

## ARTS-BASED EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH DISSERTATIONS: REVIEWING THE PRACTICES OF NEW SCHOLARS

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With this review, we explore the practices of arts-based educational research as documented in dissertations created and written over one decade in the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia. We compile and describe more than thirty dissertations across methodologies and methods of inquiry, and identify three pillars of arts-based practice – literary, visual, and performative. In this review, we trace the beginnings of a new stream of practice that is interwoven in some of these dissertations and underpins many of them: the methodology of a/r/tography. Four attributes underpin this collection of dissertations: a commitment to aesthetic and educational practices, inquiry-laden processes, searching for meaning, and interpreting for understanding.

Keywords: [arts-based educational research](#), [arts and education practice-based research](#), [a/r/tography](#)

Les auteurs explorent les pratiques ciblées et analysées dans les recherches en éducation axées sur les arts, notamment dans les thèses réalisées au cours d'une décennie à la Faculté des sciences d'éducation de l'University of British Columbia. Ils ont compilé et décrit plus d'une trentaine de travaux faisant appel à diverses méthodologies et protocoles de recherche et identifié trois grands axes en matière de pratiques axées sur les arts – littéraire, visuel et de performance. Dans ce tour d'horizon, les auteurs retracent les débuts d'une nouvelle approche qui apparaît dans certains des travaux et qui sert même de fondement à un grand nombre d'entre eux : la méthodologie de l'a/r/tographie. Cet ensemble de travaux présente quatre caractéristiques communes : une importance accordée aux pratiques esthétiques et pédagogiques, des processus axés sur la recherche, une quête de sens et un souci d'interprétation en vue de comprendre.

Mots clés : [recherche en éducation](#); [arts](#); [pratiques enseignantes](#); [recherche axée sur les pratiques](#); [a/r/tographie](#).

## INTRODUCTION

This review explores the practices of arts-based educational research as documented in dissertations created and written over the past decade in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia (UBC). We have compiled and analysed more than thirty dissertations, completed between 1994 and 2004, for comparison of methodologies and methods of inquiry. From this analysis, we trace the beginnings of a new stream of practice that is interwoven in these dissertations: the methodology of *a/r/tography*. *A/r/tography* may be described as a localized methodology, which continues to evolve from artful processes being developed by a small but growing group of education researchers and their graduate students at the University of British Columbia<sup>1</sup>. Although dissertations are the focus of this paper, other studies and projects preceded, paralleled, and have followed these dissertations and have thus had an impact on the evolution of *a/r/tography*. Nevertheless, dissertations have been pivotal to the development of *a/r/tography* in and through time. In short, *a/r/tography* is a hybrid, practice-based form of methodology.

To be engaged in the practice of *a/r/tography* means to inquire in the world through an ongoing process of art making in any art form and writing not separate or illustrative of each other but interconnected and woven through each other to create additional and/or enhanced meanings. *A/r/tographical* work is rendered through the methodological concepts of contiguity, living inquiry, openings, metaphor/metonymy, reverberations, and excess which are enacted and presented or performed when a relational aesthetic inquiry condition is envisioned as embodied understandings and exchanges between art and text, and between and among the broadly conceived identities of artist/researcher/teacher. *A/r/tography* is inherently about self as artist/researcher/teacher; yet it is also social when groups or communities of *a/r/tographers* come together to engage in shared inquiries, act as critical friends, articulate an evolution of research questions, or present their collective evocative/provocative works to others (Irwin, n.d.).

Irwin's definition may serve as a guidepost for the reader as we explore the evolution of arts-based educational research at UBC because

the intent of this article is to review the work of new scholars as evidenced in their dissertations and to share what we have learned about engaging in arts-based educational research and inquiry. As a survey of a specific body of academic research, this article is not a critical review, nor a comparison to other such collections. We offer an introduction to the collection and a description of our experience, which helped foster a climate of inclusion that encouraged the development of scholarship in promising and innovative ways.

The conditions that facilitated the emergence of arts-based dissertations and more recently a/r/tographic dissertations at UBC began with a shift in thinking, an experience that resonates within the wider academic community. As Butler-Kisber (2002) suggests, a shift is underway in the academy as more and more arts-based works are accepted as doctoral submissions, and “increasingly, graduate students are looking for arts-based expertise, and departments are grappling with how to support and evaluate the work” (p. 229). This shift was witnessed within our faculty; our review serves as an account of how the mentorship of new scholars engaged in this area of research has evolved into a community of arts-based practice. In an effort to increase communication between individuals and institutions interested in arts-based research, and/or specifically our experience, we have listed the dissertations mentioned in this article on our [a/r/tography](#) website.

In this collection, research is rendered in alternative formats to evoke or provoke understandings that traditional research formats cannot provide. Furthermore, artistic and pedagogical processes within these formats bring forth forms of inquiry in and through time that merit our attention. Moving beyond traditional text-based dissertations to embrace the complex discourses possible within the arts generates a new system of exchange where arts-based educational research unfolds as a provocative mode of inquiry. Arts-based research design begins by envisioning a research approach, engaging in inquiry (questions emerge over time), selecting sources of information and ideas, and then offering interpretations with “intellectual openness and creativity” within practice, in essence, portraying new understandings textually, visually, and/or performatively (Finley, 2003, p. 283). Recognizing the necessity of a methodology being practice, process, and product is a key principle of

arts-based educational research, similar to Genette's (1999) suggestion that aesthetic relations in works of art are both object and action at the same time. This denotes the purpose and relevance of arts-based educational research and highlights why this collection of dissertations indeed prefaces a new era in academic research. The academy possesses an opportunity to guide practices of arts-based educational research in ways that address critical concerns of rigour, validity, contribution to the field, and dissemination to a broad audience, and in so doing, make possible even greater openings for all scholars in the future. In light of this opportunity, questions guiding this review included: *What do arts-based methodologies/methods consist of? What is the range of arts-based methodologies/methods applied in this collection? What is the relationship between arts-based methodologies/methods and social science methodologies / methods?*

## BACKGROUND

In the 1970s, educational researchers began using the practices of artists and arts critics to conduct educational research (for example, Eisner, 1976; Greene, 1975; Grumet, 1978; Vallance, 1977). With the introduction of aesthetics, arts-based forms of educational inquiry were formulated, and by the 1990s had grown to include narrative writing, autobiography, dance and movement, readers theatre, multi-media, hypertext, visual arts, photography, music, poetry, and creative non-fiction (among others). Arts-based research incorporates the processes, forms (or structures), and approaches of creative practices in academic scholarship. Therefore, arts-based research draws from the creative arts to inform and shape social science research in interdisciplinary ways, thus redefining methodological vehicles in the field of education.

Developing from the work of Canadian and American scholars such as Thomas Barone, Cynthia Chambers, Ardra Cole, John Dewey, Rishma Dunlop, Elliot Eisner<sup>2</sup>, Susan Finley, Maxine Greene, Gary Knowles, Claudia Mitchell, Lorri Neilsen, Joe Norris, Jane Piirto, Celeste Snowber, and Sandra Weber, arts-based research is a rapidly growing field in education<sup>3</sup>. Arts-based researchers in education contend that the creative arts are a mode of inquiry and representation that provides significant perspectives for making decisions regarding pedagogical theory, policy,

and practice. Although arts-based research has developed significantly in the past decade and is being adopted into many fields of study across the academy, including medicine (Lazarus & Rosslyn, 2003), commerce (Gibb, 2004), science (Scott, 2006), and engineering (Penny, 2000), there are aspects that demand attention. There continue to be tensions in the academy concerning arts-based inquiry: what constitutes artful expression and how expert one must be in an art medium to render research through the arts (Piiro, 2002). Efforts to define the merits, qualities, and methods of creative scholarship have raised questions of rigour and theorization of such research, and this debate continues among scholars interested in arts-based inquiry.

An evolving understanding of what is arts-based educational research within our community of practice emerged through artful inquiries by students and faculty that would later become a/r/tography (for example, Irwin, 2004; Irwin & de Cosson, 2004). This methodology matured from the interchange of ideas, art practices, and lived experiences between a core group of faculty members and their graduate students. Through ongoing collaboration, a/r/tography took shape with contributions from members of this group of artists, researchers, and teachers engaged in educational inquiry. By honouring individual undertakings, a culture of receptivity began to pulsate and soon formed as an enclave of like-minded practitioners interested in pursuing inquiry through the arts and education. From this dynamic space of experimental research, the genesis of a/r/tography culminated in the terminology and set of concepts that first appeared in academic literature in 2003. A/r/tography has been applied in a number of recently completed arts-based dissertations, and it represents a uniquely arts and education practice-based methodology. Whereas arts-based research can apply to any discipline and is often used in conjunction with other forms of research (such as ethnography), arts-based educational research is an extension that recognizes the specific contribution arts-based research can make to education. A/r/tography is a hybrid of these broadly understood forms of research, a methodology that begins from the practices of artists, researchers, and educators, who, through ongoing inquiry in and through time, share their processes of inquiry as well as the products that are derived from those inquiries. The emphasis on

inquiry in and through time may be different than the inquiries used in arts-based research or in arts-based educational research because they are often defined within a limited space and time with an emphasis on an interpretation of data. A/r/tographers may emphasize visual inquiry, performative inquiry, narrative inquiry, or musical inquiry, among others, yet they may also use other forms of qualitative research within their work such as oral histories or autobiography. Yet fundamentally, a/r/tography acknowledges the practices of artists, researchers, and educators as places of inquiry and uses those practices to create, interpret, and portray understandings.

#### MODE OF INQUIRY

Borrowing Finley's (2003) framework for a systematic review of "emergent practices and methodologies," we assembled dissertations completed in our faculty "that provide both theoretical discussions about arts-based research methodologies and examples of arts-based inquiries" (p. 281). The rationale for undertaking our review was to locate the dissertation collection in the broader literature and practice of arts-based educational research, to summarize the different research inquiries, and to document the conceptual frameworks underpinning these dissertations in terms of the emerging methodology of a/r/tography. As many relevant dissertations as possible were considered to minimize bias and ensure the review was transparent.

We undertook a comparative analysis of more than thirty completed arts-based dissertations to identify, describe, and document the practices of graduate students engaged in arts-based educational research. Arts-based dissertations were recorded as an annotated list that includes the following information: titles, authors, specific methodological approaches used in the research, the study focus, number of participants, and outcomes (see [Summary](#)). From an analysis of one aspect of these dissertations, arts-based practices, an interpretation of trends may serve as a guide to enter into the breadth of this collection. The results provide a description of how doctoral students utilized practices and processes of arts-based research, how graduate students theorized arts-based educational research, and how their studies connected with arts and learning environments and curricula as well as other disciplines.

Although there are no comparable examples of analysis in the field of education that document a body of graduate student arts-based research, these dissertations “create new sets of questions that go beyond our current approaches to inquiry into the practices, consequences and theories of education” (Fox & Geichman, 2001, p. 47). Although this review confirms there are overarching methodological trends and generalizations of the methods of practice, to categorize arts-based dissertations further is an ongoing challenge because “arts-based inquiry cannot be governed by pre-established rules and cannot be judged according to predetermined criteria. Those rules and categories are in part what the work itself is looking for” (Diamond, 1998, p. 392). Arts-based educational research occupies a liminal space between long traditions of research, often understood in terms that have been defined, shaped, and governed by scientific approaches, and even longer traditions of artful practice that have been explored, composed, and inspired by artists. Arts-based educational researchers are always seeking to understand the parameters of “good art” and “good research,” and they are never satisfied with any checklist, template, or formula. Instead, each new arts-based educational research project is informed by past projects, but is always also seeking to extend the possibilities of what constitutes both research and art. This process is creative and emergent, a dynamic process of inquiry.

To document the divergent approaches within this collection, we first organized this review as a linear discussion of the “typical parts” of arts-based dissertations, and then explored each part in greater detail (Kilbourn, 2006, p. 529). At the same time, we introduced shifting terminology, for example, “practices” rather than “methods” is used because the arts-based practices of artists and educators and their forms of inquiry inform the process of doing research. *Practices* may involve a range of activities at the centre of research, such as customary approaches to art-making, creative rituals, original performances, as well as a subjective position of intuitiveness and responsiveness. In contrast, *methods* suggest a more traditional research orientation involving “data generation techniques and procedures, the selection of data sources, and sampling,” often resulting in a sequential step-by-step approach to inquiry (Mason, 1996, p. 19).

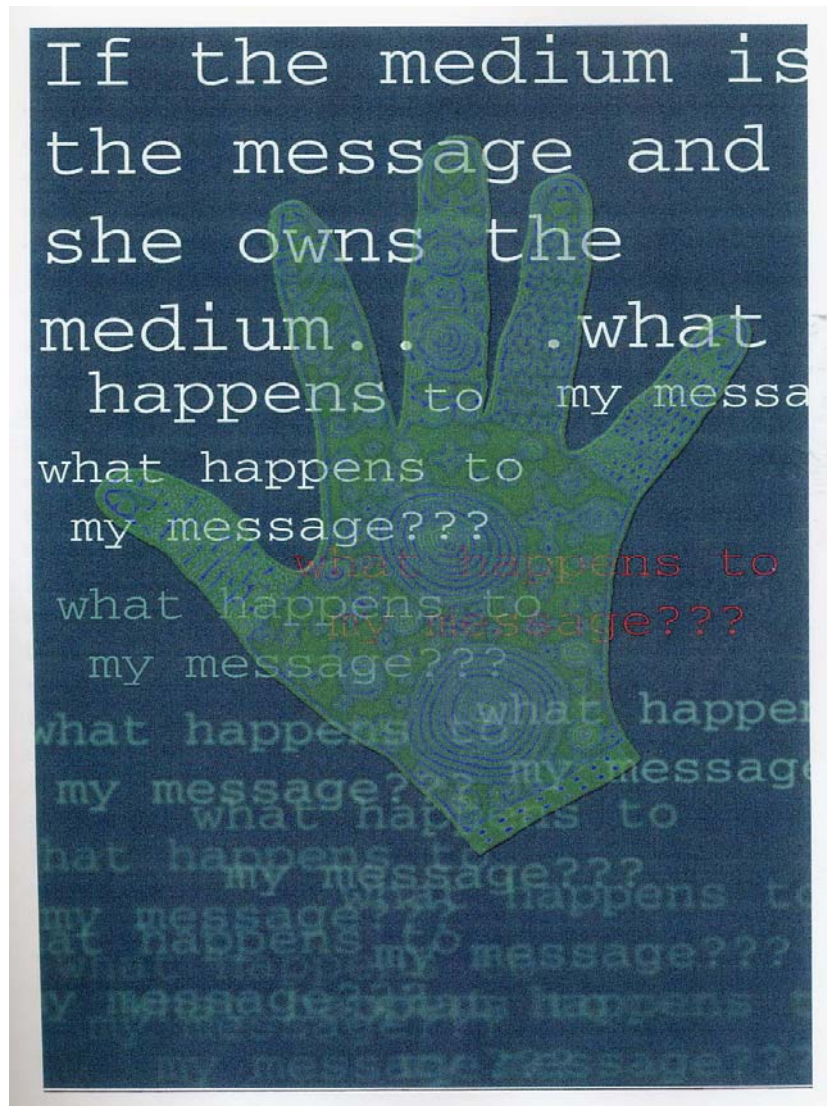
Interspersed in this discussion are textual and visual representations drawn from dissertations to demonstrate how these arts-based dissertations are different in form and content from traditional qualitative dissertations (see [Figure 1](#)). Within the limits of this article, we include singular examples from individual dissertations to illustrate the kind of research that has taken place. Although this approach to profile arts-based research may be limited, we seek to communicate an overview of practice in this review and invite readers to access dissertations on our website to appreciate the complexity of each work more fully. As we frame our analysis within a historical perspective, we recognize that we present a specific viewpoint that shapes our interpretations of these dissertations. We acknowledge that others may interpret this collection in ways that generate different understandings.

#### REVIEWING ARTS-BASED EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH DISSERTATIONS

To enter this collection, we begin with an overview of arts-based educational research in the Faculty of Education at UBC. Although arts-based dissertations were written before 1994, a trend began developing in the mid-1990s whereupon the arts as a form of inquiry were recognized (rather than being limited to the arts as an object of study) with the first dissertations completed in 1997. Arts-based research emerged from three different areas of the arts: visual arts ([Lackey](#))<sup>4</sup>, drama ([MacArthur](#))<sup>5</sup>, and literary arts ([Rasberry](#)). For example, MacArthur researched educators' understanding of vocation, and composed a readers theatre to represent her research. Rasberry, who engaged in an ethnographic research project in a Language Across the Curriculum class, wrote poetry as a significant way to express his research understandings. Clearly, arts-based research was already part of the research interests and areas of expertise of some faculty. For the next two years, arts-based dissertations contributed to further diversify research practices across departments. In 1998, Hurren's dissertation incorporated original poetry, visuals, and narratives to explore the geography curriculum. Penberg's (1998) dissertation functioned on two



levels, as a multimedia presentation that incorporated hypertext, still



*Figure 1:* Miller (2002), page 221.

and video images, and sound on a CD-Rom, and as an arts-based representation of the educational experiences of urban youth engaging in the arts. Penberg's dissertation creatively used the resources of multimedia to produce what he called an "abecedarian" of educational experiences. His dissertation is an innovative documentary that capitalized on his long artistic and professional commitment to video production. Dunlop (1999) challenged known conventions of fact and fiction in research by producing a novel as a dissertation. Beer's (1999) dissertation focused on narrative portraits of three visual artists, which, along with an analysis of artworks, generated a greater understanding for artists-pedagogues, a thread that would later emerge in the methodology of a/r/tography.

In 2000-2002, a series of dissertations incorporating the literary arts formed the first pillar of arts-based practice within the Faculty. These dissertations began with a particular methodological lens of narrative inquiry and creatively used the literary arts of poetry, fiction, drama, life-writing, and creative non-fiction to research complex lived experiences in innovative ways. The literary arts as a site of arts-based research at UBC was firmly established with works by Ashworth, Chapman, [Crook](#), [Haskell](#), Hayward-Kabani, Laroche, MacPherson, Michals, Thompson, Toulouse, and Vellani. Although these dissertations have a strong literary focus, a shift was beginning in methodological orientation, with more graduate students electing to adopt a multiple methods approach by blending one or more aspects of text, visual, and performative arts in their dissertation, regardless of their specific area of study. Expanding the parameters of arts-based dissertations by adopting multiple arts-based methods were researchers [Fisher](#), Gaylie, Gill, [Miller](#), [Norman](#), [Pryer](#), and [Renner](#). For example, Fisher wrote a sequel to the popular film *The Matrix* as part of his examination of the study of fear. Gaylie included her poetry in an examination of the value of writing poetry in an inner city school. Gill created a collage of historical documents, visual art, poetry, and creative non-fiction in her exploration of cultural identities in Canada.

During 2002-2004, a second pillar of arts-based practice emerged in the faculty with a cluster of visual arts dissertations. These dissertations established the role of Art Education as a site of arts-based educational

inquiry, with key a/r/tographic dissertations by de Cosson (2003, see [Figure 2](#)), Springgay (2004) and Darts (2004). [de Cosson's](#) seminal research demonstrates the core tenets of a/r/tography, and his articulation and application of a/r/tographic renderings to inquiry as an artist, researcher, and teacher makes his dissertation a forerunner in design, form, and content<sup>6</sup>. At the same time that de Cosson's dissertation was completed, a/r/tography evolved in part through ongoing efforts of arts-oriented faculty and graduate students who together voiced a series of creative concepts and practices. [Springgay's](#) dissertation furthered the dialogue of a/r/tography by moving beyond art education to the contemporary philosophical literature on embodiment, engaging in the work of Derrida, Merleau-Ponty, and Nancy. This was followed by [Darts'](#) dissertation, an example of a/r/tography applied to a community of practice within a high-school setting where students engaged in questions of social justice.

The third pillar of arts-based practice centres on performative dissertations that emerged more gradually over the course of the decade. According to Finley (2003), performative arts-based research emphasizes form, function, and action, and in performative texts, "research creates a specialized (open and dialogic) space that is simultaneously asserted for inquiry and expression" (p. 287). Following MacArthur in 1997, [Fels](#) (1999) explored drama as a method of inquiry in science education, blurring understood divisions of art and science. Dissertations by Linds (2002) and [Lee](#) (2004) challenged conventional understandings of identity for students and teachers through drama and music respectively. Lee's dissertation in music education used creative non-fiction and autobiographical approaches in an arts-based education research frame. Her stories of musicians' identities were rooted in interviews with musicians who decided to enter the music teaching profession and grew into creatively narrated stories of the hardships that her participants had as they struggled with the potential loss of their lifelong, musical identities (see [Figure 3](#)). In 2004, [Kirkland's](#) dissertation troubled the academy in both form – a fairytale within a play, and content – incest as a site for educational inquiry. This dissertation included both literary and performative practices, such as songs (*double-click on the sound icon to play a song from Kirkland's 2004 dissertation*):



As a collection, these dissertations are not only innovative, but push the boundaries of scholarship within the confines and context of one institution in ways that were inconceivable in the past. Unpacking the methodological frameworks of the dissertations in this collection grants insight into the decision making of graduate students in their research processes. We now address each step of research design to articulate how practices emerged in the course of their arts-based educational inquiry.

#### PRACTICES OF ARTS-BASED EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH DISSERTATIONS

Traditions of inquiry in qualitative research have generated distinct methodologies, or ways a researcher “conceptualizes the research process” (Creswell, 1998, p. 254). As inductive research, arts-based educational inquiry utilizes the elements, processes, and strategies of artistic and creative practices in scholarly investigation. Similar to Finley’s (2003) review of literature, our review of practice reveals that “explorations of questions such as these have brought forward an array of new forms of [dissertations] chosen for their unique qualities for communicating about research” (p. 283). In particular, we suggest that this collection of dissertations demonstrates four attributes: commitment for aesthetic and educational practice, inquiry-laden processes, searching for meaning, and interpreting for understanding.

##### *Commitment to Aesthetic and Educational Practices*

In this collection, the researcher’s commitment to aesthetic and educational practices, whether explicitly or implicitly stated, provides



*Figure 2:* [de Cosson \(2003\)](#), page 125.

*We begin new music  
By a walk through the leaves  
At the mercy of the trees  
Imagine the future  
Sounds we share  
Time against us*

Today I will tell a story. It has a beginning, and a middle, but no end. It is about my journey as a doctoral student in education, writing a storied dissertation. I explore musicians becoming music educators. I want to understand their conflicts as they change and extend their identities. There has been little previous research in the area. I examine literary studies, feminine-based literature, and arts-based research. My voyage begins intensely, wildly unpredictable, dark with secrets, evocation, and celebration. Each September, a new cohort of student teachers in the secondary music education program enters my classroom. I teach them two courses about educational methods in music classrooms. In the second month of the term, they are invited to participate in my research. I set out to accompany them for nine months in order to gain insight into their experiences as student teachers. After six cohorts, they are still a part my life. I learn about institutional education, musicianship, and their conflicts in: love, loss, pain, wisdom, and change. They grapple with their identities as they become educators. Their sense of identity is shaped by the past, present, and their assertion that music is a counterpoint for their lives. I need to know if and how their identity is constructed by music. They are bound by music, the sounds and rhythms of their desires. Each route they take involves a modulation. Music is the underlying theme and variation of their lives and a medley for the melodies of their stories.

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*Figure 3: Lee (2004), page 2.*

the basis for envisioning the research approach and determines the design, conduct, and rendering of their research. Arts-based dissertations in this collection are encounters with one or more

expressive elements. For example, *a/r/tography* draws upon many theoretical lenses, including philosophy, feminist theories, and contemporary art criticism, to conceptualize the methodology of *a/r/tography*, “with an attention to the *in-between* where meanings reside in the simultaneous use of language, images, materials, situations, space and time” (Irwin & Springgay, in press). These arts based educational researchers show a commitment to an artistic form (or more) and an educational practice, and use this commitment to imagine, conduct, interpret, and assess their studies. This commitment was essential to their success because it assured an attention to qualities, perceptions, and insights throughout the process.

*Inquiry-laden processes*

Dissertations in this collection share a core feature: research is an inquiry-laden process focussed on opening up spaces to trouble and address differences through creative acts. All these arts-based educational researchers are committed to traditions and practices of social science research, but their unique contributions to research methodologies include their commitment to creative ways of knowing and researching as a journey of transformation. They are seeking to spell out in theory and practice how poetry, drama, fiction, visual art, and performance all contribute to ways of knowing and becoming, to conceptions of epistemology and ontology. Their inquiry grows out of emergent questioning that often takes the inquirer into rhizomatic terrain (Irwin, Beer, Springgay, Grauer, Xiong, & Bickel, 2006). Questions lead to interventions, inquiries, possibilities, and inevitably, situations emerge, unfold, or are recognized. Through the generative rhizomatic relational nature of questions and situations, *a/r/tography* moves in different directions simultaneously yet continues to explore a line of inquiry. In this sense, *a/r/tography* may be a methodology of situations: situations that constantly teach educators to trouble and address difference while being committed to aesthetic inquiry.

Research inquiries often emerge from professional, educational, and/or personal lives of the researchers. Questions of concern documented in this collection are wide ranging and may be described as encapsulating the researcher’s lingering curiosity of being-in-the-world,

with inquiry most frequently centred around general themes of self identity (Renner, 2001, see [Figure 4](#)), socio-cultural landscapes (Toulouse, 2001), or embodied experience (Linds, 2002). Arts-based researchers are often interested in “verities of the human condition: love (Lee, 2004); death (Dunlop, 1999); memory (Norman, 1999); suffering (MacPherson, 2000); power (Chapman, 2001); fear (Fisher, 2003); loss (Crook, 2001, see [Figure 5](#)); desire (Pryer, 2002); hope (Thompson, 2001); and so forth” (Dissanayake, 2003, p. 15). Although these research inquiries are grounded in theory, such arts-based research is sometimes characterized as ambiguous because of the emotive qualities evident in the questions asked at the outset, which are then expressed as sensorial, emotional, and/or intellectual processes of coming to know throughout the inquiry. Based on this collection, the significance of the research inquiry to the field of education may be explicitly stated or not stated at all. If the significance is not stated, the researcher may intend that the audience create meaning from their own situated perspective. Openness is a cornerstone of strong arts-based research. In this way, arts-based research encourages more dynamic knowledge construction in the academy as the significance is not always bound by the researcher.

In a/r/tography, research questions emerge and change over time through a perspective of living inquiry. Leggo (2004) describes living inquiry as a dynamic state of “learning to live poetically,” where “I am trained in the traditions of human science research, and as a poet I am always seeking to understand the ways that poetry opens up possibilities for knowing and being and becoming” (p. 29-30). Researchers situating their research questions in their living inquiry are engaged in “research that matters *to* them but that also matters *for* others” (Chambers, 2004, p. 7). As evidenced in Springgay’s (2004) dissertation (see [Figure 6](#)), an ethic of caring inherent in questions of / in / through inquiry shapes the relationship between the researcher and participants and/or the researcher and broader social contexts in new ways (Finley, 2003).



**L.B.:** Indeed. I had a quick look at the excerpts posted on your website and I tell you this, Peter: I'm impressed. I found myself drawn into your work; saw myself represented on many pages.

**Peter:** Thanks, L.B. That means a lot, coming from you. If I may, I'd like to segue to an area I know very little about ... and on which you've written extensively. My question is this: How do I position my work as academic research? I know this will be raised by readers of my work—especially by the examiners during the thesis defense.

**L.B.** [smiles knowingly]: I'm not sure what methodology courses you've taken—very few, judging by your expression. Broadly speaking, educational research fits along a continuum, with qualitative (or interpretive) methods at one end and quantitative (causal) methods at the other. You're familiar with that picture?

**Peter:** Yes ... and I try not to see them as polarities ... as I did in the early days of graduate studies. It seems that all educational research fits somewhere along the continuum and it's not uncommon for a project to have qualitative and quantitative components.

**L.B.:** Right. Just to make sure we're using the same language: how would you define the two extremes?

**Peter:** Well ... I think quantitative researchers are mainly interested in measuring relationships among variables; they're concerned with hypothesis testing, prediction and control, and with random sampling. Their stance is essentially a deductive one: they want to know something about a lot of people and they typically do that by examining a sample and

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<sup>5</sup> This fictionalized exchange is based on notes taken during Carolyn Ellis' workshop on "Writing ethnography" at the UBC School of Nursing on May 2000 and her chapter, with Art Bochner, on "Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, pp. 733-768).

*Figure 4: Renner (2001), page 8.*

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Oh, oh. How violent was Laurie? Some people would hit after an insult like that.

"Don't even think about it," Betsy said sharply. "If you lay a friggin' hand on me I'll plow you."

"I'm not going to hit you," Laurie said. "I'm not going to hit you. I'm just so mad at you."

"Why?" Betsy sounded less angry now, and more curious.

"Because you're the only one of us who has any brains. Because you're the only one of us who could really set the country on its ear. You'd be the first one in the whole Clan for fifty years to do something famous. And you're going to throw it all away because you won't go to school!"

I stayed frozen on the porch. I didn't want to walk into that argument, and I was too fascinated to step away.

"I go to school," Betsy said sharply.

"Not enough to pass."

"Okay, not enough."

"Just go, Betsy," Laurie said. "The secret of getting through high school is to go every day and hand in your assignments. That's all you have to do. Nothing else makes much difference But go."

"What makes you the big expert?" I could hear the bitterness oozing over the words.

"Failure makes me the big expert," Laurie said and her voice was sad, full of hurt and lost dreams. "Failure makes me the expert, Betsy."

There was silence, and I slipped quietly off the porch and out of the yard.

"She was like a big fist," I said to Granny that night when she was having her bedtime cup of tea and I was putting my books away. "Why is she so hard on Betsy?"

*Figure 5: Crook (2001), page 139.*



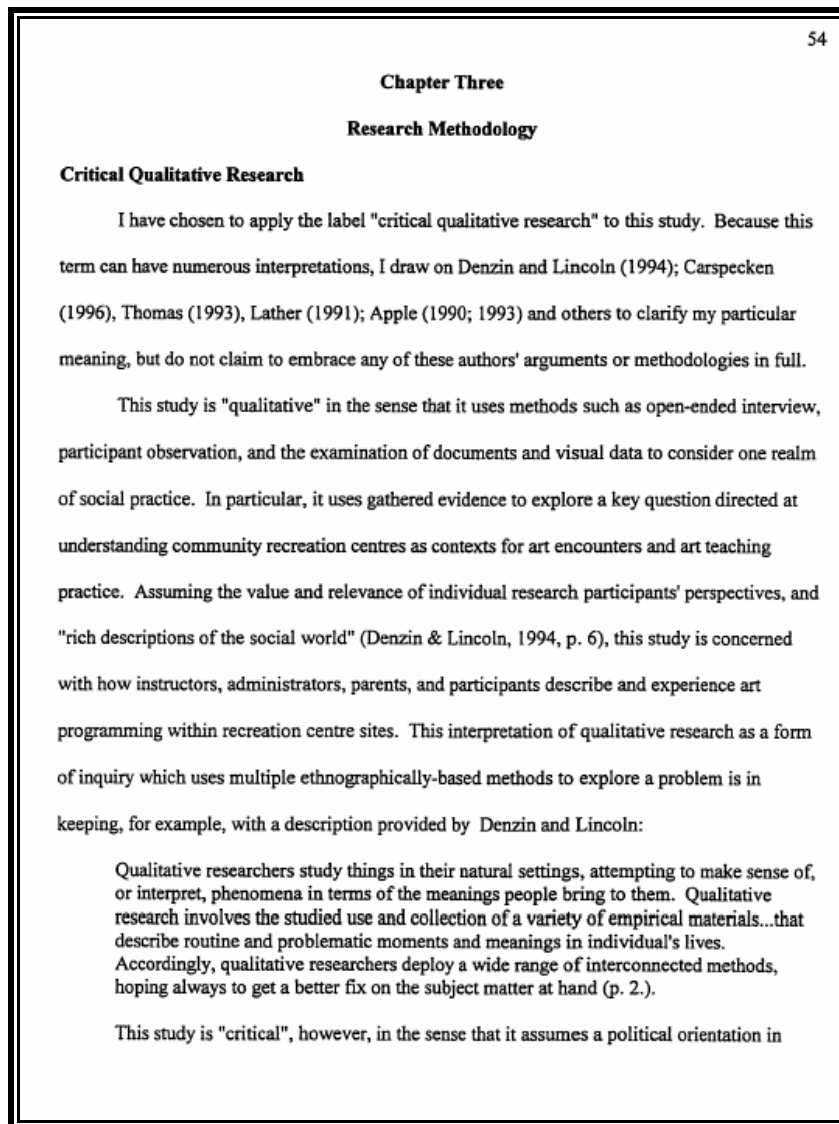
*Figure 6:* Springgay (2004), p 99.

Engaging in arts-based educational research often means that researchers are immersed in a journey of discovery, of learning about themselves as well as learning about themselves in relationship to others. In much of the arts-based educational research discussed in this article, there is no simple distinguishing between the researcher and the research. In effect, there is an organic and lively relationship where the researcher and the research are part of an intricate dance that is always evolving. In other words, arts-based educational research is a creative process that is tentative and frequently tension-filled, but often transformative and tensile.

#### *Searching for meaning*


Sources of information and ideas in arts-based dissertations often come from specific practices within the arts themselves such as creating an original work of art, working collaboratively within a community of practice, drawing on lived experiences of self and participants, and/or exploring alternate sources such as popular culture. Each occasion represents an active search for meaning. Although most researchers selected sources to answer a specific research question (see [Figure 7](#)), an arts-based researcher may or may not seek to answer a specific research question. Instead, sources may generate even more questions and take new and unexpected directions in the course of inquiry, often making sources both the process and product of arts-based research. For example, the creation of a painting may serve as the primary source of data for an inquiry, and the same painting may then be exhibited as a means of sharing research understandings. Traditional sources like interviewing may generate an in-depth analysis from which an arts-based rendering such as a play is written. Although these approaches are very different and rely on divergent sources, both constitute arts-based research.

Arts-based research must demonstrate that artful expression is at the heart of inquiry. Practices applied to the dissertations in this collection are best described as unfolding with select sources that often redirect the research agenda toward a more spontaneous, perhaps intuitive reflexivity (see [Figure 8](#)). Such art practices may be described as “the



*Figure 7: Lackey (1997), page 54.*

P 1 of 2


 THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
 FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
 Teacher Education Office

Student Teacher Darts, David G. School \_\_\_\_\_  
 Grade and Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Focus of observation \_\_\_\_\_

Tuesday February 17, 2004

I met the art 11/12 students today that I'll be working with during the research study. When I first walked into the classroom, I couldn't believe how quiet it was...the students were sitting at tables working independently in their sketchbooks. I spoke briefly with Alice (The Art Teacher) and then she introduced me to the class. I described the research project for the students and then asked if there were any questions. After some prodding from Alice, a couple of students asked questions... What is this for? What is the video for? Why do you have to take pictures? I did my best to answer the questions and then handed out the parent and participant consent forms. Alice urged the students to return them 'sooner rather than later' and then assured me that she would mark names off as they came in. I started feeling worried that no one would actually agree to participate in the study, though one girl started filling her forms in right away which made me feel a little better. Afterwards, I spoke to Alice about how quiet the class was and she explained that many of the students were from immigrant families and, therefore, many of them were new to the school. She explained that the populations of her classes 'turn over' quite regularly during the year as families move on and new families move into the area. She suggested this was because downtown was often the first place new immigrant families live when they arrive in Vancouver. I'm a little worried about the lack of enthusiasm/energy the students exhibited today but am also trying to remain philosophical about it. I'm also trying to remember David Jardine's (1998) notion of the gathering and giving of 'data.' If we play for a moment with the etymology of 'data,' we find that it originally means 'that which is given' or 'that which is granted.' Inquiry must open itself to that which is given or granted. It must be able to listen or to attend to that which comes to meet us, just as it comes to meet us. Inquiry need not prepare itself by arming itself with methods which demand univocity and clarity. Rather, it must do what it has always claimed to do – it must 'gather' data. This metaphor should not be lost. What is given or granted is precious and delicate, and it must be gathered with all the love and care with which we gather the fruits of the earth, careful not to do violence, careful not to expect too much, prepared – dare we admit it? – for the possibility that nothing will come forth (a possibility that

**Recommended Follow-up**

teachers and parents live with all the time in living with children; such deep love, care, and risk only seem peculiar if one becomes cloistered in academia). This gathering cannot take its cue from our willingness to act without a moment's notice. It must take its cue from that which is given as to how the gathering must go. There is nothing we can do to guarantee that this gift will be given. (p. 30)

Completed by \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature) (s.g. school advisor, faculty advisor)  
 Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

TEOyPractice Forms\neocobtl02-03-25Mps Distribution: White - Student Carriers - UBC Pink - School Advisor

*Figure 8: Darts (2004), page 30.*

**telephone call from a grade three teacher to a performing arts educator<sup>6</sup>**

Hello?

*It's me. Are you busy?*

No. What's up?

*I'm thinking of putting together a science unit on air pressure for my class next term and I want to combine it with some performing arts. Are you interested?*

Sure! Great idea! Uh ... what's the topic again?

*Air pressure. Can you handle it?*

Air pressure! No problem! I'll get some ideas going and we can meet next week ...

I hang up the phone and contemplate the frost-bitten window.

*Air pressure? What the heck is air pressure? And who cares?*

Imagine my surprise and delight when I discover  
within the lines of scientific text that  
air pressure is flight  
and melody breath-sounded  
and the unpredictable choreography  
of patterned weather.

Possibilities dance on a line  
like doves pulled from a magician's hat  
and tossed into the air.  
Imagine.

---

<sup>6</sup> In the winter of 1994, a friend and colleague, Marlene Marcon, proposed that I develop a performing arts project investigating air pressure for her grade three class. An initial telephone request proved a motivating catalyst to the journey-landscape we are now embarking upon together. See footnote 7 on page 8.

*Figure 9: Fels (1999), page 7.*

artist's way ... of looking at what turns up from beneath, that of involuntary wondering or 'epiphanic' memoir ... that produces 'a genuine shift of consciousness that alters one's sense of being'" (Van Halen-Faber & Diamond 2002, citing Salvio, p. 259). All arts-based researchers create textual, visual, and/or performative works of art; all dissertations in this collection utilize one or more art form. Literary texts include stories, novels, plays, poetry, diaries, journals, letters, as evidenced by researchers like Rasberry (1997), Laroche (2001) and MacArthur (1997). Visual arts include painting, photography, sculptures, fibre, drawing, film, multimedia, as well as architecture and historical artefacts. Miller (2002), Springgay (2004), and Darts (2004) exemplify the visual arts in their dissertations. Performative works include drama, musical compositions, dance, as well as culturally based performances of rituals. Fels (1999, see [Figure 9](#)), Gill (2004), and Linds (2002) offer exemplars of performative dissertations. By making art, researchers generate sources of information and understandings for their inquiry, but art may be only one of several sources of information and ideas in arts-based dissertations (see [Figure 10](#)).

The dissertations examined in this article reveal that arts-based researchers frequently utilize multiple methods from the social sciences, in addition to art making, to understand the complexity of their topic and ultimately to search for meaning. Qualitative strategies such as narrative inquiry, ethnography, hermeneutics, and action research are commonly found in this collection along with works of art. Although many of these dissertations include techniques such as interviewing, field observations, member checks, and triangulation, these strategies are separate from the process of art making but may provide the impetus to make art. In this collection, sources of information were also drawn from existing scholarly works, other fields of study such as the social, natural, or human sciences, or contemporary culture. Such sources bring an interdisciplinary perspective and layering of knowledge to arts-based educational research. Vellani's (2002) dissertation documenting the living traditions of Indian Ismailis over several generations, and Fisher's (2003) engagement in contemporary culture through the science fiction movie, "The Matrix," are two examples (see [Figure 11](#)). Arts-based researchers frequently respond artistically to lived experiences that



re-experiencing or the re-embodiment of me as teacher, instructor, learner, researcher, and (co)inquirer. I begin while looking out at the expansive landscape at 24,000 feet above sea level.

**↳Enactive Inquiry—Is it a perspective or methodology?↳**

**Johnna:** Is this real, can I see the earth forever? [I try to slow my breathing to soak in the view from the plateau, or what feels like the top of the world.] Isn't this the best? What could possibly be more beautiful? What is this flesh I feel, cannot see in the actions of climbing, yet embody? What is the flesh of researching such actions, such phenomena of experiencing?

**Maurice Merleau-Ponty:** The flesh is not matter, is not mind, is not substance. . . . The flesh is in this sense an 'element' of Being. . . . If we can show that the flesh is an ultimate notion, that it is not the union or compound of two substances, but thinkable by itself; if there is a relation of the visible with itself that traverses me and constitutes me as a seer, this circle which I do not form, which forms me, this coiling over of the visible upon the visible, can traverse, animate other bodies as well as my own. And if I was able to understand how this wave arises within me, how the visible which is yonder is simultaneously my landscape, I can understand a fortiori that elsewhere it also closes over upon itself and that there are other landscapes besides my own. (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, pp. 139-141)

**Johnna:** So is the flesh the invisible, passion, the element of Being which we can not see; a landscape or chiasm where I am the world and the world is me? I continue to ask these questions while trying to "interstand" the phenomena of experiencing (Taylor & Saarinen, 1994). I want to inter-stand the relational experience of worlds unfolding, which is more than just an understanding. Through inter-standing, can I glimpse into the chiasm of possibility?

*Figure 10: Haskell (2000), page 45.*

**FEARLESS LEADERSHIP  
IN AND OUT OF THE  
'FEAR' MATRIX**

*A play by*  
**R. Michael Fisher**

**FEAR MATRIX REMOVAL PROGRAM**

The Fear Matrix Removal Program is a divine dispensation from the Creator that allows members of the Spiritual Hierarchy to actually pull your core fear patterns right out of your subconscious mind and four body systems... When ever you feel your buttons are being pushed, or you have a negative reaction or emotion, a fear program has been triggered. Immediately call to the Ascended Masters and have them remove it. It is recommended that you not be taking any medication for three to six months that you seek removal of your core fear to be removed. If you request to be officially signed up for the Core Fear Matrix Removal Program, they will also work on your subconscious mind to...

Ardo  
Visa

FEAR MATRIX

Figure 11: Fisher (2003), page x.

emerge from a community of inquiry and/or from self-reflection. It is unusual in these arts-based dissertations to find participants as the only source of experiential information. In fact, the most common source is the researcher. As Chambers (2004) suggests, “the presence and significance of the narrative I ... does not mean that the I is necessarily the subject of the text” (p. 1). However, the presence of the researcher must be “felt” in research involving the arts, explicitly revealing “the intersection of a researcher’s life with that of those researched” (Cole & Knowles in Neilsen, Cole, & Knowles, 2001, p. 215).

The methods of a/r/tography further bridge the collaborative potential of researcher and participants by facilitating the formation of communities of practice. Communities of practice may emerge in formal learning sites, such as elementary classrooms, or informal learning sites, such as community-based artists. For a/r/tographical communities, this means the community of practice is flexible (even interdisciplinary) and may cross over several disciplinary units (for instance, artists, musicians, actors, dancers, and educators who reside in different academic units and who work together as a/r/tographers). Community members, as well as academic members, bring their curiosities, concerns, and motivations to the community of a/r/tographic inquiry. Moreover, as a/r/tographers engage with artistic forms of inquiry, they begin to create situations for further inquiry. For example, sharing an exhibit of artworks derived from a/r/tographic inquiry in more than one setting brings forward an awareness of various audience responses that may inform the inquiry in rich and often unanticipated ways. A/r/tography, and arts-based research in general, is fundamentally concerned with sharing lived experiences because collaboration represents a potential to include voices in research that may not otherwise be heard.

#### *Interpreting for understanding*

Interpretations emerge from inquiry, as a researcher explores, assesses, or develops relationships between theories, concepts, and lived experiences (see [Figure 12](#)). Interpretation in arts-based research contributes to knowledge in the field of education because the “experience of the artist [as] the core element in the creation of new

**Inconclusion**

By now, in a more traditionally produced and structured dissertation, having presented and analysed my data, I would begin the process of drawing conclusions. Perhaps I would emphasize the applicability of my findings, or the means of implementing my well-tested program. I would make sure to convince my examining committee that my research would reduce bullying in school playgrounds, or would improve standardized scores in Grade 6 math classes, or help “at-risk” kindergarteners graduate high school and become socially productive citizens – no doubt, all laudable goals. It is this final chapter, one professor assured me, that would prove my academic relevance and employability, and eventually lay the way for a much-coveted, highly desirable university teaching job. But, of course, this is not that kind of dissertation.

Perhaps you remember: I did point out early in chapter one that I would not be coming to any conclusions. What had fascinated me was what had fascinated Kathleen Rockhill (1986) whose work I had read as a neophyte graduate student: I wanted to explore the fullness of a pedagogy and a scholarship that could embrace the chaotic, the disorderly, the embodied, the emotional, the passionate, and the conflictual. With this in mind, perhaps you realized that my dissertation would not have a tidy finale, a triumphant gathering of all loose ends into a single, neat bundle. Indeed, in chapter two I had already surmised that a non/dualistic relationship to knowledge is necessarily uncertain, unstable, and contingent. Arising always in relationship, always in context, never in isolation, a non/dualistic conception of

*Figure 12: Pryer (2002), page 226.*

knowledge and the potential for new understandings is further enhanced through research projects that may take varied forms such as exhibitions, performances, and publications" (Sullivan, 2005, p. 191). In interpretations, arts-based researchers demonstrate "sensitivity to the connection between method and meaning," in a "self-conscious method" that "shows an awareness of the relationships between the conceptual and methodological moves" and "an awareness of the bearing of those moves on the overall integrity of the work" (Kilbourn, 2006, p. 530). As Kilbourn (2006) suggests, "writing that is self-conscious tends to reflect the layers and complexity of the process of a dissertation as it unfolds from conceptualization to finished product" (p. 531).

Dissertations in the collection reported in this article indicate a tendency towards methodological pluralism and/or hybridity in the interpretation stage (Sullivan, 2005). Most graduate students drew upon multiple methodologies and methods in the course of their arts-based inquiry. Kincheloe (2005) describes this process as entering "into the research act as methodological negotiators ... defending what we assert we know and the process by which we know it" (p. 325). Pluralism and hybridity offer researchers a way to broaden and deepen methodological design, strengthening interpretation and ensuring a rigorous engagement with sources throughout the inquiry process. The interpretive methods most commonly applied by graduate students include narrative inquiry, ethnography, hermeneutics, action research, performative inquiry, and/or a/r/tography. In a/r/tography, knowing emerges from being engaged with art making and teaching/learning through living inquiry. As Irwin, Beer, Springgay, Grauer, Xiong and Bickel (2006) state, "this active stance to knowledge creation informs a/r/tographers' practices making their inquiries emergent, generative, reflexive and responsive (p. 71). Interpretations in a/r/tography are based on a reflexive and reflective stance to analysis. In such cases, interpretation often generates "unfinished stories" that are ongoing and form the researcher's living inquiry (VanWynsberghe, 2001, p. 733).

Based on a review of this collection of dissertations, diverse arts-based research shares a critical outcome. Many graduate students stated that engaging in an arts-based inquiry was a transformative experience for their participants and/or for themselves, as researchers. Experiential,

intellectual, and/or social transformations are central in these dissertations. From the transformative process of art making, new understandings contribute to theory development in the field of education. This suggests that arts-based educational research is inherently complex and requires different forms of assessment than traditional research. For example, rather than a focus on traditional notions of rigour, some arts-based researchers promote the value of attending to vigour. Readjusting the focus of evaluation in this way is not intended to establish a binary opposition that pits one concept or approach against another. Arts-based researchers do not discount the significance of many kinds of evaluation, but they are careful to expand the notion of evaluation as a kind of assessing or grading to attend to the root of evaluation as *valuing*. The question shifts from *'Is this good arts-based research?'* to *'What is this arts-based research good for?'* The evaluation of the knowledge generated in arts-based research includes a critical investigation of the craft and aesthetics of artistic practices; a creative examination of how art evokes responses and connections; a careful inquiry into the methods that art uses to unsettle ossified thinking and provoke imagination; a conscientious consideration of the resonances that sing out to the world from word, image, sound, and performance (Leggo, in press).

Individual doctoral graduates included in our review have disseminated their research in numerous peer-reviewed journals and international and national academic conferences. A number of these dissertations have received academic awards of excellence, including Darts (2004), de Cosson (2003), Dunlop (1999), Norman (1999), Pryer (2002), and Springgay (2004). As Conle (2003) notes of arts-based educational research, the "main curricular event" is the presentation to an audience:

Its curricular function seems to be particularly aimed at an audience's reception of data presented through performances, images, or artistically conceived texts. Creators of such works hope to change members of the audience through the experience of data crafted into various art forms, for example, into plays. Curricular and research functions are still closely connected. (p. 4)

Willis (2002) suggests, “heightened engagement” with arts-based research by readers / viewers can generate “a strong critical reaction” (p. 11). In this collection, there are a number of dissertations that generate a controversial response when read and/or viewed. We invite your [comments](#) about this collection.

#### EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Arts-based educational research dissertations are an opportunity to reconsider the imaginative possibilities between and within theory and practice. Based on this collection, there is no one way to do arts-based educational research. Arts-based research has diverse voices, combined with a great range of interests and variety in research, and perhaps most importantly, many dimensions of creativity that bring different perspectives to the field of education, in which representation and engagement with knowledge offer new flexibility in understanding and conducting research. The findings in this review correspond with Sullivan’s (2005) position that builds “on [his] argument that promotes art practices as research in institutional settings,” where “both the artworld and the academy can be seen as critical sites where the individual and cultural significance of the visual arts has the potential to be fully realized” (p. 220). Although we take very seriously questions about the quality of the diverse kinds of art included in dissertations, we have begun to address the questions in new ways. Instead of asking, “Is this good art?,” we are now asking, “What is this art good for?” In this approach we are not seeking to be coy, but rather to challenge common and simplistic conceptions of “goodness” in artistic expression. Scholars who are also artists and educators wrote many of the dissertations included in this review. For example, Crook (2001) was already a well-known Canadian writer when she began her doctoral studies and although Dunlop (1999), brought to their doctoral research life-long commitments to creativity, they still decided to hone their skills for writing poetry by registering in courses in Creative Writing. As Irwin (2003) suggests, “cultivating an appreciative way of knowing is an act of cultivating an aesthetic way of knowing, an aesthetic that values sensory awareness, perceptual acuity, attunement, wonderment, novelty and emergence” (p. 63). Borrowing from Sanders

(1999), arts-based dissertations are a “process of constructing alternative forms of (re)presentation [as] an ongoing palimpsestic process ... of (re)imagining, (re)presentations and critical reflections” (p. 555, 559). In this way, these dissertations demonstrate how creative practice can be integral to engaging in research in the academy today.

This collection provides a description of how doctoral students (in conjunction with their mentors) interrogated their research through the embodied processes inherent within artistic scholarship, and how arts-based dissertations often “cross boundaries” by joining “things together that don’t normally go together” (Fox & Geichman, 2001, p. 40). The evolution of a/r/tography is particularly important in this collection because it also emphasizes an action-oriented form of living inquiry that stems from continuous reflection upon action within the roles of artist, researcher, and teacher. The value of this collection resides in the questions raised and the discussions these researchers provoke in the broader academic community as their research generates different perspectives on policies, practices, and experiences. The attributes they share include the commitment for aesthetic and educational practice, inquiry-laden processes, searching for meaning, and interpreting for understanding. Each attributes may be seen as a springboard for beginning to engage critically with the work while also learning to appreciate its qualities. As Van Halen-Faber and Diamond (2002) say, arts-based educational research opens researchers to “imaginative experience” which then renders the research with “explanation and commentary” (p. 252).

There is an invitation in this collection to continue to open spaces by raising critical questions about arts-based educational research in the field of education. The integration of the arts blurs the traditional format of dissertations, performatively, textually, and visually, and can productively disrupt the protocols and procedures of the academy. Based on this collection, arts-based researchers continue to devise original ways to render academic research so that researchers may muse on the aesthetics, consider the ambiguity, and reside in the divergence such dissertations generate as they are dis/located in their understanding of what is research. A review of dissertations in this collection suggests the complexity of arts-based research arguably demands great



attentiveness to complexity. This growing body of arts-based educational research presents possibilities, challenges, and interpretations that trouble the understood framework of qualitative research. Arts-based educational inquiry requires a certain state of mind, an artful 'dwelling,' an ever-present meditative, imaginative, creative process of meaning making and interpretive activities rooted in perception and language (Heidegger, 1926/1996).

The growing acceptance of arts-based educational research is evident in the number of arts-based educational research courses offered at post-secondary institutions, the acceptance of arts-based educational research by major granting agencies, and the increasing number of peer-reviewed journals including research about, or dedicated to, arts-based research in the field of education. We may speculate that, given the availability of new media technology, further shifts may occur in the modes of expression available to arts-based researchers when creating dissertations and disseminating research in the future. As Sullivan (2005) states, "the digital world is proving to be an especially rich setting in which newer conceptions of theory and practice in the arts are being explored" (p. 188).

As evidenced in this collection, expressive strategies not only reshape educators' understanding of research inquiries, but their perception of what they define as research. Fox and Geichman (2001) remind educational researchers to ask themselves, "Do our graduate students really extend beyond us? What is the distance between our students' work and our own? How fast do our graduate students become expert researchers?" (p. 39, 43). Arts-based research is a process that takes time. Creating a nascent space for a local methodology like *a/r/tography* to develop requires an academic culture where risk-taking is encouraged, nurtured, and promoted through the ongoing commitment of a core group, or colony, of arts-based researchers (Mullen, 2003). In our case, this space was collaboratively created by a small group of researchers and graduate students in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia over the course of a decade. It is through such processes that arts-based methodologies may develop fully as innovative ways of researching across the academy, in many fields of inquiry, collectively serving to guide the next generation of educational scholars.

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**Summary of arts-based educational research dissertations in the  
Faculty of Education, UBC  
1994 – 2004**

<b>Author/ year</b>	<b>Forms of Inquiry</b>	<b>Study focus</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>New Understandings</b>
Ashworth, J.E. (2002)	Narrative inquiry; hermeneutics	Educational leadership	Seven adult educators, including author	Dialogue reveals possibilities of teaching as leading; implications for the development of educational leaders
Beer, R.S. (1999)	Narrative portraits; analysis of artworks	Multicultural; environmental art education	Three visual artists	Greater understanding of artist/pedagogues; increasing role for artists in community-based sites
Chapman, V.L. (2001)	Post colonial auto- ethnography; poetry, writing, visuals	Body self- knowledge; and counter remembering	Author	Awareness of the use of power in education; colonizers/disci- plinary mechanisms; ethics of caring for

				the self
Crook, M. (2001)	Narrative inquiry; novel	High school students' experiences of learning and their lives in school	Focus groups of high school students; conversations with parents, teachers, community workers	Research generated a novel that takes students' concerns and weaves them into a story that illustrates how teens in northern, rural communities experience learning.
de Cosson, A. F. (2003)	Journaling; auto-ethnography; a/r/tography	Process of living an artistic inquiry	Author	Self as a site of research; the need for a whole body/mind/spirit connection for a grounded artistic understanding
Darts, D. (2004)	A/r/tography; action research; hermeneutics; visual ethnography	Art education; socially engaged students	Thirteen high school students; author	To understand the role that art education might play in the development of socially engaged high school students
Dunlop, R. (1999)	Research as novel / literary narrative	Nature of teachers' lives through artistic production	Author; informed by experiences of students	Explores the role literary fictions play in everyday life and in educational processes
Fels, L. (1999)	Performative inquiry	Teaching and learning of science education through drama and	Author; informed by pre-service teachers	Explores the possibility and power of performative inquiry as a research tool and

		storytelling		learning vehicle in science education
Fisher, R.M. (2003)	Performative postmodern methodology; playwriting	Educational leaders and leadership from a fearless standpoint	Author; exploratory-informed by characters of sci-fi movie, "The Matrix"	Explores is "What is the 'Fear' Matrix?" This question has curricular and pedagogical relevance, especially for educational leadership development
Gaylie, V.A. (2003)	Narrative inquiry; poetry; field study	Arts and creative based techniques give voice to those previously silenced	Author; informed by inner city high school students	When students are permitted to express themselves creatively they will explore their lives and language with empowerment and critical depth
Gill, H. (2004)	Narrative inquiry; storying	Questions multi-culturalism and identity in spaces of difference	Author; informed by author's personal and familial stories	Experiments with nonstructure and typography to actively decolonize, deconstruct/re-construct imposed academic and social identities through "transculturality"
Haskell, J.G. (2000)	Enactive inquiry; prose	Embodied awareness in an outdoor activity education program	Author's experiences - informed by a group of high school students	Juxtaposes encounters in the outdoors with enactive theory to move beyond traditional representation-alist models of

				cognition
Hayward-Kabani, C. (2000)	Auto-biography; currere	Search for authentic curriculum; enable young children to navigate society	Author	Through living the curriculum, the author formed a foundation for understanding and tolerance in the classroom and beyond
Hurren, W. J. (1998)	Narrative inquiry; poetry and visuals	An exploration of geography curriculum, poetics, and embodied knowledge	Author	Explores transformation of geography curriculum and inclusion of embodied approaches to (re)writing the world of curriculum theory (and dissertations)
Kirkland, K.H. (2004)	Narrative inquiry; mythopoetics (fairy tale within a play).	Exploration and analysis of mother-son incest as a site for educational inquiry	Author; informed by personal and social perceptions of taboos	Need to re/collect difficult subjects in order to transform lived experiences of learners and find new ways of being and becoming
Lackey, L.M. (1997)	Open-ended interviews; visual data; field notes; participant observations; critical qualitative research	Visual art programs and art education practices in two community recreation centres	Author; informed by art instructors, staff and administration of recreation centres; observations of adult and child classes	Informal institutional practices, tacit messages act to contravene a formal arts policy to increase recreational arts programming; maintains the status quo

Laroche, L. (2001)	Conceptual analysis, autobiography	Imagining science education detached from a mechanistic worldview	Author; exploratory and informed by author's experience of teaching elementary science	Possibilities for re-imagining school science curriculum by moving it deeper into the re-enchanted world, step by step, nonlinearly
Lee, K.V. (2004)	Narrative inquiry (short stories)	Musicians' identity shifts as they transform into school-teachers	Nine: eight participants and the author	Some musicians could overcome conflict through the story writing process; mentorship by a school advisor who is also a professional musician is critical
Linds, W.S. (2002)	Performative inquiry; poetry, prose	Drama workshops adapt Theatre of the Oppressed for high school students, teachers and community	Author; informed by teaching experiences	Coming to know one's identity-in-process as a drama facilitator enables the interpretation, interrogation and transformation of how one becomes facilitator
MacArthur, S. (1997)	Interpretive inquiry; drama; reader's theatre	Teaching as a vocation expressed in different textures, tones of ideas, feelings, imaginings	Author; informed by autobiographical writing of teachers	The call of teaching emerges from a polyphony of voices; explore this research space with whatever questions or answers intuited among the threads
Michals, E. (2000)	Performative inquiry;	Drama as an instructional	Twenty-eight: twenty-six	Our narratives influence how we

	journaling; video	technique for the English as a Second Language (ESL) learner	grade five and six students; teacher; author	understand and learn; our physical experiences, our stories and our ways of understanding are integrally intertwined
Miller, L.A. (2002)	Narrative case study	Exploring the experiences of young women participating in a public art performance project	Ten: seven women and three local organizers	Art educators should provide learning environments where learners/ participants can find their own ideas and voices, and express themselves meaningfully
Norman, R.A. (1999)	Autobiography; poetry, stories	Autobiography as research through performance and reflection	Author; informed by women writers	Demonstrates how some specific strategies for autobiography in education may be employed in the classroom
Penberg, D. (1998)	Multimedia narrative; hyper-texted with text, still and video images, and sound	Representing the educational experience and world views of urban youth	Nine: eight youths and author	Multiple media as a way to evoke experience and create multiple images of youth; situates youth as rich and insightful sources of knowledge
Pryer, A.C. (2002)	Hermeneutics; memoirs, autobiographical writing, visuals	Meditates upon the concept of non/dualistic pedagogy;	Author, informed by literature and personal experiences	Enters less examined non-dualistic pedagogic sites – Zen arts, popular

		erotics of teaching & learning		culture, family, ritual, dis/embodiment as a legacy of childhood sexual abuse
Raspberry, G.W. (1997)	Narrative inquiry; poetry	Learning as an interpretive location for the making of poetry and pedagogy and research	Author, informed by pre-service secondary school teachers	Enacts writing to learn (about writing and teaching and researching); writing as a location to become curious about the performative nature of learning
Springgay, S. (2004)	A/r/tography	Student's body knowledge expressed in creating and interrogating visual art and culture	Sixteen: thirteen secondary students; teacher; pre-service teacher; author	The student's art and their conversations suggest knowledge with, in, and through the body is open, fluid, and formed in relation to other bodies
Thompson, J.K. (2001)	Ethnography; narratives; multi-site case study	How high school students interact with and construct meaning from their experiences with music	Sixty-eight high school students located in six schools in Canada and Britain	Investing adolescent interpretations of music with narrative significance may provoke music educators to consider how music education could be broadened
Toulouse, P.R. (2001)	Lived experiences; poetry; photos	Examines the living teachings of the people of	Author; informed by member's of First Nation	Exemplifies research that is reflexive and respectful of First



		Sagamok First Nation community	community	Nation's protocols beyond the colonial gaze; moves towards recovering indigenous knowledge
Vellani, A.M. (2002)	Narrative and hermeneutical inquiry	Historical narrative journey of a community of "travellers," the Indian Ismailis	Author; informed by cohorts of conversational partners	Intergenerational conversations and stories of experiences reveal moral enablement of practices and virtues that make present a "living tradition"

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## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> A/r/tographical dissertations have been completed at other Canadian and American universities in recent years, A/r/tography has also been cited and used as a methodology by arts researchers in Europe and Australia.

<sup>2</sup> The term arts-based educational research (ABER) originated with Elliot Eisner. During the 1970s and 1980s, Eisner and his graduate students engaged in a wide-range of arts-based research at Stanford. By the late 1980s – early 1990s, the basis of their work provided a rationale for ABER, and through their efforts, arts-based educational research gained credibility within qualitative inquiry.

<sup>3</sup> A listing of key publications, exhibitions and or performances may be found on the a/r/tography website:  
[http://m1.cust.educ.ubc.ca:16080/Artography/a\\_b\\_r.php](http://m1.cust.educ.ubc.ca:16080/Artography/a_b_r.php)

<sup>4</sup> To download a full dissertation from the A/r/tography website may take a few minutes depending on the file size and your internet connection. Dissertations may include images, video and/or audio files; some files are in excess of 19MB.

<sup>5</sup> Although dissertations are public documents available from ProQuest ([http://proquest.com/products\\_umi/dissertations/](http://proquest.com/products_umi/dissertations/)), only dissertations for which we received the author's consent were included on the a/r/tography website.

<sup>6</sup> A/r/tographical work is rendered through the broadly defined concepts of [contiguity](#), [living inquiry](#), [openings](#), [metaphor/metonymy](#), [reverberations](#), and [excess](#) which are enacted and presented/performed when a relational aesthetic inquiry approach is envisioned as embodied understandings and exchanges between art and text, and between and among the broadly conceived identities of artist/researcher/teacher. A/r/tography exists in an interdisciplinary space, the 'unnamed something' or 'without', which constitutes a new field of study for our community of practice. This condition of 'without' illustrates the shaping of inquiry imbued with discomfort and struggle opening up new understandings.

It is important to note that researchers do not delimit a/r/tography by restricting interpretations of identities, or the application of diverse and multiple theoretical frameworks to the concepts. We recognize that a/r/tography is susceptible to critique from more traditional perspectives in the academy because of this openness, but this flexibility may be viewed as a core strength of a/r/tography, allowing a/r/tographers to draw upon the strengths of multiple fields of study.