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Teaching Teacher Candidates About Social Transformations Through Arts and Place:

"Wait, but What Does It Have to Do With Me as a Teacher?"

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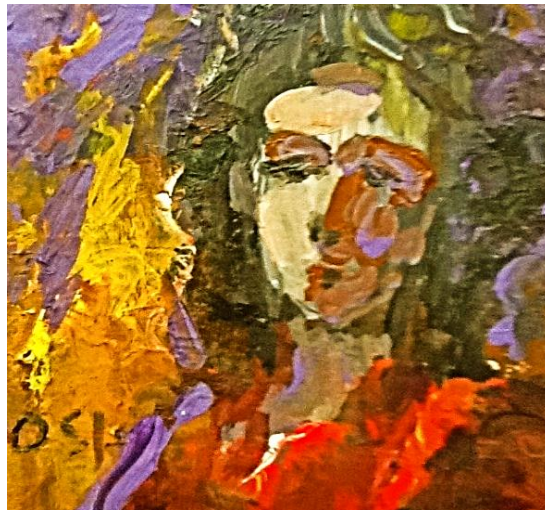
Introduction and Context

Figure 1. My self-portrait in acrylic on canvas on paper on board.

In this creative and reflective inquiry, I explore the pedagogical significance of arts-based learning in a Canadian teacher education program with a focus on my students-teacher candidates' learning experiences. This study intends to inspire educators and the public to understand the intrinsic value of arts in teacher education as well as to practically implement arts-based pedagogies that encourage preservice teachers to creatively grow as future teachers who are reflective, innovative, inclusive, and improvisational in the classroom. In addition, this inquiry maps out some of the benefits of using arts-based pedagogies in a compulsory teacher

education course for all future teachers. These benefits include self-creation or sculpting self-experience, creative personal growth or conscientization, and social engagement.

Currently, there is a gap in the literature on teacher education that does not critically center students' lived experiences in a context of a compulsory teacher education course in arts-based pedagogies of social transformation. It remains unclear how arts inform, transform, and develop future teachers, who do not consider and do not want to consider themselves as artists, in their pedagogical becoming (Gouzouasis, Irwin, Miles, & Gordon, 2013). Moreover, future teachers in general and future science teachers in particular seem to resist arts in their education because they do not see the relevance of arts in schooling and in science (Grauer, 1998; Hirsch, 2010, 2011; Eisner, 2002; Shugurova, in process). This misconception dominates students' discourses without any serious attention as to why they hold these assumptions, beliefs, and values. The literature review addressed in the following paragraphs and real-life experiences of teacher educators and preservice teachers discussed in this study reveal this gap, which, in my view, should be researched and approached from a constructionist grounded theory lens that focuses on a diversity of students' experiences in their complex realities and subjectivities.

In the context of this study, I define arts in a constructivist framework as an aesthetic engagement with diverse pedagogical ideas and experiences, specifically place-based experiences, which inspire students to author their creative sense of self and education (Dewey, 1934/2005; Greene, 1977, 1995; Matusov, 2017; Tuan, 2004). For Tuan (2004), place has an imaginative and meditative nature of being present in the changing world. In this view, artwork and place are the same. Education, in this view, is life itself because "the very process of living together educates" (Dewey, 1916/2001, p. 6). Arts-based learning in teacher education is a praxis of social transformations that allows students to author themselves as the creative meaning makers of their worlds through places (Freire, 1968/1973). Greene (1997) asserts that "the process of making meaning […] has much to do with the shaping of identity, the development of a sense of agency, and a commitment to a certain mode of praxis" (p. 394). The concept of praxis signifies a learning to learn activity which does not have a predetermined goal or an end to be achieved or fulfilled because it is "defined and unfolding in the activity itself" (Matusov, 2017, p. 98). In this view, artwork, poem, story, walk, meditation, and any other aesthetic experiences are the embodiment of praxis (Matusov, 2017; Wartofsky, 1979). Wartofsky (1979) states: "The creation and appreciation of art—the very activity or praxis of art—is a praxis which comes to know itself, i.e., which takes itself as its own object; and that this very activity is a fundamental mode of human self-knowledge" (p. 357). This constructivist vision of praxis enables students to perceive themselves and their future students as capable of authorial agency of meaning making (Matusov, 2011, 2017; Matusov et al., 2016). Matusov, Smith, Soslau, Marjanovic-Shane, and von Duyke (2016) assert that authorial agency "emphasizes the unpredictable, improvisational, eventful, dialogic, personal, relational, transcending, and ontological nature of education. The authorial agency of the student and of the teacher are valued and recognized by all participants as the primary goal of education" (p. 162). This agency honors students' experiences, as they become the creative authors of their education. The concept of self-authorship of learning place is a generative process that is grounded in students' personal ways of knowing and situated forms of knowledge. These ways of knowing can generally be summarized as *phronesis* or a virtuous reasoning because it is "embodied in and defines the person as the person authors him/herself in the process of phronêsis, while taking responsibility for it. The result of phronêsis is not

necessarily new knowledge that can exist outside of the person and can be used by other people, but a new person who can perceive reality differently" (Matusov, 2017, p. 106).

Hence, praxis is a creative activity that is fundamentally transformative because it allows people to examine their own values and their self-concept. Thus, place becomes an experiential context of creative learning because it is "the immediate environment of [the] lived body" (Casey, 2001, p. 683). The sense of immediacy allows learners to feel rooted in the particular environment as well as to experience the intimate sense of interconnectedness with others. This generative process of learning is artistic because students begin to see through places, and this way of seeing unveils the unseen perspectives and multiple views (Shugurova, 2017, p. 286). Freire (1997) eloquently explains:

> My childhood backyard has been unveiling itself to many other spaces—spaces that are not necessarily other yards. Spaces where this man of today sees the child of yesterday in himself and learns to see better what he had seen before. To see again what had already been seen implies seeing angles that were not perceived before. (p. 39)

As the generative, visual process, arts-based learning often produces a situated form of knowledge. Haraway (1988) explains that situated knowledge is always particular, place-based, and is never universal and, therefore, it allows students and teachers to co-construct their learning, teaching, and knowing experiences in and through an egalitarian context. This knowledge emerges from within relationships and relational inquiries that are not bound by a power of domination over students (Haraway, 1988, p. 585). Hence, praxis as an activity creates a context of multiple possibilities for students' expression that usually include two forms of students' products: "1) the student's responsive authorship; 2) the student self-generated authorship" (Matusov et al., 2016, p. 171). The first authorship emerges in response to the course outcomes and teacher's assignment. The second authorship emerges in response to the self-created ideas, places, and products that may be outside of the course scope. Both forms embody the authorial praxis that are equally important in arts-based education; however, the second seems to generate more excitement, fun, collaboration, and socially meaningful engagement among students.

It is from these perspectives that I teach teacher candidates about the pedagogical significance of arts-based learning through place and social transformation in their future classrooms and in the living world. My courses are usually co-constructed with students and follow a five-fold structure that is meant to provide a set of divergent entry points for all intelligences and self-generated interests (e.g., multiple intelligence; Gardner, 1983): 1) students are introduced into a transdisciplinary realm of theoretical foundations of arts-based education; 2) students self-organize in small learning communities to accomplish their group projects with a focus on their self-authored practical implications of the course concepts and methods; 3) we continue our collective dialogue about arts across the learning landscape (e.g., reflective teaching and arts-based assessment) with various activities that help students develop their creativity through divergent thinking, reflection, and emotional intelligence; 4) we then discuss the big picture of arts as a domain of social transformation that lets students question their taken-for-granted assumptions about the nature of compulsory/national schooling in the global world; 5) we then contest the meaning of praxis and students share their praxis projects in the context of art

installation, including the art of spoken word, visual presentations, aesthetic meditations, and performance. The transdisciplinary realm is often shaped by critical pedagogy, constructivism, humanism, a/r/tography, unschooling, and feminism. The term "transdisciplinary" suggests that there is a problem-based meeting ground of different theories and their concepts/methods (Leavy, 2016), which in my course is the students' question about why they have to learn about arts and its vague idea of social transformation.

Usually, we begin to explore why arts-based learning is important for teachers with the help of Maxine Greene, Paulo Freire, John Dewey, John Holt, bell hooks, Eisner, Leggo, and others. Also, I interweave some of the ideas from art history to highlight how individual artists have attempted to become change agents through their personal authorship of social relations, cultural meanings, identities, and places. I ground this discussion in Greene's (1995) concept of wide-awakening as social transformation and change that we view through modern art movement. Wide-awakening is, ultimately, "the creation of the self" through reflectiveness that arts embody in their activities (p. 121). Further, this creation is precisely about self-authorship or an imaginative process of becoming an author of one's place or life-world (Greene, 1995, 1988). In this view, modern art movement illustrates what it means to become an author through visual art and its performative, sculpturing, poetic, and other modes of expression. We broadly define arts as one's creative authorship of ideas, visions, and self that has its own autonomy and agency without any imposed limitations (Shugurova, 2017; Stangos, 1994). We engage in a visual dialogue that is inspired by fauvism, expressionism, cubism, abstract expressionism, dada, and conceptual art. This dialogue is often met with resistance to art history in general and to modern art movements in particular. Students debate whether they should even consider Picasso's work as a pedagogical context in their math classes, and whether Van Gogh truly helps students understand gravitational forces and turbulence. Future science teachers do not necessarily see math in art, physics in Pollock's paintings, theory of light in Fauvism, and theory of sound in Orphism. They question me and my slides. They question Paulo Freire and his critique of banking form because banking has been normalized in our lives and naturalized in our education. Often at the end of these intense dialogues, we go back to Freire (1968/1973) and focus on his idea of reality as a creative process in transformation. Further, we discuss the importance of reflective teaching, multimodal art-based assessment, and broader issues in arts integration as well as other aspects of our co-constructed, democratic structure.

Research Question

However, my students continue to interrogate me and themselves, "What does it have to do with me as a teacher?" Instead of answering their unanswerable question, I would like to creatively and constructively explore it in depth with a focus on the students' learning experiences, as they have expressed them to me through their self-authored assignments, such as reflections, conversations, self-image artistic representation, and praxis projects. I believe that these explorations will help many future teachers, teacher educators, and programs to enhance their and their students' educational experiences.

Methodology

In order to explore my question in depth, I decided to conceptually engage a constructionist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006, 2008) because it helps me feature the students' lived experiences in their own situated contexts of meanings, meaning making, stories, voices, silence,

and dialogues. Charmaz (2008) found that constructionist grounded theory explores questions about *what* and *how* from the participants' viewpoints and their situated contexts. She wrote, "Constructionists see participants' views and voices as integral to the analysis—and its presentation" (Charmaz, 2008, p. 402). In this view, my reflective analysis is focused on subjective realities and personal interpretations. Hence, knowledge construction is an interpretive process that honors and respects student evolving understandings.

First, I sought to explore the student's self-authored definitions of being and becoming a teacher in order to better understand their personal experience. I searched for their understanding of the question, "What does it mean to be and to become a teacher?" Second, I explored their learning in my class with a focus on their personal and pedagogical connections with a diversity of arts-based experiences of teaching, learning, and becoming. These explorations meant to help me answer the main question of my praxis, "What do arts have to do with me as a teacher?" Constructionist grounded theory allows researchers begin with open-ended, ambiguous questions that intentionally allow a multiplicity of meanings to emerge and to be constructed from within the data (Sbaraini, Carter, Evans, & Blinkhorn, 2011).

In doing so, I have gathered multiple sources of evidence (i.e., secondary data sources) of their learning and self-expression, including their reflections, praxis paper/project assignment, and self-assessment. In addition, I have utilized my reflective teaching journal with my visual poetics, memos, course outline, assignments, handouts, and PowerPoint presentations as the additional data and documented evidence of the course content and structure. These multiple sources of evidence were anonymized and, then, uploaded and coded in the ATLAS qualitative data analysis software. In addition, I have utilized purposeful sampling in order to gain a deep understanding of student learning experience with a focus on "the information rich cases from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance" (Patton, 2015, p. 264). I chose two students' assignments, such as self-image, reflection, self-assessment, and praxis with an intent to answer the research question (i.e., what arts have to do with teachers and social transformation). In doing so, I also sought to explore the emergent questions from the data, such as the generative meaning of becoming an effective teacher through diverse arts-based contexts of teacher education. This exploration is not meant to be a generalization but a creative reflection on learning and teaching through arts and social transformations.

Thus, data analysis is an iterative and cyclic process. It began with an initial coding that was focused on the learners' voices, such as utterances, expressions, and meanings. The purpose of this stage was to analytically determine what "the data are about" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 43). At this stage, I rendered my analytic interpretation of the situated findings in the data with the help of an abstract essence of their key meanings. As suggested by Charmaz (2006), I wondered about the theoretical categories that my abstract interpretations may indicate (p. 45). These codes are focused on processes or actions and are represented with gerunds and verbs (Charmaz, 2006, 2008). Hence, the emphasis is on the data and not on any external theoretical framework. The second stage of coding is selective or focused coding, during which I develop categories by studying the data (Charmaz, 2006). At this stage, I have focused not only on the student's tacit meanings, but also on my own assumptions and beliefs in the context of our classroom. Further, I utilized *constant comparative method* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) that allowed me to compare different students' opinions, views, expressions, and meanings, as well as include my own ideas,

intuitions, and course content within these comparisons. At this stage, I tried to suspend my judgements and understand student's self-authored meanings (Charmaz, 2006). In doing so, I captured the essential words, terms, and jargon that students use to describe and express their experiences and meaning making through arts. Then, I used axial coding in order to put all pieces together in a coherent whole, so that I can understand the reassembled picture or the collective collage of meanings (Charmaz, 2006). During this process, I also engaged the literature review on arts-based methods and concepts in teacher education programs in order to build a theoretical support of my new generative understandings. I created memos to explain the reassembled categories with the help of the literature base. Last but not least, theoretical coding was used to synthesize the reassembled conceptual categories and the literature. This stage was more focused on my reflective understanding of the conceptual connections between the categories and their interrelationships (Glaser, 1978).

Further, data representation is through a poetic narrative because it embodies the student's sense of creative authorship and meaning making in the course. Also, I am a poetess and, therefore, it is natural for me to synthesize findings in a poetic whole without comprising any contextual and situated significance (Shugurova, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2018, in press). Poetic narrative representation means that I weave the categories as the generative themes and poetically render them with the help of the literature and data. In doing so, I center the students' experience by highlighting their voice in their authorial words, images, and texts (Glesne, 1997). Hence, my data analysis is a hybrid between the layers of art and science, as it "represents conventionally [i.e., inductively] derived findings" (Ellingson, 2009, p. 60). These *layered accounts* juxtapose poetry and expository prose by connecting "personal experiences to theory, research" (Ellingson, 2009, p. 61). Through these layers of meanings, I become a learner and poetically weave my constructive and creative understanding from within the data synthesis.

Findings and Discussion

Questioning Compelled Becoming: Sculpting Self

When the students asked their burning question, "What does art have to do with me as a teacher," they immediately thought of another fiery sub-question "What does it mean to be and become an effective teacher?" The first question of bewilderment raised another question of their becoming. Gouzouasis, Irwin, Miles, and Gordon (2013) state that *becoming* in teacher education has a rhizomatic nature of multiple directions that students constantly engage in their living inquires or their "commitment to an embodied engagement with the world that often includes creative forms of interpretation and representation" (p. 3). To students, the multidirectional inquiry was dialogic, through which they attempted to grasp the intrinsic value of arts in education. It was dialogic insofar as the students could question their own questions and to pose new, emergent questions through the old questions. Bakhtin (1986) explains: "If an answer does not give rise to a new question from itself, it falls out of the dialogue" (p. 168). Specifically, for the student-participant, this dialogue was reflective and intentional with the purpose to "generate thoughtfulness in my role as a student though I do sense that my many of my colleagues wish I would be silent. Because the 'let's just get this over with' seems a prevailing sentiment." In questioning themselves, they formed, transformed, shattered, negotiated, and created a novel, albeit imposed, value of arts and social transformations. Further, their contested understanding of compulsory becoming raised another question about attendance which was essential in the

program. Since they had to take the course, the question of becoming was out of any meaningful context. For example, the student wrote in his reflection:

> if attendance (…perhaps in any course) was not compelled by academic punishment, and was wholly optional, who would still attend and why? I predict that attendance would plummet and that this would almost necessarily suggest a lack of meaning, a symptom of Frankl's "existential vacuum"

Hence, the student's ongoing reflections and dialogues revolved around these emergent questions and their elusive meanings of becoming in the existential vacuum, which the student defined as the absence of self-created learning experience and, consequently, valuable meaning and relevant meaning making. For Frankl (1946/2006), existential vacuum makes people unaware of themselves as the creative beings and authors who are capable of world making and social transformations. Vacuum makes no sense because instincts are no longer active in the human consciousness, and traditions are no longer relevant either. Further, people do not know what they want, for they have two choices at hand: conform the mass behavior (i.e., conformism) or follow the wishes of others (i.e., totalitarianism; Frankl, 1946/2006). The dialogic nature of my course has led them out of the existential vacuum. They did not have to fall into the trap of conformism or totalitarianism; they simply could resist and create their meanings of their own becoming.

After two classes and after they have read Paulo Freire's (1968/1973), it became clear that the question of being a teacher is about one's own becoming through resistance and dialogue, not through commitment as Irwin (2008) suggests. Any commitment is either conformism or totalitarianism, since it is compelled by the imposed requirements of the program and the structure of teacher education. In the context of compulsory attendance, students cannot develop any meaningful commitment because they do not want to follow the illusion of their agency and choice. Further, commitments do not lead to transformations because, again, they are imposed by the external structures and systems of power and authority that render students' voices and creative agencies as null on their individual basis.

Precisely, becoming cannot be made compulsory in education, and students should not be made committed because becoming is intrinsically a transformative process. Freire (1968/1973) claims that becoming is dialogic, which means that it is a free encounter between individuals that is also mediated by the world (p. 61). If the encounter becomes forced or compelled through a structure of discipline or punishment, it becomes oppressive and compulsory because students' will is undermined (Holt, 1969, 1972). This means that future teachers should not necessarily learn how to fit into the existing system of compulsory education, but how to transform it in order for them and their students to become the authors of their education and life. Irwin (2013) explains that becoming pedagogical engages one's subjectivity, yet this concept of subjectivity is not predetermined or static because it is "multidimensional, collective, and plural" (p. 200). However, the students-participants contested this concept of plural subjectivity and thought that becoming a teacher is not about this sense of elusive, even ghost-like *obligatory* subjectivity, but about one's meaningful authorship of meaning and value, including the social values of democratic participation and debate. The student wrote and I poetically represented his thought,

Obligatory Dewey
Careful, consequences
Consider the contexts
Enter the dream again,
Be transitive, sub-conscious, inhuman,
Teacher-self.
Art works out a person
teacher-self, teacher-student, student-self
student-student, student, student…
is art confession?
Is art mining?
Pipelines of expressive selves
Bare, exposed, enforced.
Is art a memoir of something
Which is yet to be revealed,
Hidden at heart, concealed
In silence, the unforgotten
Dreams, not to make them true,
But to come to truth, to art in you.

Becoming a teacher is about an individual and collective realization and actualization of the self in all her/his/their self-authored subjectivities that do not emerge out of commitments to the existential vacuum of compelled attendance and compulsory schooling. Hence, the students realized that the program teaches them about the importance of compulsory attendance and status quo, which is presented as becoming a teacher. However, arts help students to create a sense of teacher-self through the concept of wide-awakening (Greene, 1995). This teacher-self resists her or his own dehumanization because s/he resists the compulsory order of their teacher education. This teacher chooses not to become the sub-conscious follower of inhumane schooling. Greene wrote that wide-awakening means people's realization of their ontological freedom, which "is to move others to elevate their lives by the 'conscious endeavor,' to arouse others to discover—each in his or her own terms—what it would mean to 'live deliberately'" (p. 120). As a part of my course development, students not only had to read Paulo Freire and Maxine Greene, but also to practice and live the concept of wide-awakening through various activities, such as an environmental, emergent sculpture (Crowell & Reid-Marr, 2013). The inspirational idea behind this activity was to "see a world in a grain of sand and a heaven in a wild flower, hold infinity in the palm of your hand, and eternity in one hour" (Blake as cited in Wilber, 1977/2002, p. 60). Through this activity, they could find either ready-made objects (e.g., Duchamp's idea of found art) or create their own organic ideas/sculptures for the purposes of aesthetic experiences, so that they can not only see the world but also be *with* the world (Freire, 1968/1973).

Wide-awakening is about one's mindful attention to the world. The sculpture activity turned into an imaginative journey of metaphoric thinking and writing about its emergent meanings. Further, this sense of sculpting place and self-helped them to clearly understand their own values and make them visible through metaphors. When they wondered why they have to see the world around them as a sculpture, they began to wonder about their taken-for-granted assumptions that are often naturalized. For example, the student created the image of organic sculpture as a hybrid

between soil, free found garbage, and word entitled "Value" (Figure 2). The hybrid of waste and value seemed to puzzle the student and, paradoxically, inspired them to contemplate the meaning not only of this activity, but also of valuable and meaningful learning in and with the world. The amount of free-floating garbage in the presence of neatly organized garbage bins unveiled our accustomed perceptions of the mediated world in the existential vacuum. In the description of this image, the student dialogically expressed his thought that I poetically rendered and represent below.

> Is value something buried, hidden,
> Something we uncover to be written?
> Does the trash have more value than dirt, leaves?
> We know that soil refers to earth, growth, lives.
> We know that it can become soiled as litter, matter in waste site.
> In this staged, compelled collocation, there can be no Nature in sight.
> Žižek was right…

Figure 2. Organic sculpture image entitled "Value" amidst garbage.

Sculpting self from the sense of existential vacuum and the absence of nature with a capital N turned out to be a messy activity of unlearning without any predetermined goal and purpose in mind. This state of being free from the external expectations is the prerequisite to creative learning and becoming (Greene, 1988; Hermanson, 2009; Holt, 1972). The organic sculpting act brought forth the concept of situated knowledge and freedom. For the student, nature with the capital N ceased to exist. Interestingly, Žižek affirms that our knowledge construction should begin with the absence of meaning in our daily lives, such as a material and metaphoric place of trash and its existential vacuum of becoming. It is absent because we tend to ignore it and take-for-granted without dialogues. There is no Nature because we have commodified and profited from it in our self-image and self-centric desires (Žižek, 2016). Understanding the nature of unseen value, in fact, helped the student to be more grounded in various places they encounter and inhabit in the world. They realized that they see the world through the lens of self and value and, consequently, they create it and create themselves.

Then, the realization of trash and absence of Nature may be defined as freedom, or rather a situated freedom. Greene (1988) explains that situated freedom is one's ability to perceive a dynamic situation and to define it. Drawing on Taylor (1985), Greene writes about freedom as being free from purpose and external obstacles, including compulsory attendance and schooling. This concept of situated freedom is a deeply grounded ontological idea of value-based education and life that reflects Freire's (1968/1973) view of dialogic learning as a practice of social transformation and humanization. Greene (1988) goes on to say, "It is a matter of affirming human beings as subjects of decisions rather than objects, of involving men and women in the striving toward their own completion—an activity that can never end" (p. 8). In this ontological context, organic sculpture activity helps learners to understand a reality of their situated freedom and a way of being with the world of unseen and trashed nature in the existential vacuum of their world. Hence, this sense of freedom is not a noun, it is an act, verb, and gerund of self-creation.

As I was reading and marking their responses, I also tried to connect with the students' emergent understandings of themselves, their values, and their seen/unseen worlds through the organic sculpture activity. I noticed that all of them seem to envision themselves as teachers in a context of place that holds personal meanings to them. These places are different: their backyards, daily walks through campus, trash, and their practicum schools. The metaphor of knowing one's backyard seemed to be directly connected to their emerging concept of wide-awakening out of the imposed attendance and compelled becoming through commitments. One student explained that for him, wide-awakening was about the disruption of the ordinary perception and may be defined as an altered state of consciousness, which "is more interesting than SCOs [i.e., governmental specific curriculum outcomes]." It seems to be more interesting because it does not create a norm of ideas, identities, values, and knowledge systems; wide awakening troubles and contests these norms. Hence, it is more interesting. Wide-awakening is also interesting because it engages the mind with curiosity, freedom, weird ideas, twists, turns. Many students wondered how wide-awakening and sculpting actually helps them develop themselves as teachers. With these wondrous questions, they began to see various angles of their sculptures and themselves, changing perspectives, shifting lenses, and viewpoints. Then, they read Leggo (2005) who also found that his preservice teachers often question the idea of seeing the backyard and claim to have a set of instrumental strategies to take away with them. He wrote, "I wonder if they see the teacher in the image of a comic book hero with a utility belt replete with all the tools they will need for every contingency and emergency […] my main response is to encourage student-teachers to know themselves as poets, to live creatively in the pedagogic world of students and teachers" (p. 177). Further, Leggo (2005) suggests that poetic living means exactly this: knowing the backyard (p. 182). In fact, backyards provide them with a concrete place for their awakening. This connection has shifted their initial searches for immediate answers, recipes, and products to be conformed to or consumed to a living process of paying full attention to life. This perception reflected some of the students' ideas that their artistic self-creation has to be situated in the real world. Hence, the pedagogical significance of wide-awakening is not only to stop our daily routine, banal activities, and mundane perceptions, but also to elevate our pedagogies to the experience of the real world. In doing so, we (i.e., teachers and students) develop a conscious engagement with the world and become its active co-creators. The real and imaginative world come together.

Through self-creations, students have become more awakened to their own experience of metaphoric imagination. For Greene (1995), imagination means awakening to "the unseen, unheard, and unexpected" (p. 28). The awakening begins with the margins of people's awareness and those forgotten, suppressed places of their lives that are underneath the dominant rational consciousness. The margin is the oppressed place of being that is left abandoned and unattended in schools and in society. The artistic imagination uncovers these places, "so that we can enable our students to live within the arts, making clearings and spaces for themselves" (Greene, 1995, p. 135). Here, imagination is not necessarily concerned with the real world that exists outside of ourselves. As a living inquiry, imagination creates "a place for the teacher candidate to learn how to observe, question, analyze, and interpret" their worlds (Irwin, 2013, p. 203). In this way, imagination is the real world that emerges through the artistic act of wide-awakening to the sculpting self in relationships and in being with the world.

Self-Creation as Conscientization
The idea of self-creation has not only inspired students, but also dialogically puzzled them. To them, wide-awakening intrinsically emerges from passion. If arts are not their passions, then they struggle. However, resistance persists due to the fact that wide-awakening still feels imposed, compelled. Wide-awakening cannot be compelled because it *organically* comes from within the depths of the inner self. Further, wide-awakening and self-creation imply not only intrinsic motivation, but also will. Will was defined by the student as an act of volition, agency, and voice. Ricci and Pritscher (2015) explain that "willed learning is based in fascination, trust, respect, and care. Fascination and trust are what allow for an internal motivation to flourish" (p. 2). Yet, again they could not necessarily enact their will because of the compulsory nature of their education and their future schooling. For example, the student poetically reflected in this prose,

> *I think teacher-education has an unsavoury reputation, unlike law and medicine. The field is in the throes of an identity crisis. The new student-not-teacher centered, heart-not-head based "paradigm" in education may feel, to young pragmatic professionals entering a new field, informed by a diluted popular philosophy indebted to Sesame Street and Oprah Winfrey. Repeatedly telling a group of young people to be (and to imply they need to become) compassionate, reflective, open-hearted, etc. is to suggest that they are none of these things. Moreover, it is not made clear how or why this is essential teacher education, that we are undergoing a character re-education to become character re-educators of people even younger than us. Many are, perhaps rightfully, uncomfortable with this new paradigm. Over and over we are told that teaching is more about 'who you are' -- but no evidence is given.*

> *Privately (up to now, I suppose) I've chalked this up to the problem of uninterrogated assumptions in education, perhaps stemming from the cultish worship of Dewey and Freire; as if educational insights come in these two varieties of a single flavour that seems increasingly antiquated. The unquestioned and seemingly unquestionable assumption of the field is that student-centered is good and teacher-centered is bad, but not a single argument is advanced in support of this claim. Indeed, what argument needs to be made in the*

institutionalization of love and compassion? But not a single one of us, as I see it, has signed up to be a missionary.

Going back to your question, having heard it posed several times, is the group largely unengaged and uninterested, in general? The prevailing sentiment only whispered by the students is that… we are all just here to get a piece of paper. So, if you sense that something is missing, it probably is. But, the good news is, it's not you or your course -- it's not personal i.e. specific to you or your work. It's us. In one way, we are manifestations of a capitalistic moment dominated by instrumental reason, people don't see art social transformation as practical or useful. My classmates seem to align with the general population i.e. this is not a rare collection of outliers who see a need to transform the social through art/s. In fact, the cluster of math and science students could suggest the possibility that this group is even less interested than a random sampling of the population. And no one chose this course, we don't have any choice in coursework -- and so strictly speaking no one is in your course through an act of volition. This is surely an aggravating factor in the general attitude: we are given lectures that tell us how bad lecturing is, and given no choice in the courses that tell us the importance of choice, have no democratic say while decisions are endlessly made for us.

Brass tacks: Insofar as your "job" is to show people who don't care or aren't interested in the topic how to use art in a teaching practice that is somehow super-transactional and thus transformational (of self and society) ... of course the audience's reluctance and not-having-bought-in will lead you to believe "it's not going well." The real tragedy is…that no one is really acting these frustrations, likely sensing the potentially explosive consequences of activism will change nothing, save the status of one's own good standing or even registration. And so, we are quietistic and reserved, withholding frustrations about the meaninglessness and inefficacy of our own education. Why is that a significant point? When it comes to transformative change-agential activists, surely it is not us... these are not authors of even mild, local transformation who would rebel against what they deem pointless, despite having invested time and money and thus are powerful stakeholders... And so we are not candidates in becoming transformers of society, though it is a story we like to be told about ourselves and in some moment we believe about ourselves, in bad faith.

Interestingly, this reflection is an example of wide-awakening. By the virtue of this critical self-awareness, the student became resistant and reflective. Through these moments of resistance, students learn the pedagogical significance of becoming reflective teachers, because effective teachers are reflective teachers. This is one of the experiences of wide-awakening because students begin to understand the nature of their situated reality. This awareness helps them to transform themselves and their programs, pedagogies, and societies by understanding the social pattern of relations that shape education and schooling in the compulsory way.

It follows that wide-awakening organically becomes *conscientization,* which means that it is the awakening of critical awareness and reflection through dialogue and place (Freire, 1968/1973;

2000). Specifically, conscientization is the demythologization of false consciousness and *its real* world. Freire (1970/2000) asserts: "Conscientization is more than a simple *prise de conscience*. While it implies overcoming 'false consciousness,' overcoming that is a semi-intransitive or naïve transitive state of consciousness, it implies further the critical insertion of the conscienticized person into a demythologizing reality" (p. 59). Thus, the student begins to critically reflect on their own situated freedom. Wide-awakening helps them to turn their visions within themselves in search for their passion, truth, and will. This is how arts engage teacher candidates in self-creation: through their resistance to their own false consciousness and false reality. In a non-democratic society, students do not even know that they are compelled to do certain things, they accept everything as a norm or Nature; they take things for granted; they do not write reflections and become reflective (Shugurova, in press). I have also made a connection with Marx's (1867) discovery that factory workers are so immersed in their oppression that they do not even understand that they are oppressed; they have internalized and become it. Hence, our dialogue about arts has helped them to reflect on the world through the lens of self-creation and possibilities of a different world, in which students act on the basis of their will, love, passion, compassion, and other creative impulses; rather than through the compelled attendance and studies.

Social Engagement

We create and build community
Being in a circle
Around a fire
Singing
It is powerful
We might say
it has deep resonance
at the root-core
of collective experience
premodern self,
the individual is modern cogito,
the i-self of Descartes
And so, however, uncomfortable it may make
Or however much you disagree
We re-engage
In circles
With fires
In song and dances
We join with the ancestral
With the ancient memory
With death, with all life
That came before
An ego-loss in becoming
Or at least in making,
in thought.

(Student's thought in my free verse representation)

Arts are not only the embodiments of students' self-creations, but also act as the social engagement or community building in the classroom. According to Dewey, art is an experience because it is an act of expression (1934/2005). He then cites Samuel Alexander with his statement about the poetic expression that illustrates this idea, "The artist's work proceeds not from a finished imaginative experience to which the work of art corresponds, but from passionate excitement about the subject matter. . . . The poet's poem is wrung from him by the subject which excites him" (p. 67). Arts seem to create an inclusive (i.e., experiential) context where diverse students with divergent interests find personal meanings and connections, critical confessions, and reflections because they *become* passionately excited about doing things in the class *with* their peers. The term "engagement" here signifies exactly the passion to be creative about a subject or a concept through artistic production.

However, students emphasized that their engagement was more meaningful to them because they could work together in their small learning communities. Therefore, arts generate not just an experiential engagement, but a social engagement. Katz (2012) claims that social engagement means social inclusion, which takes place when all students can participate in a learning situation on an equal basis and with a sense of belonging. This participation is often formed on the basis of partnership and friendship. Students learned that arts engage students through exciting hands-on activities, through which all can participate. Further, these acts of social engagements proved to them that even science is all about discovery and imagination, collaboration and cooperation, mystery and nature.

To students, social engagement happens when a teacher can change the learning dynamic from the center of the classroom toward the students' tables and their learning communities. In doing so, students become the teachers of themselves because they "learn through the process." Likewise, Hattie (2009) states that "when students become teachers of others, they learn as much as those they are teaching. When they have some control or autonomy over this teaching, the effects are higher" (p. 187). This shows that social engagement is a collective self-creation. Hence, social engagement enhances their academic engagement because students can develop personal connections with each other in small groups through diverse forms of arts.

Conclusion as Reflection

To summarize the main aforementioned points, arts help students to resist the compulsory nature of education and, in doing so, to imagine themselves as teachers in a democratic society as well as explore their passion, will, interest, place, and the world. The questions about whether arts have anything to do with education emerges from the compelled nature of public schooling. However, this question enables all teacher candidates to question the dominant status quo. In doing so, future teachers, who do not understand why they have to study arts, become passionately and dialogically creative about a possibility of difference, social engagement, and inclusive sense of community. They become intensely aware of the concept of situated, pedagogical freedom as the ontological context of learning and authorial agency. Their reflections and self-creations have shifted an oppressive, or banking, concept of education from the teacher-centered compulsory narrative to a learner-centered context of social engagement in a fun climate of learning communities.

This study suggests that it is important for all teacher education programs to have arts-based courses as electives, rather than compelled courses, so that all students can have a choice to enact their interest and will in learning about the intrinsic value of arts as a democratic context of socially engaging and inclusive education. When arts are externally imposed by program requirements, they may become a dreadful experience of conformism, totalitarianism, and resistance. In this scenario, students feel reluctant to create anything and feel disengaged. Also, it is equally important to introduce arts-based pedagogy across their learning landscape in teacher education, so that students can have arts as one of the available choices of their self-authorship and creations anytime.

All in all, future science teachers are generally correct that an arts-based teacher education course does not provide any instrumental strategies and predetermined recipes of social transformations and that there is no real-life application in it. Likewise, Donoghue asserts that "it is true enough that the arts will not cure a toothache [or] help very much in surmounting the pressures placed on us by the material world. . . . But in another way, there are really momentous, because they provide spaces in which we can live in total freedom" (as cited in Greene, 1995, p. 134). In fact, there is no real world in an arts course because it exists in a constant process of transformations, in becoming real only to appear in our imagination. Therefore, arts take education out of its taken-for-granted real-world applications and reframe it in a different world (Danto, 1981). This world is always in becoming and is unfinished because it signifies that we, as human beings, are conscious of our multiple possibilities of self-creation (Greene, 1977; Freire, 1968/1973). Freire (1968/1973) wrote that we are all "beings in the process of becoming [emphasis in original]—as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality" (Freire, 1968/1973, p. 72). As an artist and educator, I am also a learner from my students and the world. Together, we learn through our artistic resistance to the compulsory nature of public schooling and teacher education. To me, teaching becomes wide-awakening to students' suffering and resistance that enables us to democratically imagine a different world, where future teachers and learners can co-construct their education willfully and naturally. Thus, arts do not instruct, they inspire and encourage all students to find a place of self, reflection, and social engagement of ontological freedom in being with the living world.

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