

**A Narrative Inquiry into the Experiences of Teaching Artists in
Community-Based Practice**

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Abstract

This research inquired into the experience of identity making of teaching artists over time and in relation to a community-based practice. The methodology was a narrative inquiry. Experiences of belonging and agency as they relate to identity making were explored. Three teaching artists working in community-based practices were interviewed in a non structured conversational format, which consisted of four meetings with each participant occurring over a period of several months. Temporality, place, and social context were considered throughout the research. Belonging was explored in relation to such experiences as validation, coherence, and negotiating between different communities of practice. Agency was explored in relation to meaning making, imagination, the challenges of the creative process, and the landscape of the art studio. The element of freedom in the community-based teaching practice of the participants was considered with the experience of vulnerability that ran alongside. Encouraging others through care in teaching was found to be a significant experience for the participants. The shaping of their agency in teaching was supported by a sense of belonging. Seeking a greater sense of belonging was in and of itself an agentic act by the participants. Experiences of belonging and agency were linked to and supported by the participants' artist practice.

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Chapter One:

Narrative Beginnings

Art Experiences in Community

As I begin my research journey, I reflect back on one of the outreach visits I made to a seniors care home. As part of my work at the art museum in the learning and engagement department I often make outreach visits. During these outreach visits I provide art workshops to various community groups and agencies. This particular senior's care home was one I had visited monthly over a number of years.

Upon preparing for this day's workshop I thought back to the previous visits I had made. I remembered the different projects and moments I had shared with the residents. Over the years, I had worked with the seniors introducing different material and techniques. A change had taken place this year. A class of elementary students was coming to join in which would make these workshops an intergenerational art experience.

On this day I began as always by setting out the variety of art supplies I had carried with me from the art museum. I enjoyed this preparation of the space, imagining what would inspire the upcoming group, and lingered in this preparation activity. I allowed myself time to center in the present role, and place. As the seniors began to fill the room, I greeted them taking this time to connect and ease myself into the day's activity. Soon the children arrived singing, as they came down the hall, their joyful faces and energy in turn brightening the faces of the residents.

I began the workshop by framing the project within its intent and offering some strategies on how to work together with the senior seated next to them; then I provided instructions to the whole group on how to use the art materials I brought that day. First, I demonstrated how to get different effects, blend the colors, and construct a desired image. I then moved from table to

table showing the students how they could work together, using a hand over hand strategy when working with a senior with limited mobility, or how to engage the senior in choosing the colors and subject matter. They then worked together to create the image.

The young students were initially nervous and hesitant; and as I moved from group to group providing support, they began to find their way. At different moments during the workshop I pointed out and discussed with the student's adult chaperones the learning that the children were experiencing as I noticed each child finding ways to work with a resident and being creative in their solution finding. At other moments, I gave suggestions to the care staff about how to support the residents in engaging with the art. Although at times initially reluctant or unsure, the seniors often felt proud and were pleasantly surprised by the results of their efforts in the creation of the artwork. They were encouraged by the presence of the students at their table, and often joined in, as though wanting to participate for the benefit of the student with whom they were working. The students relaxed into the process of creating the artwork with their seniors after a time, and I watched and encouraged the connections that were being made between these two groups.

I saw my teaching in a variety of ways in the moments described above: in the formal instructions, but also in the different forms of providing engagement, guidance and modeling. This variety in the type of approach and format of instruction has been my experience with community art education. Sometimes I teach more formally at an art museum itself but often also through its outreach program I work in the community where my teaching can take many different forms and where I engage in different roles. These experiences in my practice have left me open minded and with wonders as to what teaching can look like for artists in community-

based practice, and how they find grounding and connection through shifting and dynamic settings.

In this above example, I was seeing changes in my roles and feeling the attraction of my previous learning, thoughts and wonders about my belonging, and where and how I belonged. The staff at the seniors' care home seemed to view me both as an artist and an educator; and I saw much of what I was doing as having therapeutic components. I was cognisant of my goals as staff of the art museum. Over time, I had begun to see each new workshop within the context of my previous visits to this seniors' home, as my experiences built on one another.

As I remember these outreach workshops organised through the art museum, I see how my sensory experience played an important role both in my preparations and how I engaged with the community groups. As a visual artist myself, my familiarity with art materials gave me confidence. I knew what type of materials would likely be intriguing, challenging and flexible enough for those I taught. In this preparation activity I felt grounded in familiarity and comfort with the art materials. Another source of grounding for me was through my work at the art museum where I had a professional community. Within this community I experienced validation of my "stories to live by," a narrative term for identity, (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999, p.94), as an artist and art educator.

Stories to live by is a narrative term for identity that Clandinin and Connelly (1999) developed. Estefan, Caine, and Clandinin explain this narrative view of identity as being "experiential, as contextual, as embodied, as always in the making" (2016, p.2). In narrative inquiry rather than seeing, identity as being singular or unchanging, research with this methodology is attentive to viewing and representing identity as something that has multiple facets, has a history, and can be reshaped throughout our lives (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999).

I appreciated that through this work, being employed in the education department at the art museum and also in its outreach programs, I had the benefit of working in relationship with others who valued art and had a similar way of knowing and being in the world. I recognised that trust and relationship were important in my work with community groups.

As I reflect back on this time of preparing for my workshop and my interactions with this community group in particular and other groups in general, I am aware of the challenges of attending to the needs and goals of the participants while still attending to the art education goals of the art museum. These goals ranged from social interaction, community engagement, improved health and wellbeing, and the teaching of artistic technique and art history education. Through this work, I was beginning to notice and appreciate the learning gained through attending to these multiple roles and purposes, as I actively sought to understand my own identity. This recognition of the challenges of negotiating roles and purposes within my community-based practice and my growing appreciation for the self-knowledge to be gained through this teaching practice was a large part of my motivation for undertaking this research.

In addition to work as a studio artist such as creating, planning and mounting exhibitions, like many artists, I have found opportunities in teaching roles in the community. Although I have been drawn to work with groups with special needs due to my previous art therapy training and work experience, health care centers and groups catering to marginalized populations are increasingly recognizing the value of the arts. Many artists find opportunities to lead workshops for these special-needs groups. As issues of social justice become more important to our community groups and funding bodies, the availability of community-based work for artists is prevalent. As artists are often called upon for teaching roles with community groups, it is important to reflect on the process of the teaching artists involved in this work. I wonder about

how this work can demand sensitivity and self-awareness and the reflection that is needed into how this impacts the artists themselves as they engage in a community-based practice. Through narrative inquiry, with its attention to experience, I can achieve a better understanding of the learning that occurs for teaching artists in community-based practice, a practice that has a changing nature and where they are required to attend to a variety of purposes.

Through the narrative inquiry approach of this thesis, I sought to understand how teaching art in community settings can be engaged with in a way that is sustainable in terms of the artist's sense of self and identity making, and I sought to show areas where meaning and learning can be enriched for both teaching artist and participant. I also explored the negotiations and transitions involved in this work over time to gain understanding into the process of identity making for teaching artists.

Research Wonders

In a narrative inquiry research puzzles are considered in terms of wonders rather than research problems: "Narrative inquiry carries more of a sense of continual reformulation of an inquiry than it does a sense of problem definition and solution" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.124). Clandinin and Connelly spoke to how allowing for the complexity and layers of an inquiry to be part of the process helps "draw readers into the stories, to lay their own experiences alongside the inquiry, to wonder alongside participants and researchers" (2000, p.173).

In the context of these narrative beginnings *I wonder about the experience of identity making of teaching artist's over time and in relation to a community-based practice*. Subsequent wonders I have are as follows: *how are aesthetic modes of knowing and the act of creating, instrumental in creating a sense of coherence for teaching artists? How can narrative*

understandings of the above wonders be applied to community-based practice in relation to teaching artists?

Chapter Two:

Supporting Literature

Reviewing the Supporting Literature: Teaching Artists in Community-Based Practice

In the context of art education, this chapter looks at an area of this practice and work which occurs in a specific context. This specific context is art education that takes place in the community setting. This chapter considers artists who teach, whom I referred to as teaching artists (Booth 2003). I outlined the concept of the teaching artist as described by Booth. I provided a background context showing that artists who see themselves as teachers and who have considered this as part of their art practice, are a part of a long history. I described this history of the teaching artist in reference to apprenticeship learning. I then placed the teaching artist in relation to their current context in terms of their socio-economic circumstances. The socio-economic situation for teaching artists gave a context for both the challenges and motivations for engaging in this community-based art teaching. I also described part of the current artistic culture as I reviewed postmodern views in art that may impact the participants in this study.

I identified issues of identity that would be likely to impact the experience and practice of teaching artists. I considered how engagement with community-based education may factor specifically into identity making. Imaginative experience was explored in relation to meaning making for the teaching artists. I reviewed the work of narrative thinkers to further identify the context for a narrative inquiry into the experience of teaching artists in community-based practice.

Artists in Teaching Roles: Defining a Practice

In their work in a community-based practice, artists who teach may identify themselves with different titles that can include workshop leader, artist-in-residence and artist-educator. They may make the conscious choice to name their practice by identifying as teaching artist or artist-teacher (Booth, 2003). The act of thinking of their work in this way, with the identifier of teaching instead of simply as an artist, impacts on their life narrative by giving new meaning to their work. Identifying their work in this way gives new significance and cohesion to the various teaching roles they fill, aiding in being able to see them as a whole. This identification also allows them to include a wider variety of their endeavours under this umbrella, including thinking about their own artist practice as playing a part in this narrative. By compiling feedback on the experience of several artists who identified as teaching artists, Booth found various themes they had in common in their approach to their work over time, including the following: having multiple purposes, the role of modeling, a focus on process versus product, and the goal of providing experiences in and through the arts that nurture human development. He offers a tentative definition of a teaching artist, while recognizing the wide variety in approaches: “A Teaching Artist is an artist, with the complementary skills and sensibilities of an educator, who engages people in learning experiences in, through, or about the arts” (p.12). The two roles of artist and teacher may have different balance and interdependence and are nuanced differently for each professional and change over time (Booth). Booth saw that the creative process is the place where identities of artist and teacher are connected, emphasizing the role of the creative process in this dynamic.

Due to the various roles a teaching artist plays, including artist, teacher and mentor, there is a need for a sense of continuity. The complexity in defining the role of community-based

teaching artists while they are working in the field can be understood as being on a continuum of purposes (Ulbricht, 2015). These multiple purposes can include providing social activity, health improvement, dexterity, technical learning, community engagement, social justice, and visual learning. In addition to altering one's viewpoint from seeing roles as needing to be clearly defined with a sole purpose, we can also learn to see the professional and personal as having less clear boundaries. Carr (1986) spoke to this more fluid and complex relationship between personal and professional approaches in our life:

Even for those whose lives are centered in some 'profession' or 'vocation', such a conception fails to do justice to the complex relation between such an activity and the other spheres of life in which all of us are inevitably involved: the private, the public or civic, the family, the emotional and sexual, etc. To view these spheres and the relation among them as a means-end relation is surely simplistic from several points of view.

(p.79)

To aid with seeing the areas in our life with more coherence, Carr (1986) suggested the question is not, "How does this or that event or action fit into the story? but rather: What *is* the story?" (p.91). Further to his views on the intertwining of the personal and the professional, Carr also presents aesthetics as playing an important role in finding coherence and meaning in life. In my own experience, although I shift between studio artist, gallery educator, art therapist, and art teacher, there is always art and the creative process as the foundation. It is this enjoyment of the tactile experience and sense of being at ease as I work with the art materials that grounds everything I do. In my workshops at the art gallery, I was able to use my familiarity with art and art materials as the starting point to navigate the multiple purposes, and as the means for enriching this social interaction. As artist, art therapist and art educator, the act of creating

provided a source of coherence within the shifting of roles and purposes, and within my sense of self. Through my own art practice, through the act of creating art, I gained knowledge about my own identity and how I experience the world. I learned about my strengths and weaknesses as I identified elements to resolve in the artwork and worked to find solutions. For teaching artists, the creative process can act as common ground as they shift the emphasis between identities of artist and teacher over time (Booth, 2003).

Daichendt (2009) challenged us to reconsider elitist notions some may have when considering the idea of the artist-teacher and to see this rather as an inclusive and richer understanding of the profession of teaching art. The dynamic between identities of artist and teacher are often described as being a source of potential identity conflict (Daichendt). Daichendt advocated that the two identities can instead work to support one another and need not be viewed in terms of a duality.

Narrative inquiry theorists see that through narrative inquiry into their identity and experiences, teachers can learn to sustain themselves as in their teaching work (Huber, Li, Murphy, Nelson & Young, 2014). As many teaching artists in community-based practice come by the work of teaching through other avenues, there is a limited level of pre-service teacher training, and identity making work in relation to teaching must be considered in the context of work they are already engaged in. Concepts of personal explorations and negotiating and renegotiating identities through narrative (Huber et. al.) are worth considering in relation to the community-based practice of artists involved in teaching work. In the teaching process, there is a tangled web of experiences, personal history and interests (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Artists and Art Education: A Context

Historical context. Daichendt (2009) spoke to the historical development of the idea of artist as teacher, illustrating how there was a time when it was thought that artist and teacher were separate identities, and that these identities were not thought to function together successfully. Daichendt traced the initial use of the term artist-teacher back to George Wallis in the nineteenth century. Previous to that time, the field of education and the tradition of passing down art skills were seen as different endeavors and not necessarily compatible (Daichendt). During the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans, the informal familial passing down of art skills was prevalent. Later, there is a shift as during the renaissance period, the development of art clubs and academies allowed for richer educational opportunities, with more freedom and opportunity to generate and exchange ideas. Wallis promoted the notion that the concepts of education should be applied to learning about art and coined the term artist-teacher (Daichendt, 2009; Ulbricht, 2015).

Over generations art education has developed into a distinct field. Artists are, however, still engaged with informal and incidental teaching relationships. They engage with this informal teaching as the artists present their work to the public, share skills with fellow artists, and seek to bring greater awareness to social issues or their personal experience through their art. This tendency and opportunity to experience informal teaching in an artist's career, in combination with increased opportunities and interest in the arts by community groups, can act as a foundation for more formal teaching roles. These can include being a workshop leader and museum or gallery instructor, or in addition to participating in formal mentorship relationships.

Influences of the postmodern art period: impacts for community-based art education. Most recently postmodernism has brought a decentering of focus on the artists

themselves (Lingo & Tepper, 2016). This was a change from the modernist period where there was more focus on the idea of artistic genius and originality (Daichendt, 2009). With postmodern perspectives, the artist is viewed more as a facilitator and there is a recognition of the value of art created by non-professional artists (Ulbricht, 2015). Bourriaud (2002) described a relational aesthetic that has been influential in the art community. He detailed how many artists today see human relationships, inter-subjectivity and interaction as “neither as fashionable theoretical gadgets, nor as additives to a traditional artistic practice. It takes them as a point of departure and as an outcome” (Bourriaud, 2002, p.44). This approach is one that is commonly held in today’s art community, and the value placed on relationships in the creative process would allow for those involved with community-based practice to see aspects of their work as both artist and teacher in community workshops as being interconnected.

Daichendt (2009) spoke to how postmodernism has positive tenets for teaching artists, “The artistic process is a tangled web of personal experiences and interests. Similar to the individualist philosophy of making meaning, the artist is empowered in the postmodern era to explore issues at will” (p.145). In the context of postmodern era, artists could have a teaching image of themselves as facilitators in the student’s learning. This approach allows them to be open to the learning that may arise for both participant and teaching artist, while engaging in the creative process together. It allows room for the personal knowledge and experience of both. Postmodernism creates a context for an artist working in the community to further value the work they are doing with participants and value the art created by their participants.

Current contexts: socio-economic circumstances. While there are many factors such as the development of the art education field and the increased valuing of art made by and with community members, there are also issues of the larger social context that impact on the working

experience of teaching artists. The current economic and social conditions for artists are relevant in considering the identity making of teaching artists, as it impacts on motivations for this work and the type and quality of the opportunities that they find. The Canadian Council for the Arts reports on the statistical profile of artists and cultural workers in Canada (“A statistical profile”, 2011). It classified artists as painters, sculptors and other visual artists who create original works of art, a designation that excludes artisans and craft persons, art teachers in the school system and graphic designers and illustrators. When the time spent at their other job is higher than time spent at their artwork during the week they reported, they would not be included in these statistics (“A statistical profile”, 2011). The Canadian Council for the Arts stated that artists are more likely than other workers to hold multiple jobs. The report found that although artists have significantly higher levels of formal education than the overall labour force, their average income is thirty two percent lower than other workers. In addition, the rate of self-employment among artists is higher than the overall labour force, a designation that includes art instructors in after school art classes and artists and professors who are employed by art schools, for example (“A statistical profile”, 2011). The study also noted that we do not often define artists as artists who teach, as this is so prevalent a role. This finding reinforces the benefits of naming their practice as teaching artists. In terms of this research into the identity making of teaching artists, the challenges of self-employment, financial difficulty, and the multiple jobs that artists have, make teaching roles both a valuable source of stable work and income, as well as a source of potential challenges due to the multiple jobs often required to make this a viable financial option.

Identity Making Within Community-Based Art Teaching Practice

In addition to any more practical reasons such as financial stability, Selkrig (2011) considered that the learning about self that artists experience through community may be one of

the reasons that they continue to work in community-based arts practice, and part of what makes this type of work a positive experience for artists. Artists often accept community-based contracts with an initial financial motivation, but later continue this work due to the congruence with their values and the positive effect it has on their sense of self (Selkrig, 2011). Selkrig highlighted the learning about self that the transitions, interruptions and disruptions in life can bring.

Working in a community-based practice can bring many transitions and disruptions due to the changing nature of the work, and to short term contracts. The support of professional communities can help with a sense of uncertainty and disruptions in employment (Lingo & Tepper, 2016). They can provide peer support, financial support in the form of grants and employment, sales and exhibition opportunities, continued education in terms of career building, skills training, and supported working residencies. In Saskatchewan some examples are the Saskatchewan Arts Board, the Canadian Artists' Representation (CARFAC) and SaskCulture, as well as the many public art galleries and group studios. These organizations can work to reduce isolation for artists and build community. The centers and associations that support artists and teaching artists are an important resource.

Teaching artists belong to multiple communities and these communities are a source of learning and support. Marché (2000) saw that art educators belong to both the art and the education communities, yet have some professional independence as well. This independence can provide an opportunity and a need to create a practice that is cohesive with their own narrative. Community-level activities occur within the context of the local culture and international communities. Marché stated, "Art educators act within this universe, reflecting

current social needs, values, and popular trends; they also respond in particular ways to local, regional, national, and international art and educational communities” (p.57).

Wenger (1999) believed our identity is built in relation to communities of practice that we belong to. He spoke to our need to actively engage in our social communities and these communities of practice. Wenger elaborated further that this belonging is a matter of survival whether in terms of providing our basic necessities or in providing a sense of identity, “Surviving together is an important enterprise, whether surviving consists in the search for food and shelter or in the quest for a viable identity” (p.6). The work of teaching has a strong impact on the artist’s relationship with their community, as it is the point of engagement. The professional communities in our lives are not only places supportive of growth for us professionally, but also sites where we can define our sense of self through relationship. We can engage with the work of identity making in relationship with others and this can be a rich source of learning about our strengths, weaknesses and how our story fits in with our greater social context.

Artists are increasingly finding opportunities for teaching roles in community settings. In relation to this professional context, it is important to consider if this work is sustainable in terms of the teaching artist’s sense of self. Through research and purposeful explorations into how one’s identity making shapes and is shaped by a community-based practice, some of these concerns can be addressed. As teaching artists actively name and embrace their teaching practice and consider the place of their own art practice in this narrative, it will enrich meaning and make the work more sustainable for the professional.

Identity Making and the Social Context

Sarbin (1997) emphasized the importance of the social context in our identity development. He highlighted the social constructionist standpoint describing how theorists claim

the self was generated in social life. He differentiated between thinking of self and identity with identity being more of an answer to *who am I* reflecting a being in place. If following Sarbin's explanation then we must answer the question *who am I* with an answer that depends on the context of the question, then a teaching artist's role in the art community or art education community can act as part of the context to this question. The participants in this study may wonder who they are in relation to the art community, and where they fit into the art education community. How and where they feel they fit and belong is important as they form an answer to the question of who am I. They may more readily feel a sense of purpose and meaning in their work if it is in areas where they see the direct benefits to the community, such as work with marginalized populations for example. When teaching artists' do self-evaluation work either for themselves or as required in reports to their employer, these evaluation activities can help with this self- reflection. The answer to *who am I* may develop and change over time in relation to the context of their work.

Working in an environment that has at times a changing and unpredictable nature, can be a source of growth both professionally and personally as it brings many opportunities for learning. In community-based practice there is always a certain level of the unexpected: many group workshops have new and unfamiliar participants each week; participants come from diverse life situations and cultures; and numbers can fluctuate dramatically from week to week. An approach that is flexible and open to the unexpected can be helpful in this context. Working with the art in a way that focuses on the process of creating instead of the finished product allows for spontaneous moments of discovery. This flexible working approach in unpredictable environments with those from diverse cultural groups and life backgrounds can be thought of in terms of a playful attitude. Lugones (1987) suggested choosing a positive view to this

uncertainty by taking on such an approach: “The playfulness that gives meaning to our activity includes uncertainty, but in this case the uncertainty is an openness to surprise...we are open to self-construction” (p.16). Lugones saw playfulness as a tool for entering and imagining worlds different from our own. Certainly, as a teaching artist in community-based practice, this playful attitude has been helpful in imagining the life experience of individuals I work with and art has provided the medium for this playfulness.

As I think about playfulness as a tool for imagining the worlds and experiences of others, I am reminded of a clay workshop I led for a group of recent adult immigrants. One woman was working the clay, molding the cool smooth material with her hands and a few rudimentary tools. She began to describe how in her youth in her home country, women used this same type of clay to build ovens. This clay was used for this very important daily task of cooking. As I listened to her story and worked on my own clay creation, while the cool clay warmed in my hands, it slowly transformed in my perspective from an inexpensive yet wonderfully yielding art material to one that could prepare the food for a family’s meal. It only enriched the experience when others joined in sharing this same story from their youth, and how their mothers and aunts also painted and carved beautiful designs into this clay oven. Working with the clay with her hands had brought back this memory for this woman. As a group we carried this story in our bodies while we played with the clay, and entered her world for a time through her story.

This experience allowed for meaning making that occurred through our relating with each other on that day. The art was both a catalyst and a visible, tangible recording of this experience. In my role as teacher I was showing her through caring attentiveness, that her story and her work in the art was important. In my own narrative this interaction showed me that my life and history

could enrich my art even without painting or drawing specifically about this history, but rather allowing it to bring greater meaning to what I do.

Identity Making and Agency

Agency is an important element in a teacher's practice. Huber and Yeom (2017) have found that when thinking about agency narratively, both context and identity need to be considered. They described a teacher's agency making as a fluid process that is inseparable from their "life making" (p.307). Huber and Yeom also stated that this agency making is something that teachers will repeatedly re-engage with over time. Lipponen and Kumpulainen (2011) described agency as follows: "Agency can be defined as the capacity to initiate purposeful action that implies will, autonomy, freedom, and choice" (p. 812). How one experiences agency is worth considering for both teachers in general and for those in a community-based teaching practice specifically. The teaching artists in this study have at times generated their own teaching opportunities, constructed lesson plans without a curriculum, and found ways to move across the boundaries of their art practice and teaching practice, as is common in community-based art teaching. Agency in teaching can be considered in regard to one's relation to others and to community:

Teacher learning is social and situated by nature. This applies equally to the development of agency, as it is constructed in relation to others, including teachers, other students, facilitators and the whole community. The development of agency is crucial in teacher development, that is, how one considers one's own expertise and oneself as part of the community. In sum, agency is interactive and cannot reside only in the individual because it is a socially constructed experience. (Lipponen & Kumpulainen, 2011, p. 812)

Here the social context is considered, from those persons the teachers have direct contact with in their teaching work, but also the larger communities of which they are a part. In addition, the understanding of their own knowledge and what part they feel this knowledge can play within their community was highlighted by Lipponen and Kumpulainen. When individuals act as agents there are all the social relations in their life to consider, including the meaning that this brings to their agentic actions (Burkitt, 2016). Burkitt noted that the relationships and interactions in our lives are not engaged in just to reproduce structures for one's own interest, "but because the meaningfulness of the particular activities we engage in with others is deeply fulfilling for us" (2016, p.331).

Experience and Teaching Artists

Aesthetic and embodied ways of knowing. As we look at the identity making of teaching artists, it is important to take into consideration how influential aesthetic ways of knowing and being in the world are and how this may impact their work in teaching and other roles professionally. Greene (2001) described the effect of aesthetics on experience: "For some, aesthetics has primarily to do with the kinds of experiences associated with reflective and conscious encounters with the arts. Or it may focus on the way in which a work of art can become an object of experience and the effect it then has in altering perspectives on nature, human beings, and moment-to moment existence" (p.5).

Eisner (2005) connected the learning of what he described as an aesthetic attitude to an ability to engage with qualities of experience that are free from the literal or practical meaning of a subject, and have a greater engagement with feeling and thought. He described our ability to experience the qualities of the world around us as being heightened as we develop the use of our senses. Eisner links an embodied experience with creating meaning in our lives: "First among

these is the belief that experience is the bedrock upon which meaning is constructed and that experience in significant degree depends on our ability to get in touch with the qualitative world we inhabit” (p.151).

In considering Eisner’s perspective, I was reminded of learning to draw from the live model. In my university life drawing class, the professor helped us to develop the skill of really seeing the parts of a person for what they were, breaking through our assumptions of what an eye looks like, or teeth, both of which we often represent as more like a cartoon version. We were able to notice the light and shadow, the lines and shapes that made up the eye, and to see that the eyes are located in the middle of our head, rather than near the top as many assume. The teeth we drew by concentrating on the shadow and lines in between each tooth rather than the actual tooth, helping us to break through our assumptions and ending up with a more realistic depiction. I often left the drawing session seeing the world differently for a period of time directly after. My ability to get in touch with the qualitative world around me through this learning experience allowed for a greater depth of experience. This was not the same as an intellectual recognition of the physical elements of a person or of a tree, but rather an ability to be aware and use more of my senses as I observed and experienced the world around me. I use skills of observation not only when I create art, but also in my interactions with people. Following Eisner’s perspective on experiences being the foundation for creating meaning in our lives, I understand that creating art increased my ability to experience the qualities of the world around me, either in nature or with people, and also aided in a feeling of grounding within myself.

Imagination and belonging. In reading Eisner and reflecting on my own experiences, learning to observe and experience the world more deeply through art increased my sense of belonging in the world. This learning and belonging found through creating art was an embodied

experience. Sarbin (2004) takes concepts of embodiment and our ability to imagine who we are or what we can be and describes narrative's role in this process:

My claim is that imaginings are induced by stories read or stories told, that imaginings are instances of attenuated role-taking, that attenuated role-taking requires motoric actions that produce kinesthetic cues and other embodiments, and that embodiments become a part of the total context from which persons decide how to live their lives. (p.17)

Greene (1995) presented imagination as a tool or a skill that can bring us a sense of freedom, or conversely, anxiety, as it has the potential to expand possibilities or destabilize our sense of grounding. Greene believed that the ability to imagine alternate and better possibilities for ourselves requires community, and the support of the community to which we belong. She eloquently claimed community should be "a space infused by the kind of imaginative awareness that enables those involved to imagine alternative possibilities for their own becoming and their group's becoming" (p.39). Greene highlighted how imagination can help in becoming aware that there may be more to gain and learn from the experience with further reflection. It seems that imagination is not so important for what it can tell us specifically, but rather for simply reminding us that there is always more to know, more to experience, and more than we can even name.

Dewey (1934) explained imaginative experience as the moment when elements such as sensory information and emotion are brought together in new ways, describing it as a new birth, which suggests a liberation from old patterns and assumptions. Dewey described this imaginative experience further:

It is a way of seeing and feeling things as they compose an integral whole. It is a large and generous blending of interests at the point where the mind comes in contact with the world. When old and familiar things are made new in experience, there is imaginations. When the new is created, the far and strange become the most natural inevitable things in the world. (p.267)

The above theorists described how imagination can be freeing and akin to a new birth. This description suggests that engaging the imagination can be an important tool in identity making and growth.

Conclusion

As I considered my wonders in regard to teaching artists and an individual's stories to live by (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999), I reviewed the supporting literature. While I reviewed the literature, I gathered together ideas of learning within community-based practice, theories on the relationship between development of self and one's professional identity, and research into how artists navigate teaching roles. I found research that presents the two identities of artists and teacher as having potential to benefit each other. In the supporting literature, relationship to others in community is presented as important for learning about self, and this learning process has transitions and disruptions. While there is a lack of research that attends to all these areas simultaneously, I was able to find commonalities among these diverse areas for consideration.

Chapter Three:

Methodology: A Narrative Inquiry

This study is a narrative inquiry. This research methodology is defined by Connelly and Clandinin (2006):

People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. (p. 375)

With this definition in mind, this research looks at the experience of the identity making of teaching artists involved in community-based practice through a narrative understanding of identity, taking into account their ongoing life journey, framed as a stories to live by (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999). The participant and researcher encountered the narrative inquiry process in the midst of their ongoing lives (Clandinin & Caine, 2013) which notes that the participants had a meaningful past before the research began, and their narrative continued into the future after the inquiry came to a close.

This research process inquired into the depth and complexity of a person's experience through stories told and stories to live by (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999) in relation to art practice and art teaching. Narrative inquiry engages not just with a person's story as an entity in and of itself, but how this narrative evolved out of their life context, how it guides their future choices, and how they construct their lives in relation to their narrative of experience. The goal of an in-depth representation of the participant's experience through the use of narrative inquiry requires a process of negotiation, conversation and commitment between the researcher and the

participant as both co-compose the research narratives (Clandinin & Caine, 2013). The researcher begins the process by an inquiry into their own narrative beginnings, but this reflection is ongoing through the process. The researcher reflects on their own narrative in relation to the experience of the participants and the research process: the intimacy and collaborative nature of the methodology allows for the researcher to be moved and changed by the research.

Dewey's (1932) descriptions of experience guide, in part, narrative inquiry's approach. He emphasized the intaking and outgoing rhythm of experience as having a pattern and structure, and the role that the senses have in allowing us to have an experience. He saw experience as an active process where we engage with our environment and intake information through our senses and then have an outward movement as we act on this information. Dewey described this embodied exchange between our internal selves and the external qualities in our surroundings as transformative. These external surroundings include objects, others persons, and our environment.

Narrative thinking about a three dimensional narrative space stems from Dewey's concepts of continuity, interaction, and situation (1938). Interaction relates to the personal and social in narrative inquiry, and situation is the reference point for place. Place in this sense refers both to the location where the narrative occurred and the place where the research occurred (Clandinin, 2013). Dewey's concept of continuity forms the basis for discussions of temporality in narrative thinking, that of past, present, and future.

The concept of continuity of experience as described by Dewey (1938) is central to narrative inquiry, "every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after" (p.35). This view of continuity

has implications as educators grow and learn. Dewey described a maturity of experience an educator gains after time in the field, which allows them to use this experience to enrich future educational experience. He saw that an educator is then able to evaluate and organize the conditions of others' experiences, and in fact has a responsibility to do so. For a teaching artist this may mean careful choice of materials, projects and changes to the learning environment that will support the growth and needs of the participant through the creation of an artwork.

Dewey (1938) drew attention to the importance of how internal conditions interact with objects, other persons and external environmental conditions. When we consider situation and interaction we must consider them together (Dewey, 1938). In examining Dewey's concept of interaction in narrative inquiry, we look at interaction in terms of the *personal* and *social*. In narrative inquiry, we can think of situation in terms of *place*. The aforementioned concept of continuity can be viewed in terms of *past*, *present* and *future* in narrative thinking (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). With an intention of gaining an understanding into the experience of teaching artists, Dewey's theories on experience were important to consider.

Why Narrative Inquiry?

This methodology attends in balance both to the personal and the social dimensions of experience and therefore is ideally suited for inquiry into the identity development of teaching artists in community-based practice: "In essence, narrative inquiry involves the reconstruction of a person's experience in relationship both to the other and to a social milieu" (Clandinin, 2007, p.5). The research for this thesis looked at the identity making of teaching artists over time and the holistic approach of narrative inquiry allowed space for exploring the different aspects of this experience: "Listening deeply and inquiring into our changed lived and told stories calls forth the

possibility to attend differently, to shift practices, and to create possible social-political or theoretical places we can impart as narrative inquirers” (Clandinin & Caine, 2013, p. 171).

Development of Narrative Inquiry as a Methodology

Recently there has been a move in qualitative research towards using narrative to understand experience (Clandinin & Caine, 2013) referred to as the *narrative turn* (Goodson & Gill, 2011). Some researchers saw the need to define their work as distinct from this trend, defining narrative inquiry as both a methodology and a phenomena (Clandinin & Caine, 2013). This distinction helped researchers to know best what fit and what did not fit from this broad field of narrative study as they developed narrative inquiry as a methodology. Specifying terms and commonplaces was an important step in developing this methodology because of the broad range of different types of narrative studies. These terms and commonplaces act as guidance for researchers using this methodology, as narrative inquiry is a methodology that encompasses a range of disciplines and different perspectives (Clandinin, 2013, Clandinin & Caine, 2013).

Thinking Narratively

In the context of this research, the experience and storied lives of teaching artists working in a community-based practice as it relates to identity was the focus. The stories and experiences were viewed through the lens of the three-dimensional research space shaped by place, temporality, and social context. In narrative inquiry, attention is given to the four directions of inward and outward, forward and backward (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) when looking at experience. The inward direction refers to a person’s feelings, hopes, beliefs and their aesthetic reactions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The outward direction takes into account the environment and the person’s interactions with it, as relevant to their experience and stories. When looking at the last two directions of backward and forward we consider a participant’s

stories, and our own experience as researcher, in the context of our whole lives, not just in the moment where the story is told to occur (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In this research, these four directions were taken into consideration during the conversations with the participants, and in the composing of field notes and final research texts.

In the same way that a shape comes alive when created in three dimensions, such as a circle to a sphere, or an artist's sketch of a person realised in a three-dimensional sculpture, so can a person's story come alive when understood through the inward and outward, forward and backward process of attending to experience. Our sense of self and identity are the central point of this three-dimensional space through which the moving force of experience can flow.

Attending to all three commonplaces throughout the study is integral to narrative inquiry, and attending to all three simultaneously is in part what defines this methodology (Clandinin, 2013). Thinking about these commonplaces narratively highlights that the phenomena being studied are fluid and ever-changing. The focus of the narrative inquiry methodology and this thesis work therefore is on gaining an understanding of experience through lives lived (Clandinin, 2013). Clandinin and Huber (2010) spoke to the significance of these commonplaces:

Attending to experience through inquiry into all three commonplaces is, in part, what distinguishes narrative inquiry from other methodologies. Through attending to the commonplaces, narrative inquirers are able to study the complexity of the relational composition of people's lived experiences both inside and outside of an inquiry and, as well, to imagine the future possibilities of these lives. (p.439)

Bruner (2004) described a two-way process in which our narrative imitates our life and our life then imitates this narrative, comparing it to the commonly used phrase *life imitates art*

coined by such writers as Aristotle and Oscar Wilde. Bruner described the self-telling of narratives as giving structure to our experiences and as the way in which we organize our memories. Bruner did not shy away from acknowledging the tenuous nature of narrative as “form” while emphasising it may be the only method that truly captures the sense of lived time. This narrative described by Bruner is not any narrative, however; it is one that has a depth to its representation of experience rather than a shallow account. Bruner acknowledged that even though we may interpret our stories and experiences, they can still be a “right” (2004, p.694) or meaningful representation of a life.

Morris (2001) described a process of thinking *with* stories instead of *about* stories. He recognized that there may be an initial phase where we engage our reasoning as we consider the story in this way, but then move into engaging our emotions. As we engage our emotions, we allow a narrative to have a deeper effect of change on us, as we seek to experience the narrative, becoming immersed in it. Dubose-Brunner (1994) spoke to the importance of making space for these narratives in education: “telling our own stories and creating spaces for students to tell theirs is to understand somehow that stories provide links” (p.14), and further to this she emphasised the significance of this experience of sharing and the connection to language, “all our stories are ways of anchoring the world, of attaching meaning to words, and of knowing/ articulating what we know” (p.14).

In narrative inquiry there are four terms that describe the process of self-narration: “living, telling, retelling, reliving” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2006, p.478). The researcher is involved in the self-narration process with the participants of their studies, as attention is paid to “the growth for researcher and participants that can occur in the (re) living and (re)telling of the experience” (Clandinin & Caine, 2013, p.175) in the composing of research texts.

The Professional Knowledge Landscape

The professional knowledge landscape is a metaphor employed by many narrative inquirers. In this research, this metaphor was used to understand the structure and influences that define the learning environment in community-based settings. In using this metaphor, narrative inquirers emphasize the vastness of the landscape imagery (Clandinin, 2013), but this image contains none of the wild emptiness as portrayed in the Group of Seven's famous paintings. We can envision instead the landscapes of their contemporary Emily Carr, which suggest the richness and multidimensions of life, with people, cultures, family and grand narratives contained within. With this kind of rich and complex landscape imagery in mind, we can look to the professional knowledge landscape of teaching artists. This professional knowledge landscape is both an intellectual and a moral landscape as it involves relationships with people, places, and things (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). Place and time are important components of this aspect of a professional's knowledge foundation (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). Social, political, cultural, and historical contexts of where teachers' knowledge originates are considered with this metaphor (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007). While this metaphor was first considered in reference to the school classroom, it is equally valid in community-based teaching environments. Here, an artist in a teaching role contends with all the same components, with the actual location or professional home changing more frequently at times. The professional home may vary from such locales as health care institutions, museums and community centers, but these locales contain their own limitations. These limitations can include materials available, institutional structure and policies, as well as the physical space of the building or room. The professional knowledge landscape shapes the teacher and teaching artists, and they themselves also have an impact on the landscape (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995).

Personal Practical Knowledge

Personal practical knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), is a term used in the narrative inquiry methodology to understand the knowledge foundation of teaching artists. It emphasises the role of action in one's knowledge foundation (Clandinin, 1985). In this research, an artist's personal background and life experiences are considered in relation with and to the academic, theoretical, and technical knowledge gained (Clandinin, 1985). Elements of personal practical knowledge that could come into play for teaching artists are the learning of technical skills, art history perspectives, and the current or historical artistic discourse on what is valued in art. Other elements to consider as part of the knowledge foundation of teaching artists are the skills in how to observe the world around you, express your experience to others through creative avenues, and the idea that one can alter the world around oneself through art (Eisner, 2005). Some of this knowledge could have been gained through such avenues as the process of creating professional art exhibitions, through continued education opportunities, and through the act of solving problems when creating an artwork. The teaching artist's personal history, past experiences, and family narratives all form a part of personal practical knowledge. One both shapes and is shaped by the teaching work that they do, as well as by the context of where this teaching occurs (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Huber & Whelan, 1999). Clandinin (1985) highlighted the fluid nature of personal practical knowledge: "The conception of personal practical knowledge is of knowledge as experiential, value-laden, purposeful, and oriented to practice. Personal practical knowledge is viewed as tentative, subject to change and transient, rather than something fixed, objective, and unchanging" (p.364). Huber and Whelan (1999) spoke to how this fluidity in our stories to live (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999) by is composed over time and responds to the many different situations and contexts in which we find ourselves.

In community-based practice one's professional contexts may change frequently, as well as there are transitions between personal art practice and teaching contexts. These changes in external contexts and the resulting changes in one's stories to live by (Claninin & Connelly, 1999) are an important aspect of understanding the narrative term of personal practical knowledge.

For teaching artists, person practical knowledge includes knowledge gained through their own art practice as well through teaching experiences. In considering Dewey (1934), we can think of all of this as making up part of our "integral whole". Dewey spoke about old and familiar things made new in experience and I consider this as I reflect on my work. I can see that in my teaching work, as I interacted with someone new and created a new situation through the creative process, I reflected back on old and familiar things, such as times spent listening to the stories of aging relatives. During a past art workshop, as I worked with an older gentleman creating art with old stamps. I called upon my lived experience of sitting and listening to my elderly relatives as they shared their stories. Although the workshop participant's reflections contained gaps due to his progressing dementia, I saw the wisdom in his words, however halted his speech; and I attempted to fill in the gaps based on my own experience of listening to the stories of my relatives. I felt compassion for him as I imagined my own father potentially aging in such a way. My academic knowledge of dementia and its differing effect on long-term and short-term memories is inseparable from the practical knowledge I have of the distress this can cause. I also knew that the longer my participant would hold the smooth soft paper, the more relaxed he may become just from the tactile experience; and if I could just engage him in this holding and sorting of memories, he may feel safe in this process. My strategy was to sit patiently with him and allow these positive effects to occur, even though it may have appeared that he was not having success, having not glued or chosen a single stamp to add to his collage

by the time the workshop came to a close. Through brief, but meaningful encounters with individuals or groups, I am able to expand and imagine what is possible in my future work.

Even more important than the significance of what actually occurred in the workshop for seniors I described, the experience allowed me to imagine new ways of working and to see possibilities in my role as art educator. I noticed how even with different goals and structure in my community outreach role as art educator, there were many avenues for this work to enrich my knowledge in my own art practice and life. I was able to imagine a work life where there were not significant divisions between my personal life, my artist self, and my work. The concept of personal practical knowledge in narrative inquiry allows us to see our knowledge in this cohesive way.

Cover Stories

Cover stories are a phenomenon recognized in narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). I was aware of the phenomenon of cover stories in my participants' narratives, and in my own as I engaged the participant in the co-composition of the field texts. While I at times I gently sought to work to understand the meaning of these cover stories, I respected that in general these served a necessary purpose of safety for the participant. Allowing time and space for the complexity of the participants experience to be heard is one way to attend to these cover stories: "When we make all three dimensions of the inquiry space visible to public audiences and continue to think narratively, we make the complexity of storied lives visible. In this way we avoid presenting smooth or cover stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000)" (Clandinin, 2013, p.50). Cover stories are at times helpful for the research participants as these stories can create a safe zone while they do their personal and psychological work. These cover stories create a safe and stable front for the participants.

I found it helpful to think of these cover stories in terms of stories that surface and stories that run underneath. During my time with the participants, their visual art seemed to have a voice in the consideration of the phenomena of cover stories. Elements in their art highlighted elements in the recounting of their experiences. The images in the art work also drew my attention to possible unspoken stories that ran beneath their told stories.

The Research Process

In this section the research process I followed is outlined. This research process follows the methodology and tenets of narrative inquiry. In addition to providing details about the process of finding and working with the participants, I describe the particular research process undertaken in a narrative inquiry. I outline the process of engaging in planned conversations with the participants and the resulting composition of field texts and final research texts. This section describes how the narrative inquiry methodology recognizes that the research occurs in the midst of lives (Clandinin & Caine, 2013, Clandinin, 2007). The term *in the midst* acknowledges that the participants' lives began before the research, are ongoing, and will continue to evolve after the research has been completed. This section also identifies the research and relational ethics to which I was attentive during the research process.

The Research Participants

The participants in this study were three visual artists currently involved in teaching roles in community-based settings. The method of inviting these teaching artists to participate was through my own personal and professional contacts and those referred to me by others. I chose to work with those who were not currently teaching in the school system, although I did not

discount considering working with those who had worked in the school system in the past. This was to keep the focus on the area of interest under study which is community-based practice. The artists were not chosen only if they were solely working as teaching artists, but they were chosen if they considered this a significant part of their work life. These teaching roles ranged from formal mentorships, community art classes, and art museum education. Rather than defining this teaching work in terms of hours spent on these roles, it was more important that they themselves felt it was a significant part of their work. The artists I worked with had at least some formal training in art through university, college or training in specialized private schools. They had actively engaged with an art practice over the last few years, whether through studio practice, further art classes, or art exhibitions. I recognized that this active engagement with making art may have fluctuated over time, as they spent more or less time on other employment, for example.

Composing Field Texts

During the course of this proposed study, I attended to the stories and experiences of the artist participants. Attending to these experiences and stories involved face-to-face meetings where I listened and engaged with their own telling of their personal stories and memories. I recorded our conversations and composed field notes of these sessions. These were considered conversations instead of formal interviews with prescribed questions, so that I was better able to attend to the complexity of the participants' lives. These conversations took the form of four planned meetings of approximately one hour each. The artists were asked to create a memory box with items they had collected to help with recollections and initiating the storytelling

These texts were experientially and intersubjectively based (Clandinin & Caine, 2013). The primary source for the field texts was the recordings and notes of the interviews with

participants that were framed as conversations, as this format allowed space for the complexity of the participants' lives (Clandinin & Caine, 2013). The other sources of information were the visual images of their artwork found online, as well as the actual artworks I was able to view. There was communication and negotiation while the field texts were composed. The field texts showed the experience of both the participant and the researcher (Clandinin, 2013).

From Field Texts to Research Texts

Narrative inquiry allowed me to understand how a teaching artist's stories to live by (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999) are shaped by and shapes their community-based practice. It allowed me to build narratives around how community plays an important role in this meaning making, and how an artist navigates teaching roles. From the field texts co-composed with the participants, I formed the final research text where I placed the individual narratives within the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin, 2013).

There was three main parts to the composing of the final research texts. I first created narrative accounts of each teaching artist's lived experience. I then positioned these individual narratives next to each other as I endeavoured to understand the stories to live by (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999), of teaching artists in community-based practice. I then wrote about how these individual participants positioned themselves alongside this larger narrative, how they found their life story shifted or not through the research process, and acknowledged any subsequent narrative threads that arose. I attended to the particularities of how artists engage with the narrative inquiry process.

In the Midst

Narrative inquiry research recognizes that the researcher enters the process in the midst of their own and their participant's ongoing life narrative (Clandinin & Caine, 2013, Clandinin,

2007). It recognizes that although some narratives occurred in the past, they are still dynamic as they are told and retold and impact on the person's present life as they are relived. These narratives were positioned along the dimensions of temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin & Caine, 2013). This research recognized that although I strove to capture a dynamic and meaningful aspect of the artists' narrative, as it related to community-based practice, it was only a partial representation. These narratives began before the research process and will continue past the completion of the study, as they are a part of ongoing lives: "as we live within the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space with our participants throughout the inquiry... acknowledging that neither researcher nor participants walk away from the inquiry unchanged" (Clandinin & Caine, 2013, p. 170).

Acknowledging that we are meeting in the midst of our lives in the research space requires the researcher to engage in inquiry into their own narrative and to work to understand the personal, practical, and social justifications for the research (Clandinin, 2013),

As participants' and researchers' lives meet in the midst of each of our unfolding complex and multiple experiences, we begin to shape time, places and spaces where we come together and negotiate ways of being together and ways of giving accounts of our work together. (p. 44)

As researcher, I was for example, in the midst of my graduate research, institutional narratives of the University of Saskatchewan, and in the midst of my life. The participants in this study were similarly in the midst of their lives, their social, cultural, and familial narratives (Clandinin, 2013). As well I considered that there were also in the midst of the narratives of any community organizations of which they were a part.

Relational Ethics

Narrative inquiry is conducted through careful attention to relational ethics. This attention to relational ethics in narrative inquiry and in the inquiry of this thesis, is shaped by Nodding's (2002) ethic of care, and this ethic is a central tenet of this research. This relational ethic considers that the researcher's obligation to the participant does not end at the final stage of the research process, but that this relational responsibility continues. Responsibilities of equality and social justice are not removed from this process and must be taken into account. "Listening deeply and inquiring into our changed lived and told stories calls forth the possibility to attend differently, to shift practices, and to create possible social-political or theoretical places we can impact as narrative inquirers" (Clandinin & Caine, 2013, p.171).

The work of narrative inquiry research would not be possible without a foundational relationship with the participants. Throughout the research, I was conscious of this element of narrative inquiry research and looked for ways that the participants were able to also benefit from the research. One of the main ways that I aimed to provide benefit for the participants was through my reflecting back to them their own narrative in a way that was collaborative, truth seeking, and caring. It was my intention and hope that they may then fold this awareness and meaningful experience of caring back into their life story.

I gave the participants the option of my protecting their anonymity. I protected the anonymity of those whom they referenced. I used pseudonyms for some names and places were requested and required. For this reason I did not identify specifically how recent the different work experiences were. However, all three participants chose to be identified by their real name and so were referred to in the study by their real first name. They also gave permission to name their workplaces. Yet for the reason of protecting the identity of those whom the participants

taught, and to keep the focus on the participants' experience and not the organizations they worked for, I did not name these workplaces directly. I respected the varying levels of comfort the participants had with the sharing of their narratives and with the research process. I made a conscious effort to make the research process comfortable for the participants by varying the meeting place to suit their needs and demands of their responsibilities, such as meeting them at their art studio or workplace. In addition, I made available to them the work in progress, and showed them the work for their feedback which I incorporated into the final text, and keeping them up to date with written and verbal communication. The collaborative nature of creating research texts addresses issues of power difference (Dybdahl & Hollingsworth, 2007). By involving the participants in the composition of texts I gave importance to their voice and perspective. I was conscious of any academic power differences in the process between researcher and participant and was attentive to this throughout, making efforts to reduce this imbalance.

By adhering to this ethic of care and relational responsibility as outlined above, as well as abiding by the ethical guidelines of the University of Saskatchewan, this study met the institutional requirements for ethical work. This study will be submitted for approval to the University of Saskatchewan's ethic review committee.

Chapter Four:

Belonging

In this first of my chapters on the findings of this research, I considered, in relation to the literature, the ways in which the participants experience belonging. As narrative inquirers move to composing final field texts it is important to keep in mind how, as researchers, we live alongside the participant in the research space, in the midst of our and their ongoing lives (Clandinin & Caine, 2013, Clandinin, 2007). As I placed the participants' experience alongside the literature I privileged the knowledge found in the participants' experience in the composing of these final research texts. Throughout the process of composing these research texts, I reflected on my own experience and storied life, and how they were a part of the research process. I allowed these reflections to be present as I discussed the individual participant's experience.

When teaching, artists have a sense of belonging within their multiple communities, they experience validation of one's stories to live by (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999). Belonging across multiple communities provides a rich context for the self to develop (Wegner-Trainer & Wegner-Trainer, 2015). When teaching artists interact with these different communities they see themselves and their actions mirrored back in the responses of others. The teaching work that artists engage in provides a context for interaction with community. In addition to the interaction with those they teach, the professional relationships developed through teaching gave the research participants a sense of belonging and a community of people with whom they felt connections.

Teaching provided a regular and stable source of validation and was linked to the experience of belonging by the participants. Goodnough (2010) referred to the modes of

belonging as engagement, imagination, and alignment. The lived experience of the participants was considered as they engaged in these modes of belonging. Experiences of validation, interactions with their communities of practice, mentorship, and seeking coherence will be explored in relation to this lived experience.

Belonging and Validation

Validation of one's stories to live by (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999) is an important experience for one's sense of self. The participants in this study identified this experience of being validated in their work as important for them. The participants were aware and spoke of the validation from the internal satisfaction gained from time working in their studio, when hoped for results were achieved, unexpected successes occurred in the creative process, and from the enjoyment of seeing what could be created with one's own hands and efforts. External sources of validation were identified as also being important for the participants. Iris, one of the participants explained this as "It's hard when it all comes from the inside. Then any shred of validation you get from the outside is like water in the desert" (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017).

Validation was also experienced through teaching work in several ways. Validation occurred as those the participants taught spoke about how they had enjoyed and benefited from a class. It also occurred nonverbally as those they taught could be seen to demonstrate progress in their artwork. Validation was also experienced when people enrol multiple times in a class offered by that teaching artist, from positive written feedback, or by those who had been in the class seeking further support or mentorship from them after the class had finished. For example, Iris taught a class in her home studio for sixteen years. Several of the adults she taught have been with her for the duration of those years. Additionally, at the community arts program she

had generally one third to one half the class comprised of returning students from the community (notes based on transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017). The fact that these students chose to sign up again for her classes provided evidence for Iris that they felt they had gained something worthwhile from her teaching.

Witnessing the Impacts of One's Teaching through the Creative Process

The participants (Iris, Bevin, and Kim) taught in classes with an experiential learning format and generally small class size which gave time for individualized instruction. This format and approach provided opportunity to see direct and visual evidence of the results of their teaching efforts. When speaking about the benefits of this teaching context, Iris considered community education as a welcome alternative to the critique format used in many art training programs with their typically large class sizes. In the latter format, she noted that there is less time for the teacher to interact with each participant while they are making the artwork, as most of the work is completed outside of class hours, with class time reserved for time for the instructor and other students to critique the work. In the community classes Iris taught, the adults worked on their paintings in class. Iris valued how she was able to participate in the painting process with those she taught, as she watched the painting develop, and as she engaged with them as they made choices and decisions in their art.

Bevin provided art workshops to community groups. Here too, as in Iris's and Kim's classes, those she taught worked on their art projects in her presence. She noticed, as she worked regularly with a particular group over a number of months, that there were progressions. She described how the members of the group initially worked more individually and quietly on their art, and how after a time the group began to build community with each other, how the art workshop helped them to do this:

And now all the people in the group seem to be friends, and they talk about where they are going to meet up next and what they are doing, and when they are coming tomorrow, and they make plans. And so it has succeeded, and you just want to have people connect with community and that is what they are doing there. (transcript of conversation, Bevin & Laurel, 2017)

This community building through making art was one of the purposes of this particular group. Seeing this occurring would have validated the work Bevin was doing and helped her to find meaning in her work, and belonging as an art educator.

Affirmation through Artist Practice

Financial and formal affirmations of work as artists could consist of such sources as being accepted for exhibitions, positive reviews of their work by art critics and peers, art sales, or arts board financial grants. While the above mentioned type of external sources of affirmation were helpful, they could not be relied on as there were times where these occurred infrequently for the participants. Kim also identified that although arts board grants were helpful, they were not a good source of validation. For him, it was important that the validation came from someone he respected and admired. He related instances where this occurred and described this validation as being important for whom it came from, “and of course it’s a question of someone you really admire or care about” (transcript of conversation, Kim & Laurel, 2017). He shared examples of being invited to show in a gallery owned by someone he had great respect for in the art community, and also of a fellow artist saying how she was reminded of his paintings as she looked at similar scenes in nature on a recent trip. Another instance was described in reference to a mentor and artist he admired:

He had a spectacular art collection and I was always so grateful to him that I had given him a soapstone carving, a little tiny thing, and I overheard him telling someone else it was the finest sculpture in his collection. So I mean again that is the kind of validation you don't get.... you can't help thinking...I made that one sculpture that he thought was worthwhile, someone that I admire and respect. (transcript of conversation, Kim & Laurel, 2017)

In Iris's own art practice, feedback from the public is important for her, as she thought of her paintings as a form of communication with others. In one instance, a woman reached out to say that she had been influenced by one of Iris's exhibitions at a public art gallery, which was a series of works about the beauty of women not dependant on body type or size, many years previously. Several years later, this woman was moved to talk about the effect the art exhibition had on her those years ago. The woman described the artworks as changing her feelings about herself and her body and felt compelled, even at this later stage, to let Iris know of the impact she had made on her life (based on transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017). This communication was both an imagined and experienced connection to others. Iris received validation and connection to others through her artwork, such as this afore mentioned instance when this woman who saw Iris's exhibition of paintings spoke to her years later about how moved she was by this encounter with her paintings. This communication, facilitated through exhibiting her paintings, gave her a sense of belonging in the art world. That which Iris wanted to communicate was revealed in her art, and also facilitated a connection to the wider community. Her statement on this subject is as follows:

It feels really awesome when you make something and you say, 'I know this is strong', and I look at it and it's like wow, so satisfying. But that is only half of the story, the

other part of it is communication. If they just languished in my studio or storage bins, I would feel quite sad because they are made as a form of communication.... hopefully it will touch your soul and connect and maybe you'll be able to stand life better. Because we are all in this together. (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017)

The communication that occurred through art reinforced the experience of belonging. Through this shared experience the participants engaged, connected, and imagined a belonging.

Belonging and Mentorship

For Iris, the experience of not achieving a higher level of commercial and public success in her art career, due to what seems to be factors related more to trends of the time than to her skill, has presented challenges to her path as an artist. There is evidence that the impact of these challenges was diminished by the sense of belonging she experienced through her teaching and mentoring work, and the connections made through her art practice.

Iris painted in a manner that was inspired by and respectful of the realistic classical painting masters. She identified her choice to paint the human figure in this classically realist manner as placing her outside the current norm in the art world: "When you are working in a way that is so outside the mainstream you get a lot of rejection, like a huge amount, and so you start to think: well, am I really doing anything of value?" (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017). The choice to paint in a way that is outside the current art trends meant that validation in terms of exhibitions, commercial gallery success, and arts grants could not be relied on. While Iris found the personal experience of making a successful painting where her hoped for results were achieved very motivating, and this motivation remained always, Iris experienced a sense of isolation within the art community in the early years. This isolation dissipated when

she started teaching and mentoring, where she began to feel a part of the art community for the first time:

From the first time I started being in the mentorship groups, I felt a sense of community in the art community. And I still feel that. I have a sense of connection to lots of other artists that I never felt before. I always felt like a complete island unto myself, until I joined the CARFAC (Canadian Artists Representation/ Le Front des Artistes Canadiens) group. So that was again unexpected. I thought there would be a really interesting dynamic with the individual, but I never expected this profound sense of connection to the art community that I got from the group, so it was really very meaningful. (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017)

Iris expected connection to individuals through this mentorship program, which she experienced, but was surprised by the connection to groups and community at large.

In the narrative of the participants, mentorship was important to them whether it was spoken about in terms of the value of having mentors or in being a mentor to others. In reflecting on her current place in her career Iris described wanting to share not only what she knows about art, but also about life. The boundaries and divisions between the two began to dissolve: “And I suppose as you get older you want to reach down as part of that mentorship...you want to help young people and say, ‘Don’t worry it’s going to be fine’” (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017). Mentorship for her seemed to be in a broader sense in this case, not referring just to her formal mentorship roles but to any young people she encountered.

In Iris’s narrative, while she experienced the benefits of a community of fellow artists, she was not able to find a mentor. A brief and unsatisfactory time in art school, coupled with a

determination to learn from others who had mastered figurative painting and to grow her technical skills as a painter meant that she needed to seek out an alternative option for a mentorship. In the context of lacking a physical mentor, in this case someone who had a higher level of technical skill to do the kind of painting she wanted to do, Iris had to turn to written and illustrated art texts: “the art that I saw that moved me would be my mentorship. I looked at that and thought oh, that was possible, I can do that” (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017). In reference to looking at the work of the old art masters Iris described the effect this had on her artists practice as a stand in for a mentor:

There were so many times I would think I wish I could ask them how they did that, how do they make those velvety blacks that are so incredibly dark and solid and yet transparent...so many questions about how to do things which I gradually eventually figured it out...I would say that would be my mentorship would have been looking at Rembrandt paintings and thinking wow I want to do that”. (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017)

Through these texts Iris studied the work of master painters, many from Europe prior to the twentieth century. In addition to studying the visual reproductions of these famous works of art, she also read the instructions that accompanied them which the authors described the various techniques, materials, and processes used by these master artists. The written texts and the works of the masters were in part her mentorship. In addition, Iris had to be both her own teacher and student and embody the role of mentor within herself. All the participants and artists in general do this to some degree, through experimentation and independent study. Yet for Iris this was in the context of the lack of a physical mentor, and thus it heightened the significance of this experience for her.

While Kim, another participant, was a mentor to both the students in his classes and to those who visited his framing shop, mentors were also important to his own narrative. Bill Epp, an influential artist in the Saskatchewan sculpture community, was a personal mentor for Kim. It was he who initially helped Kim to embrace the identity of artist as he had previously resisted identifying as an artist. Epp also operated a sculpture foundry and Kim referred to him as the center of the sculpture community at the time where people would gather, learn, and work under Epp's mentorship. The loss of this mentor was a significant enough occurrence in Kim's narrative that he described his experience after his mentor's death as "I was really washed aground." He changed artistic mediums completely after this event, stopping work as a sculptor and moved to work as a painter. Kim described this change in his artistic practice as akin to starting from zero.

Mentorship and negotiating boundaries. Bevin had experience working as both as an art educator and mentor in diverse environments as well as entrepreneurial experience as a gallery owner. Bevin began her career working at a small non-profit arts center as mentor to youth who had substantial needs for emotional and practical support. This was the beginning of Bevin's professional career as an artist and teacher having recently graduated from university. She identified her own learning in this mentorship role as significant during this early period in her career and found she relied on her own mentorship provided by the director at the time as they worked together to resolve issues and crises in the program. In this work at the youth center Bevin identified that she was learning to negotiate boundaries for her energy, time, and resources (notes based on transcript of conversation, Bevin & Laurel, 2017).

In the beginning of Bevin's seven years with the organization she would often bring her belongings to work to share with the youth, such as a bicycle or a stereo, items which often were

lost or stolen. She also spent many long hours in the evenings strategizing on how to cope with the issues that had come up during the day, identifying a level of emotional involvement that was unsustainable. Over time, negotiating boundaries related to her energy and resources became easier as she clarified for herself what she could offer as a mentor. More recently Bevin began working for a public art organization where she was engaged in education and described the professional support available there as enabling her to maintain clearer boundaries. She also felt that the difference between acting as an educator, and not a mentor contributed to her ability to maintain these boundaries of self. In an underfunded small community organization which had at times a staff of only three people, with Bevin acting as the sole teacher in the youth program, the experience was very different from the one at a larger art organization, with its numerous support staff and larger resources (notes based on transcript of conversation, Bevin & Laurel, 2017).

In community-based education artists may find themselves working with diverse organizations such as Bevin described, including in the non-profit, the commercial, and the public spheres. As time passed, she found that seeking balance between work and family life became more important to her, and contributed to her pursuing a change in her work life. Bevin proceeded to open a gallery in partnership with another artist. In making this transition to opening her own business, she aligned her work goals with her belief in the importance of finding a balance between family life, personal goals, and her work.

Coherence as Part of Experiencing Belonging

Carr (1986) emphasized that it would be overly simplistic and problematic to categorize areas of our life into strictly professional or private, that doing so denies the fluid and complex relationship between these different areas. The participants' experiences can be understood

through this framework, and in reflecting on Carr's views on coherence in terms of seeing the parts of our life as elements of a larger story. Although Iris identified one of her motivations for seeking teaching work as financial in the beginning, she spoke about how much more she found she had gained in this process. Her experience of belonging described earlier as a mentor with the CARFAC group can also be thought of in terms of coherence. Reflecting on Selkrig's (2011) findings that artists begin community-based work for financial reasons but find much more in terms of congruence between their own values, we can see how this coherence between the participants' lived experience and their practice in community-based work could contribute to building a sense of belonging.

Goodnough (2010) described imagination in terms of a mode of belonging in communities of practice as:

It focuses on self-awareness and reflection in relation to understanding others and their actions, connecting to new trajectories and locating ourselves in broader systems, creating new artefacts and processes, exploring new ways of doing things, and seeing new identities for ourselves. (p.169)

A shared experience of freedom and imagination in learning was the context for Iris's sense of belonging in the art community. The community-based classes she taught provided a counterpoint to her early experiences of feeling restricted by her own art school learning and feeling like an island unto herself (notes based on transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017). This new positive experience of learning enabled congruence with her life values and showed pathways of coherence in her stories to live by (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999).

At the youth arts program Bevin found that her teaching work here initially fit in with her values in terms of the benefits of engagement with community and belief in the ability to grow and learn through art. Bevin described the youth arts program:

The philosophy was in line with my own philosophy, so the idea of bringing art to everyone and making it accessible and not at all highbrow and only for educated people...as a way of gaining self-confidence, all of those things fit exactly with what I was wanting to do with art in the beginning. (transcript of conversation, Bevin & Laurel, 2017)

Bevin was engaged and motivated in her work at the youth center, yet over time she began to see that her goals in her artistic practice differed from the emphasis and goals of the organization, which orientated toward creating art with a focus on commercial value. After a time Bevin found that the focus of the youth arts organization was towards a commercially marketable art style which differed from her own artistic practice and personal artistic approach: “when I did bring some of my pieces (artworks), it was so different from what they were working on, and so different from the overall philosophy of the organization with their goals. And so it didn’t align with any of that” (transcript of conversations between Bevin & Laurel). Goodnough (2010) defined alignment in this way:

As a mode of belonging, alignment involves adhering to the global practices of a community. Aligning with the practices and discourse of a broader community allows members to direct their energies towards common goals (e.g. enhancing student learning) and promotes the coordination of efforts. It involves establishing common ground and defining broad visions. (p.169)

Bevin spoke often to a desire to be able to construct a practice that allowed her the freedom to work in a way where her teaching, art practice, and goals for community aligned. In this context, Bevin considers her work as a gallery owner, and how she wanted to provide a gallery that allowed an experience that would connect with visitor's day to day life. She describes her gallery's approach and choice of location at the local farmers' market as:

It aligned with people who wanted local food...I think people who care about what they are putting in their bodies, also care about what they are putting on their walls and how they create their space, how they inject creativity into their everyday life. (transcript of conversation, Bevin & Laurel, 2017)

She wanted the gallery to be accessible in price and content so that people did not become intimidated or frustrated but were still able to view or purchase work that had a degree of depth to it.

Belonging in community was an important issue in her narrative as well as in her paintings, which she described as being about "what our relationships are like, is there community and what is our sense of community?" (transcript of conversation, Bevin & Laurel, 2017). Bevin found it important to connect to a sense of place: "Day to day was what I wanted to make sure that was what I was gaining inspiration from, and not just ignoring and living for those moments when I was away from the city, and so it was my way of befriending the city and finding that inspiration in everyday life" (transcript of conversation, Bevin & Laurel, 2017). Bevin described her process of finding inspiration for her artwork above, but it seems in this description to be only loosely tied to her artistic process and it suggests a general life approach. The language used above, which suggests connection between the artistic process and identity making, shows that for Bevin there is not a strong division between the two. If her art practice,

gallery ownership, and teaching experience were all related and connected to her identity making with a sense of coherence, Bevin would be able to experience a sense of belonging:

I think when you really send out roots to a place, if you want your everyday life to have some sort of merit or value or just overall wellbeing, it's good to be connected with your neighbours and your community, so it's good to reach out, and then you feel a sense of responsibility to your community too. (transcript of conversation, Bevin & Laurel, 2017)

Bevin described her connections to community as occurring through the institutions she works with, where the public spaces act as meeting points. Her experience as an artist who created a significant number of public murals, both as a leader of a team of painters as well as on her own, provided the possibility of engaging with the community as she created the artwork on site.

Bevin spoke about themes and style in her artwork, in this case the urban scenes she paints that deal with the subject of relationship and community. She further considered how when we walk through cities, we can see ourselves are reflected in the windows of the homes and buildings: "When you are downtown in cities and you can see things happening in the reflections... it is also a reflection back on yourself" (transcript of conversation, Bevin & Laurel, 2017). In her paintings which are finished with a high gloss top layer, here to the viewer can see themselves reflected back in the work.

Experiencing an affinity with those we teach. In considering Kim's experiences, the value of seeing oneself in those we teach comes to the forefront. Kim spoke to a sense of affinity with those he taught. This experience of affinity impacted on his feeling of belonging. In community education there are many opportunities to support this experience. Often there are not significant divisions in terms of qualifications or professional titles between those who are teachers and students. While the students and in some cases the organization recognize the

teacher's skills and experience, this is not emphasized. There is the possibility for both students and teachers to feel a sense of equality or affinity. In this context there is opportunity to see the student's experience as a mirror for what the teacher has or is experiencing.

When I asked Kim about his sense of belonging in the art world, he spoke of a hierarchy in the art community. He made comparisons to his coming from a long line of peasant farmers and likened his place in the art community to that of the peasant farmer. While his many years of varied experience and artistic accomplishments suggested he could easily view himself in another light, his affinity with his beginner students was clearly reflected in his teaching: "My place is more with beginners, so-called amateurs: people who are struggling to continue their artwork and who have really not achieved that level of success" (transcript of conversation, Kim & Laurel, 2017). This affinity with his students suggested that the experience of witnessing his students' process, their struggle and subsequent growth, must validate and affect his willingness to continue with his own work.

Kim spoke to how he noticed that there was a continuum of experience where he viewed his fine art framing shop, his teaching studio, and home studio spaces as being connected: "I feel there is a continuum, that my art practice is not distinct from my teaching practice, they are all part of one whole, and they all feed each other. So I feel very fortunate now" (transcript of conversation, Kim & Laurel, 2017). After Kim discussed how his studio at home as a teenager was a refuge for him I asked him if now when he went to work in his studio did it still have these qualities for him his response was:

Yes, but now I am so fortunate because I am always in that refuge, always in that state, even here at the shop, it's just like an extension of my studio, it's not my painting but, like I said I don't really see the break, its' a continuous space. And then I have a studio

of my own in my home, in the backyard, and then when I move into the teaching studio, the same thing, it's my space and we are talking about art, and trying to advance art.

(transcript of conversation, Kim & Laurel, 2017)

Belonging and Temporality

Iris was aware of the shifting nature of art trends and places herself outside this transitory artistic culture. In many instances her descriptions placed her as an observer of these shifts, and this provided a picture of a stable sense of self and of her artist identity. In her earlier memories she identified this experience as being more difficult. Her experience of external validation seems to have shifted over time. As Iris changed through her life experiences and the knowledge gained from her work, the nature of how she was impacted by external sources changed. While she was no less aware of the effects of critiques of her work, she was folding that knowledge into her teaching and mentoring of younger artists.

In Kim's narrative he shifted between back and forth between time periods. He did not seem to view his own narrative in a particularly linear way. However, Kim was conscious of how different phases in his life and artistic career began for him, and what the catalysts were. He demonstrated an interest in why we are led down certain paths, and the key pivotal moments, or people in our life who influence transitions in our narrative. Kim often described his belief system as being influenced by the idea that the parts of our life are not distinct. It seems that he saw his past and present as connected in this way as well, as he told of his experiences.

As the narrative deepens a shifting occurs. Iris's sharing of these experiences of connection during our conversations began to hint at an understory that emerged in Iris's narrative. In my meeting with her, Iris began by speaking about how she experienced a sense of isolation in the art world due to her painting style that was so different from the mainstream, and

due to her challenges in achieving commercial success. Later in my conversations with Iris as she proceeded to tell of her connections to the community, a different narrative of satisfaction and belonging began to come to the forefront.

As Iris discussed her art career in our early conversations, the dialogue focused around an experience of disappointment at not having the level of commercial success she felt would have been expected with her level of technical skill and expertise:

When I moved here everything was either formalist abstraction or landscape, impressionist landscape and that was all there was. Nobody was doing the figure...and so I felt like a complete outsider. And I always did for the longest time. I always felt my interest in painting always stepped outside what mainstream art was, and I always felt I didn't belong in it. (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017)

Yet when we progressed further in our conversations to where the pace of recollection slows down and moves deeper into a subject, this initial part of her narrative in which she spoke of the isolation, all but disappeared. As we discussed the individual parts of her career, there emerged remembrances of connection, belonging, and a positive picture of affirmation through the areas of her practice. When the disappointments were mentioned in this context, they were presented as a regret. This was a regret that she could have helped other artists more, or have been allowed to touch more lives through her art with a wider audience. It seems a disappointment not for what she may have lost, but to not have been able to share more of her knowledge with others. Her disappointments shared in these later conversations were more often told in reference to her reflections of earlier times in her career.

In Iris's narrative there is a revisiting of the metaphor of water, but the second time it is not water for a desert but rather water for a growing plant. This change in metaphor illustrates

the shifts between reflecting on the level of external validation in her career in negative and then more positive lights. When I asked Iris what kept her going in the early days of her career before teaching, she spoke of an image of the artist as resilient:

We are kind of like plants, like if you could have lots of water and fertilizer it would be great even if you give them just a drop now and again, its' just enough to keep you going. So the odd little success or what not is sort of essential to keep you from getting too dispirited. (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017)

What seemed initially to be an unspoken story of satisfaction and belonging in her narrative shifted as Iris spoke of her teaching and mentoring work and the later years of her art practice. When considering her artist's career in the early years, the narrative of lack of commercial success would emerge, but when Iris viewed her teaching work together with her artist's career, or on its own, the teaching work had as a primary narrative, satisfaction and validation. In our third meeting as Iris was reflecting on art's power to lift the human spirit, and the responses she had received about her work, she began to speak about a career in the arts as a life of satisfaction. Iris spoke about making art that affects you deeply and gives you a feeling of connection as a human being:

It is so satisfying when you get to see a painting like that, it feels like a really worthy thing to try to make paintings like that. Even if you work in obscurity for your whole life. And I think mine do that, because I get a lot of response from people they will say something like 'I saw that piece and it just moved me so much it made me see myself differently', ... I feel like I have had a life of satisfaction. (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017)

This statement of satisfaction was repeated again in our last interview: “To make a living in the arts, it’s very rare...but on the other hand it’s also one that is very satisfying” (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017). This comment caused me to reflect on two things: first, how different this was from our initial meeting, and second, to notice how the telling and retelling of her narrative brought her to a point where she was compelled to state this feeling of satisfaction in her work.

Belonging in Summary

Validation, both in verbal and nonverbal forms, confirmed for the participants their belonging as teaching artists. Looking at their experience working with mentors, and as mentors themselves, highlighted the fluidity of the divisions between their teaching practice and their artist practice. Kim’s reflections on the connections between the areas of his life illustrated these fluid divisions. The efforts to gain or maintain coherence between these different areas at times resulted in transitions and disruptions for the participants, which was most clearly illustrated in Bevin’s experience.

The participants’ teaching approach reflected their recognition of the value of community. The experience of a sense of belonging was interwoven with the experience of teaching in hands-on learning formats. It was also shaped by the qualities found within community-based work, including the ability to see similarities and experience affinity with those they taught. Belonging for these participants was about the purposeful shaping of a context for this belonging to occur, for themselves, within their working communities. This context involved their teaching work but was also linked to their artist practice.

Chapter Five:

Agency

Agency for teaching artists in community-based practice is an important element of their identity making experience. For the participants in this study, there was a significant degree of freedom in their practice and opportunity for having a leading role in building this practice. In order to understand the identity making experience of these participants, it is important to consider how they engaged with their agency as they developed their practice over time. To understand how their identity making and agency shaping occurred, the interactions the participants had with the professional communities of which they were a part and with those they taught must be explored. The meaning of these interactions for the participants is also important to consider to gain an understanding of this experience. In this chapter, the processes of creativity and imagination are considered in relation to the experiences of the teaching artists in this study and how these processes worked towards the shaping of their agency. It is educative to look at how the participants' agency impacted those they taught, and how it was connected to their stories to live by (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999).

The focus of this research is the learning that takes place within community and relationship, and for these purposes this chapter examines agency primarily as it is experienced relationally:

Teachers increasingly need to work across professional boundaries, and this requires and calls forth the capacity to work in collaboration with other teachers and with other professions. This capacity, relational agency, is evidenced in being able to utilize the

support given by others as well as being a resource for others. (Lipponen & Kumpulainen, 2011, p.812)

Agency as experienced individually is also discussed as relevant to the artist's studio practice.

The ways in which the participants understanding of their capacity for agency emerged from their storied lives (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990) were reflected throughout the conversations with the participants. In reflecting on the focus revealed through the telling and retelling of their experiences, my observations were directed towards considering how teaching artists experience and understand their capacity for agency. I also saw evidence of ways this experience of their capacity flowed back into their life story in general and their artistic practice in particular.

Meaning Making, Imagination, and Agency

Holzer (2009) spoke about the importance of imagination in learning. She referred to meaning making as a layered process that can be thought of in terms of a scaffolding of capacities and experience: "In order to take action, meaning must be created. And in order to create meaning, an imaginative act must occur" (p. 386). She further described this scaffolding as she spoke to how noticing deeply, and embodying knowledge, can lead to meaning making. As the teaching artists in this study engaged in imaginative actions and experiences in their teaching and art practices, a sense of meaning in their work may have emerged gradually. This meaning which emerged from a scaffolding of experiences (Holzer, 2009) over time may have helped build their understanding of their capacity for agency.

The participants' own growing sense of agency impacted their teaching practice, as they helped to inspire agency in those they taught. When I asked Iris about her views on the role of imagination in her teaching and in the creative process, Iris said the important part for her was

just to give people “that sense of permission that it is okay to go where they want to go” (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017). In regard to people coming to Iris’s class and painting an image that was more decorative and conventional in the beginning, she noticed that for “a lot of people, there’s more there, they are drawn to painting because there is more. But they start there, they start with just the conventional, and I think if you get that little spark going and encourage them, sometimes they will go ‘this is what I really want to paint but I thought I should do that because that’s what everyone says I should paint, but I kind of really want to paint this.’ Well I say paint what you want to paint” (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017). This was an imaginative act, painting what gave them that sense of personal meaning, that spark, and could be considered to be laying a foundation for future agentic actions. This interaction was situated within the studio environment and with the support of both the classroom community and Iris, their teacher.

As referenced earlier in the supporting literature section, Dewey (1934) spoke of the imaginative experience. We can look closely at his description of the imaginative experience as follows: “It is a way of seeing and feeling things as they compare to an integral whole” (p.267). We can consider that this way of seeing and feeling as described by Dewey guided the participants in this study to make meaning of their imaginative experiences. Iris described how her ability to gather qualitative information from the world around her was related to her experience as a painter: “It’s a profound way of seeing the structures of the world. They are permeable and related and echoing back and forth in each other.... you see the relationships” (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017). The participants in this study spoke to being aware that they were using their capacities for seeing and feeling to gather information into an understanding of what was occurring in teaching situations. Iris described how she learned to

gather information in teaching situations: “I think you are generally sensitive to what you see (as artists), but I think by teaching you develop that sensitivity to people more....It really is quite a job of translation basically, because people don’t have this universal language that makes sense” (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017). For these participants learning through teaching was a meaningful phenomenon as they had not pursued a degree in education. Kim, however had enrolled in optional courses in a teaching and learning in higher education center to enhance his teaching skills. Interestingly he also identified that the significant learning for him was through teaching itself: “It was these classes that taught me, of course how else do you learn to teach? Except of course by teaching and learning, from the students, from the classes” (transcript of conversation between Kim and Laurel, 2017). The participants made meaning of imaginative experiences that occurred both in their teaching environments and in their studio practice. They learned to see these as part of “an integral whole” as described by Dewey. This understanding, gained through their imaginative experiences and the ensuing meaning making, guided them in the shaping of their agency.

Sarbin (2004) made connections between our ability to imagine alternate narratives for ourselves and how we take action in our lives: “imaginings are instances of attenuated role-taking” (p.17) and he further described how these form embodiments “which become a part of the total context from which persons decide how to live their lives” (p.17). Imagination has an important role in agency shaping. Sarbin described imagination as constructing stories of what may be where one may see openings to take “agentic action” (p.12).

Bevin shared a relevant example from her work with a group of adult newcomers who faced multiple barriers to employment and stability. She was able to see the benefits of imaginative and agentic actions in their artwork for creating change in their lives. Bevin had to

engage in an imaginative belief in what these adults could do as she encouraged them in their artistic growth. Bevin spoke of an example of how she encouraged progression in the creative process and learning of this group. She noticed they were initially fearful of doing any artwork that was not prescribed in a step by step manner or by reproducing someone else's image, such as a photograph. Here I could see an example of Bevin's efforts to work toward the goal of helping those she taught to produce artwork that reflected their own life experience and interests, and to take more risks in their creative process, accessing their imagination and therefore communicate her confidence in their ability to do so.

Lugones (1987) considered that self-construction can benefit from an openness to the unexpected, and from a playfulness in our endeavors. This playfulness can be an openness to who we are and can become. After some experience with safer, more predictable projects, Bevin could envision that the adults were ready to move on to more freely expressive work that reflected their own personal narrative. She used her skills in observation and personal experience with the creative process, noticing progressions in their artwork, and imagined their ability to handle the future challenges of this more expressive work. It seems that through this work, engaging the imagination of those she taught and helping them to see their ability to create an impact in their own life through their artwork and their actions, Bevin was also engaging them in the shaping of their sense of agency. Greene (1995) spoke to how we can use imagination to bring about change in our lives and thus to feel more like an agent in this taking of initiative. She emphasized that the ability to imagine alternate and better possibilities for ourselves requires community, and the support of this community to which we belong. She described being in community as "a space infused by the kind of imaginative awareness that enables those involved to imagine alternative possibilities for their own becoming" (p.39). In the workshop for new

immigrants Bevin was able to provide this support for the group's becoming, and the group members themselves also provided this support for each other.

Sarbin (1997) said that the answer to the question *who am I* depends on the context. In their teaching practice, the participants' engagement with the question *who am I* developed and changed over time in relation to this work and the interactions with those they taught, and with other teaching artists. Huber and Yeom (2017) described the context of our understanding of who we are and of our agency consists of personal, social and material environments. They illustrate this narrative understanding of agency and its connections to identity making as follows:

Given the continuous and holistic nature of storied experience, which is both shaped by and reshaped as people interact in and with personal, social and material environments, agency too, is negotiated in this midst, in this midst of a life in motion, inseparable from identities becoming. (p.301)

This interpretation of agency as negotiated in a process inseparable from the negotiating of identity is similarly interpreted by Buchanan (2015). She described how the process of making connections between our personal lives and various workspaces may occur, including the connections between identity and agency. Buchanan illustrated how teachers do this as they:

Actively use their own pre-existing identities and interpret, learn from, evaluate, and appropriate the new conditions of their work in schools and classrooms. In this process, their identities are reformed and remade and professional agency is carved out. (p.701)

The fluidity of identity is highlighted in this example. Describing agency as being carved out suggested an active engagement in the shaping of agency and a process that connects directly with the shaping of identity.

One perspective shared by all three participants in this study was that making art which is reflective of who you are and your narrative is very important for growth and change. The participants looked at the importance of this for their own practice but also in their teaching work. Both Iris and Kim spoke to how encouraging those they taught to create work that challenged their growth as artists also encouraged the personal growth and confidence of those they taught. One of the primary goals for Iris was that the adults she taught would show greater engagement with their work. She saw developing a personal narrative related to one's work as a skill she was able to help them with. Iris aimed to guide the adults to find the subject matter and style that truly inspired them. She did this by listening, encouraging, and reflecting back to them when she noticed they seemed disengaged or uncertain. Iris described her approach to teaching the adults in her classes: "Ultimately you have to find your sense of color, you have to find your own content in terms of what moves you, and what is meaningful to you" (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017). Iris described art's role in her teaching in terms of making the transition from finding meaning to action: "I think that is part of what art can do is sort of show the path and say don't be afraid, go forward" (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017). This expression of one's identity and discovery of one's own narrative through creating art can be an important step in shaping a sense of agency. Iris communicated her belief in the value of what the adults she taught had to offer, and helped them to express this.

Inspiring Agency in Others through Care in Teaching

Iris described her understanding of her ability to make an impact through her intentional effort to offer a teaching approach that provided a positive environment for those she taught to learn in. Care in teaching can be considered as follows:

The carer is first of all attentive.... The attention of the carer is receptive. Its objective is to understand what the cared-for is experiencing – to hear and understand the needs expressed. From the perspective of care ethics, the teacher as carer is interested in the expressed needs of the cared-for. (Noddings, 2012, p. 772)

Iris considered her life story and mobilized her resources to transform an early negative experience in art school into something positive through her nurturing and caring for students, “in a way my teaching is a reaction against my learning experience” (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017). Teachers who have an understanding of their own agency can transfer this knowledge to those they teach as “relational agency in pupils is likely to be enhanced by teachers who also experience it” (Edwards & D’Arcy, 2006, p. 151).

Iris described her teaching approach as:

To me that (art school experience) has really informed my teaching. I think it is really important to be really honest with people but in a nurturing and safe way so that they feel they can express whatever they are thinking and feeling without fear that they will be jumped on. So you help them to mature. (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017)

This experience of her agency, in this case her ability to transform a negative learning experience into something positive through her teaching, was done in relationship, in community.

Iris spoke about her belief that artists grow and flourish in environments that are nurturing and encouraging. Iris’s reflections can be viewed next to the work and words of Noddings (2005) as Noddings spoke about the benefits of a caring approach in education when the teacher is attentive to the person they are teaching: “When we confirm someone, we spot a better self and encourage its development” (p.25). Iris considered that there might be some people who respond to a more adversarial approach, but thought that in general she believed

most would respond to a more nurturing approach. She traced this belief and her subsequent teaching approach to her own art school experience, which appeared to be a very adversarial environment and she did not feel free to explore who she was as an artist. The fact that those Iris taught returned again and again to her classes and engaged in this nurturing teaching environment reinforced her beliefs, and to see these adults grow and mature as artists in this context gave Iris motivation to continue with this type of teaching approach.

Place and Agency

The place where this research occurred and where all the participants lived and worked is significant as we look at the experience of agency for these participants. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) define place as “the specific concrete, physical and topological boundaries of place or sequences of places where the inquiry and events take place” (p. 480). The research and most of the events in the participants stories occurred in a mid-sized Canadian city in the prairies, isolated geographically from other large centers. For Iris this place was relevant as she progressed in her career. Iris was aware of her role in this city, isolated from other larger centers geographically and this awareness impacted on her narrative and identity making. She was able to establish a teaching identity where it was possible for her to both see herself as solitary, lacking others to share in the exchange of knowledge, yet as having something of value to offer in a context where there may not have been many others with the same skill set as there may have been in a larger center, and a possible recognition by the community of this skill set.

The Creative Process and the Landscape of the Art Studio

An artist’s studio with its physical and metaphorical space and related practices and processes was explored. These elements of the participant’s practices were considered along with the notion of a continuum of space and experience between an artist’s studio practice, and

their teaching practice. Through an experience of their own agency in their studio art practice, the participants began to feel they could rely on their own knowledge and abilities in future interactions, and in their teaching practice. Clandinin and Connelly (1998) described teachers as knowing persons when speaking about the concept of personal practical knowledge:

a term designed to capture the idea of experience in a way that allows us to talk about teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons. Personal practical knowledge is in the teacher's past experience, in the teacher's present mind and body, and in the future plans and actions. Personal practical knowledge is found in the person's practice. It is, for any one teacher, a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future to deal with the exigencies of a present situation. (p.25)

The participants' work in their studios, taking risks and resolving problems in the creative process, prepared them to help others to feel confidence in their own abilities, and as knowing persons. In the landscape of the studio and through the creative act, artists learn that as a result of one's actions and efforts something new can be created (the art piece), and that they can resolve problems (color, composition, design) and find solutions. The participants were able to have an embodied experience of their agency in this way (as they engaged their bodies in this making of something new and in resolving the problems as they painted and manipulated the art materials).

Eisner (2005) stated that we are not born with a belief that we can alter the world, that we must learn this, and the value of this lesson should not be underestimated: "Developing a sense of personal causation is not trivial, it represents a disposition towards the world, one that says that 'I can make things occur, I am not simply at the mercy of the environment'" (p.61).

Experiencing our ability for personal causation, for what we can do and how we can have an

impact on the world can be an initial step towards agency. In future situations a person may move from this incidental experience of personal causation and proceed to take a deliberate step towards impacting the world, and having an experience of agency. Eisner (2005) described the arts as a medium in which we can develop this sense of personal causation. Eisner believed that through creating art we can learn to judge our own work, and thus to make judgments in life for situations in which we have no precedent. The creative process, which can occur in many different settings and environments, had a role in the shaping of the agency of the participants in this study. Booth (2003) saw that for teaching artists in community-based practice the different roles they engaged in may vary in terms of balance and how these roles interact for each person. He found that it was through the creative process where the identities of artist and teacher were connected.

The Physical place and context of the art studio. In looking at the role the creative process can have in agency shaping, the communication between the artist and the actual physical place of the studio is important to consider. Pigrum (2007) spoke to the studio-based artist's workplace, considering the importance of what materials and tools are readily available and what is possible to create given the possibilities and limitations of the environment of a particular studio. He described the topography of the workplace as: "Action that is situated and involves a relation to things and place that involves orderings, choices, operations, bodily movements, and alignments and duration that inform the concrete work" (p.292). Pigrum spoke of this topography of the artist's workplace in terms of the communication. He saw it as a communication between the artist and the space, and considered that this communication was linked to action. The participants experienced agency in relationship with others in their teaching, which complemented what they had experienced in the studio. The participants were

instructing those they taught to work with the same visual mediums they worked with in their own studio practice. The common elements such as the same art materials as well as the common elements of the studio environment facilitated the ease of making connections between their two experiences, of experiencing their agency in the studio and in teaching interactions.

Studio as refuge. The participants described their studio as a refuge or a place that they felt was just for them. They all worked out of a home-based studio which may have accentuated the experience of the studio as refuge. However, wherever it is located, the art studio can be considered a safe space whether it is located inside or outside the home environment. The artist's personal studio is a place where the artist is able to control the working conditions to a significant degree. Iris described the studio as a space in which she feels a strong connection to her sense of self: "It's an extension of my mind space... when I go into my studio it's where I go internally and I think. So it's kind of more like a protected space..." (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017). Iris also described her studio as a protected "womb like" space or alternately like an "inviolable private sanctum" (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017). Although she has visitors come to the space as models for her paintings, as interested buyers, and as students, she was aware of the difference in the quality and nature of her work completed during their presence: "I don't do my deep work when they are there" (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017). While Kim's teaching studio was shared with other teachers, for the time period of the class he could feel a sense of ownership over the space, and that his own goals and artistic values and beliefs had a place there.

Agency within Teaching and Community

Moate and Ruohotie-Lyhty (2014) consider the importance of connections and relationships with the learning environment and community, which in this example is for

student-teachers, as a process of strengthening connections “between who they are (identity), what they do and can do (agency) and with whom they are engaging (community)” (p.260). In this representation the three aspects of identity, agency, and community are presented as of equal importance, showing that one needs to engage all three elements. These three elements would interact over a longer period. Moate and Ruohotie-Lyhty also spoke to the importance of how we develop through multiple encounters, relationships, and contexts. Examining the instability in the teaching environment, the authors present teaching as having the possibility of creating a unifying story: “...with discontinuous self-experiences unified in one teacher story through constant inner negotiation” (p.252).

Bevin, one of the participants, described being an active part of one’s community as giving life greater meaning, and this was an important part of her artistic and teaching identity. She spoke on several occasions about the value she placed on being part of her local community. Bevin’s interactions with her local community in relation to her artwork and teaching were important in shaping her sense of identity and of agency. In her artistic career she had many unusual opportunities to interact with the community around her artistic efforts. Artists often install their work in a gallery, and have the chance to experience the public’s feedback infrequently, such as only during the opening reception for example. In Bevin’s case, as co-owner of a gallery and onsite manager, in addition to displaying the work of other artists in her gallery she often displayed her own work. She described how this unique situation allowed her to interact directly with the public about her artwork, and how it allowed her to directly experience and speak to the public about their reactions to her artwork on a regular basis. Similarly, Bevin had many interactions with community in the many instances where she created public mural paintings. Mural painting had been a significant part of Bevin’s artistic career. In

these cases, she painted the mural onsite, sometimes inside public buildings, or in an outside space, with many passersby stopping to ask about the mural, at times offering encouragement or gifts. These offerings seemed to be the public's way of thanking Bevin for her efforts to improve the local community.

Burkitt (2016) spoke to how we must view agency in all its complexity, by not simply seeing this phenomenon as centered on a person's ability to act reflexively and consider one's actions consciously, but instead see agency in its relational sense as "people producing particular effects in the world and on each other through their relational connections rather than as singular agents or actors" (p.323). Burkitt explained that these relational connections can be thought of in terms of webs and networks which are connected at multiple points.

Although Bevin created the designs for the murals and at times painted them alone, the process of creating a mural involved a significant amount of support from others, such as prepping the surface of the wall, applying base coats or sealants, setting up scaffolding, and consulting with community partners and city planners. Many times, as well, she would be involved in directing a team of artists who collaboratively painted the mural. At times these artists were ones she was currently mentoring or had mentored in the past. In Bevin's experience we can see that the relational connections as described by Burkitt (2016) occurred at multiple points. Perhaps Bevin's goals to create artwork about community were at times inspired by the experience of connection she had through her mural projects, which would also have reaffirmed the work she continued to do mentoring and teaching in the community. As described earlier, Bevin's work trajectory moved from commercial gallery ownership back into community education after a time. Bevin's connection with community work, her artistic goals to portray

community life in her paintings, and the shaping of her agency are all connected in this complex way.

In reference to the work being done on the subject of identity and agency in teachers' education, Moate and Ruohotie-Lyhty (2014) identify a gap: "Whilst identity and agency work recognize the important dimensions of *who* and *how* in education, the further dimensions of *with whom* and *why* are often absent" (p.250). Their research seeks to provide a more complex look at teacher education and growth. They suggest looking to the work of Dewey (1933) in which they encourage viewing an individual's interactions with the environment in a manner that "is reciprocal and active: I act upon the world as the world acts upon me and we are both changed in the process" (Moate & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2014, p.250).

The Challenges of the Creative Process

Kim was familiar with the difficulties of the creative process. He valued the challenges as an opportunity for growth. Kim's recollections provided numerous examples that he is an artist who has not shied away from challenges. He seemed to seek out personally challenging environments. While there were many examples of this in his narrative, one example illustrates this well. Kim and his wife are both artists, and in the first part of his artistic career Kim worked as a sculptor. As a family they moved with their young child to northern Saskatchewan to work as artists in a rural forested environment. Here they lived for seven years, cutting wood for heat and living in this isolated and rustic structure that served as both home and sculpture studio. Kim spoke to the value of struggle in the creative process for learning about one's capabilities, using the metaphor of a ship in a rough sea journey: "In the midst of disaster, in the wake of disaster, washed up on the beach of some unknown distant land, that is when you find out what you are supposed to do as a painter" (transcript of conversation, Kim & Laurel, 2017). Given the

difficulties of the creative process, Kim saw that often the most important thing for him to do as a teacher was to encourage the student in their work. While the artistic ability of the adults he taught varied widely, he strongly believed in the benefits of making art beyond making a commercially successful art piece: “There is a different kind of success that is taking place that is inner, that is unknown to me, that I can’t possibly know about, or even help with directly” (transcript of conversation, Kim & Laurel, 2017).

Professional Freedom and Experiencing a Capacity for Agency

The professional freedom inherent in the community-based education settings where the participants taught allowed for the shaping of their agency as teachers. Greene (1978) considers the element of action important when thinking about freedom and choice:

Freedom is the power of vision and the power to choose. It involves the capacity to assess situations, in such a way that lacks can be defined, openings identified, and possibilities revealed. It is realized only when action is taken.... (p. 102)

Kim spoke about the professional freedom he experienced as a teacher in the community arts program. However, he understood that this freedom meant that there were no other professionals around to help him during his classes if he would ever have needed it. He was the sole teacher for that class and there were no administrative personnel on site during class hours. Kim interpreted this situation as an experience of freedom in which he did not feel he had any interference in how he was able to teach, “no interference, I just go and do what I feel I need to do. And that, that’s a good start” (transcript of conversation between Kim & Laurel, 2017). He later referred to some of the community learning experiences he had helped organize such as the symposiums for the Prairie Sculptors Association which reflected his belief in his capabilities: “I have often been excited about a certain project and then was just like let’s do that, and I would

just go ahead and carry it out somehow” (transcript of conversation between Kim & Laurel, 2017). In an environment of professional freedom Kim had to imagine what the class he was going to teach would be like, and the possibilities which may be present in this future situation.

Iris experienced the same professional freedom in the structure of the community-based classes she taught; she was able to share her painting style and philosophy with no set curriculum. She was relatively free to teach in a way that reflected who she was and what she believed. Although Iris at times referenced different authors or master painters in her classes, she was able to draw on her personal practical knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) both in her course design and in her teaching style.

The participants in this study understood themselves as knowing persons (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998) with a capacity for agency gained in part from the experience of a degree of professional freedom in their teaching situations, impacted on their studio practice as well. In this way their experience of their agency in teaching practice folded back into their narrative as artists. The participants identified that as they gained trust in their own knowledge, they were able to work in the studio in a more productive way, even with a limited amount of time. The demands of teaching and other work often left less time for the participant’s own studio practice. They identified maturity as artists as well as engagement with art during their other work as mitigating any resentment they may otherwise have had for loss of time for their own art practice. Kim in particular identified a shift in his feelings of resentment about time away from art that he used to experience in earlier years. He noticed he had a sense of assurance that when he did have time, he would be able to work efficiently, and he knew that he would still be able to produce work that was satisfying for him.

The temporal aspects of freedom and agency. An experience of a degree of restriction on Bevin's freedom to teach art in a style that aligned with her own art practice, seemed to inspire Bevin to one of her major agentic actions in acquiring co-ownership and management of her own art gallery. She described this new professional environment as one of greater freedom in the beginning: "and not have any restrictions on what kind of artwork, I mean we were the ones who decided what to show and when" (transcript of conversations between Bevin & Laurel). Professional and artistic freedom for Bevin was experienced in a manner that was fluid and temporal in nature. While she was often the only teacher on site at the youth program and had a degree of freedom in how she constructed her classes and program, there were some restrictions on the type of art she was able to teach. Later in her gallery ownership Bevin had freedom in the sense that she was able to create and promote artwork of any style she chose. Restrictions on her freedom came again as time passed and as the demands of business ownership limited the time and energy she had to act on this freedom, which resulted in limited opportunity to work on her own artwork. Her later work as a community art educator likely came with its own fluctuations in freedom and space for agency.

A continuity of experience was described by Dewey (1938) as "every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after" (p.35). Reflecting on experience in this way, we can consider that the layers of Iris's early art training and her own challenges and successes in her artistic career are part of how she experienced her students' learning. Iris was able to evaluate and organize the creative experience of those she taught through gentle guidance and reflecting back to them what she saw occurring. This experiential learning structure provided opportunity for Iris to see tangible evidence of her teaching efforts and the value in her artistic approach, in the form of the

student's evolving painting. While there were times when the student did not absorb the teaching, or did not absorb it immediately, when it did improve their painting and their engagement with their work, it provided direct feedback for Iris in terms of the effectivity of her teaching methods. When Iris was involved with the adults in their creative process in the way described above, she was learning and incorporating this knowledge into her teaching. In the classroom setting the adults were painting, and she was immersed in the visual evidence of the benefits of her teaching efforts.

Agency in Summary

Throughout this research into the experience of teaching artists in community-based practice, agency was understood as a complex phenomenon that is continually being renegotiated in the midst of our storied lives (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990). For teaching artists in community-based practice, the shaping of agency is a complex process: this process involves a layering of experience in which there is a growth of understanding of themselves as knowing persons (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998), as experienced in their teaching environments and interactions and in their artists practice. For the participants in this study, the shaping of their sense of agency was not separate from the processes of creativity, artistic growth and imagination, and was expressly related to the landscape of the art studio environment.

Chapter Six:

Discussion

Returning to a Beginning to Reframe an Ending

As I look at where my research journey has brought me I feel compelled to remember the beginning, where the wonders in my research began to take shape for me. As researchers involved in narrative inquiry work, we are called to keep in mind our own journey and to notice and allow the research's impact on our own life as we engage in the living of this research work. Clandinin (2013) states that "narrative inquiry is an ongoing reflexive and reflective methodology" (p.55). It was with these things in mind that I looked back to what I see as the seeds of my research journey.

Having just graduated from the Bachelor of Fine Arts program, I had moved from Saskatoon to Vancouver. Here in Vancouver I was beginning a fifteen-month graduate level diploma in Art Therapy. For this program, in addition to the course work and the practical component of the program, I was required to complete a major paper involving primary research. This would be my first experience with primary research and would essentially be the beginnings of the wonders that I carried with me into this current study and for the requirements of the Master's in Education. In the art therapy program, I was encountering another professional community of which I was going to be a part, different in that in this case it was the art therapy community, not the education community. However, this experience was similar as in this case I was also an artist like my participants, questioning and wondering what it meant to bring belonging in another community of practice into one's identity making.

Beginning this new program in art therapy, I was also wondering about who I was in relation to the members of my cohort. I saw that the other art therapy diploma students came

from many different academic backgrounds such as nursing and psychology. Yet as a new graduate from the Bachelor of Fine Arts program, I was still building my identity as an artist and asking myself questions about what my practice would look like. I was exploring what direction I wanted to take with my art, with what style or medium, or would I do abstract art or work that was more conceptual. Here in a seaside community in North Vancouver, I began to feel that it was important to me that the pieces of my learnings came together somehow.

Even then, those many years ago, the beginning threads that would form my current research wonders were emerging. A few years later, as a student pursuing graduate studies in education, thoughts of my art therapy research project were not far from my mind. This was both for the wonders it had elicited in me that still lingered, and for the remembered search for how one can find connections between two communities of practice. In that previous research I was focused on the disconnections and titled the project “Examining the disconnection between the art and the art therapy communities: Implications for today’s student” (Boerma, 2006).

In my efforts to bring coherence to my story, I created a transition and a change just like the participants in this study had done as I embarked on this research journey in the Department of Educational Foundations. Once I named this experience and these efforts as seeking coherence, it brought new meaning and significance to this endeavor.

As I reflect back, I notice that this wondering about how we can find integration began even then, in Vancouver. I see that I seek similar threads of connection and integration in my work and research life now. When I began my graduate studies in education, I was the only student in the program with a fine arts background, and one of a few who was not a school teacher. Wonders about belonging were still present on my mind at this time. In addition to

thinking about belonging to a community, it was these in-between spaces where I live within my own work, which drew my attention.

In my work in learning and engagement at the local art museum, I am aware of the negotiating I do to find ways to bring together my learnings in art therapy, fine arts, and education. After immersing myself in the narratives of the participants of this study, I no longer see this negotiating as a problem to be resolved, as I did in my art therapy research, but view it now more as being aware of how I am living with and working in, these in-between spaces.

Moving from Resolving Disconnection to Living and Working in Borderland Spaces

It is interesting that at that early stage in my professional identity making, while the context was different, my research wonders were already forming. It seems to me that I am still grappling with these wonders, about connection, and about working in the in-between spaces. Inquiring into these wonders has caused me to integrate them into who I am, and to see how they are a part of my stories to live by (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999).

I understand my experience now as I look through the lens of the concept of borderlands. Since working with the participants in this study and doing this narrative inquiry research, I notice how my focus has shifted from wanting to find connections into an understanding of how we can live and work in these borderland spaces and how this can be a place of learning. I find the concept of borderlands and the writings of authors (Anzaldúa, 1999; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007) on this subject as ways to understand my experience. I now see my role in this education work as being part of different communities of practice that are rich and changing, and how this role is rooted in experience. I see my belonging within this context in terms of a concept larger than an immediate tangible belonging. It is a belonging within myself and my beliefs, within a practice with fluid edges and borderlands that I must negotiate.

Agency occurs in my research journey as I make transitions in my career path and actively seek a sense of belonging. Agency is something that has not always come easily or naturally to me. While agency was clearly a part of the journey of my participants and stood out easily in their narratives, I have to look more closely to see my experience with agency making. This brought poignancy to my studies of agency and inspired me to look closely. I see how my agency in my community-based practice occurs in relation to others. I see how it emerges from an experience of belonging.

Impacts on my practice in response to this research. *I reflect back on a recent workshop I led in the newly built local art museum where I work. In this situation, I am asked not just to teach the program, but to mentor other staff to work with community groups with special needs, as they observe and assist. I was leading the first of what we were calling a relaxed tour, offered at this museum. This meant that the art museum welcomed families with children who were on the autism spectrum and had sensory issues to come for a program on a day the museum was closed to the public. The noisy art installations were turned off, there were no security guards, and they were the only visitors that day. I led the group around as I taught them about the art and the artists who created the work, and helped them to engage with the work, followed by a hands on lesson in printmaking. In this venture there was a bridging between the art community and a community group that supports people who have disabilities. I imagined what this group's experience might be and how I could help them to feel comfortable and offer an experience of belonging in these spaces. I was modeling for other staff in this approach as well. I brought to mind the learnings I have gained from this graduate research and from the time spent considering the experience of the three teaching artist participants in this study.*

Agency and Belonging in Experience

In this research I was attentive to the ways in which the participants' teaching experiences were supported and linked to their art practice. Experiences of agency and belonging were recounted as being connected to their creative practice. Iris, Kim, and Bevin always kept their creative practice at the center of our conversations. In these conversations, they shifted smoothly between recounting stories of their teaching to their art practice and back again to stories of their teaching. They saw teaching and art practice as part of a whole and not divided from how they live their lives. The participants were purposeful as they strove to teach in a way that was reflective of their beliefs about life and human relationships, and a lived experience of the power of art for personal growth. Huber and Yeom (2017) described building these connections as “the ongoing struggle for narrative coherence lives at the heart of the complex, often uncomfortable process of becoming” (p.3). Creative practice was part of the context for the interplay between experiencing belonging and agency for the participant. The shaping of their agency in teaching was supported by a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging occurred in their teaching community but also in their art practice.

Negotiating Coherence through Communities of Practice

In their discussion on multiple memberships with various communities of practice, Kubiak, C et al., (2015) spoke to how people will work to find a way of being that will allow congruence between these practices: “People may reflexively find ways to maintain some form of identification that allows congruence with their multimembership” (p.79). Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015) spoke further to this multiple membership within landscapes of practice: “But meaning is produced in each practice. Because this makes mere impossible,

relationships between practices are always a matter of negotiating their boundaries” (p.17). They also describe that in the negotiating of boundaries there is an opportunity for learning.

In their narrative, the degree to which the participants experienced a sense of agency and belonging was reliant on them seeing a clear line joining their values and beliefs in life, art practice, and their teaching practice. Throughout their lives the participants seemed to move towards a sense of belonging in their communities of practice, through congruence of their teaching practice, artistic practice, and personal belief systems. For Iris this was about building a caring approach to teaching and impressing upon those she taught the importance of expressing their own artistic voice. It was also a rejection of pressures to move towards potentially more lucrative contemporary art styles and trends in favor of continuing to work in a style that aligned with her beliefs. For Kim this was about expressing his views about seeing elements of his practice and life in general as being interconnected, and about teaching of the value of art in life. For Bevin this was about building a practice that was focused on engaging with community through art. It was also expressed in her career changes, most notably from the youth arts center where she was significantly involved, to seek out and create work and teaching opportunities more aligned with her life story. Creating this coherence was in and of itself an agentic act by the participants and was a process evident in the conversations with all three participants. They all attended to areas of tension where belonging within their communities of practice seemed uncertain. They created transition and change with an intention of regaining a sense of belonging within these communities. They also were active in building and seeking out a teaching practice that was congruent with their artistic practice and their storied lives.

Place and the Research

When considering the significance of place for the Bevin, Iris, and Kim, I think of how their teaching experiences bridged across a “sequence of places” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.50). I consider also how some of these teaching places were shared spaces which in turn gave them a temporary quality. The participants may have had use of the classroom space temporarily just for the afternoon, or the evening for the scheduled class or workshop. They would have entered the room, and spent some time establishing the space, shifting things around, setting up any materials needed, and claiming it for this limited time. We can think also of these teaching studio spaces as being nested within a community center, for example, which provides other services, and that the room then may be sometimes used for other purposes. The space of the studio classroom and its “concrete physical and topological boundaries” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.51) were relevant to their work, but also there would have been an awareness of the rest of the space of the larger building or center and its happenings.

When I think of place in a larger sense, I consider the city where many of the experiences and events in the stories of the participants occurred, and which was also the location of the conversations I had with them during the research process. All three of the participants were influenced and engaged with art institutions in the city in diverse ways. Common players in their stories and experiences included the local university and its art department, the main public art gallery, and some common community centers where they taught. As researcher, I also had these links in my own experience to some of these same places, which added a dimension to how I experienced their stories as I related them to my own lived experience.

A research location rich with visual cues. The participants in this study all chose their own research locations for our conversations. These physical locations impacted the research

experience. All locations were connected in some way to their reflections and offered visual cues for our conversations. These locations were uniquely different for each participant, and personally meaningful.

While the participants did not engage in depth with making a memory box, a common narrative tool of collecting ephemera, sitting in these research locations with them was like being inside a memory box (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). Here both the physical environment and the relational interaction in the form of our conversation were linked through my presence in this place. I was both observer and participant in this interaction between the physical environment and the conversation. This was not a neutral space removed from the participant's everyday life. Instead these locations were dynamic active environments where classes occurred, or work was produced. I was relating to the participants, relating to them as artists and teachers through these creative environments and their conversation. I was present in this space, aware of my role in provoking these conversations, yet also aware that I was passing through this experience with them momentarily in relation to their personal history and work trajectory. They had invited me into these spaces, not only to hear stories of their lives but where I was also able to experience their work briefly in these active environments, which for the purpose of this narrative inquiry stood in for a memory box.

With the participants, I was connected to my own artist identity as I looked at their artwork and interpreted their visual language through my artistic training and knowledge. I did this as I sat in the interview space and looked at the artwork and tools around me, and as I referred back to the images of their paintings online when I composed the field texts after our conversations. I considered the body of work they had created over a number of years, and found a trajectory in their work that seemed to have followed the trajectory in their stories.

Narrative inquirers commonly use a collection of ephemera in the form of a memory box, as starting and reference points for the conversations and research. My initial proposals that they begin collecting these items were met with some reluctance. Later when the subject was broached again, two of the participants suggested I could take photos of their studio items, and could use digital images of their paintings for the final document. Another was willing to create a memory box yet did not end up doing so. As the participants were very generous in giving their time and energy for this project, I concluded that this must be a different issue than commitment to the project. Instead I wondered about what information was available in the locations of our conversations. These locations were rich with visual imagery, ephemera and tools to inspire their stories. I began to see just how vibrant this stand-in for a memory box was that they had offered me. I also considered how they may have been conserving their creative energy for their practice, while the conversations may have not required this same creative energy.

In these research locations, I could see how the art materials and tools would have been put into use as we spoke about their practice. Regarding Kim, we met at his framing shop with the smell of wood and with several of his paintings on display. Here he was at ease and seemed comfortable to share knowledge. I could sense his agency just by being there in this place, where his knowledge of materials and color theory, gained through his experience as an artist, had a role in this professional venture. I met Bevin at a place of work, sitting either inside or outside on the grounds of the building near trees, flowers, and plants, sometimes with the natural sounds of a water source nearby. With Bevin, while the tools of her work were not as present as with the other two participants, there was instead for us a shared memory of working at this place. In addition, there was a shared experience of working together in other locations as I had

assisted with painting one of the murals she led; we had taught some of the same themed workshops; and I had been an artist represented in her gallery. These memories retold were Bevin's; however, this shared experience added another layer to my understanding as I moved with her through her recollections in this research space. While our paths did not always cross in our work lives, I had a lived experience of some the stories she told, and this changed the framework of our conversations. The stories she shared were often a retelling of previous conversations and they were not primarily a recounting of details.

Regarding Iris, we met in her home, sometimes sitting in her home studio space amidst her paintings; at other times we met in her garden or sunroom. Although these were intimate spaces, it was also significant that she often welcomed students into her home. In her studio there were pots of paint, pallets covered with layers of paint, and partially completed work on the easels. There were also many finished paintings on the walls, and in our conversations, she often referred specifically to these very paintings.

The visual elements in the research process. The paintings I viewed in Iris's studio during our conversations added another layer to my understanding of her stories, in that they offered another source of information. In some instances, during our conversations, it was as if these paintings were retelling the stories again in their own visual way. Iris spoke about how some think of her artwork as being dark in subject matter. There was certainly symbolism suggesting the darkness in humanity but a sense of joy as well. The celebration of the human experience was undeniable in her work, through her careful and even tender rendering of the human body. When Iris told of the darkness and the hope in her work, she described it vividly in this way:

Although people will often say your work is dark...I don't really see it as dark, but I have to admit it is often about things such as loss or death or aging. But those are things everybody struggles with...And so the connection that you get from that, so I paint something that is maybe a little dark, I think people can see their own darkness in it...I did a very long series of forty-two paintings overall I think, of my brother, who is bipolar. And a lot of it is very dark. But even there I did one called perilous voyage where he is heading out to sea, to a sea full of sharks and a boat made of newspapers, so he is just stubbornly heading off into disaster that is basically the portrait. But with a lighthouse, at the end, like the light. (transcript of conversation, Iris & Laurel, 2017)

Instead of this reference to the darkness as well as the hope in her work passing quietly through our conversation, this reference gave me pause, and as I looked around the room at her paintings during this conversation, I saw how often these themes appeared in her work. For myself as a researcher and a visual learner, these paintings added another layer of understanding as I listened to her tell of her experiences. Viewing the paintings helped me to listen more deeply and to engage more fully in elements of her stories.

Cover Stories: Freedom and Vulnerability in Teaching Art

The participants experienced the freedom to teach in a manner deeply connected to their own art practice, yet with this came a vulnerability. Vulnerability was a thread throughout the considerations in this research of belonging and agency. In the participants' narrative, it motivated a search for belonging and created a context for the agentic actions of the participants. Freedom within their community-based practice was a positive experience but beneath this ran a story of vulnerability as well. Vulnerability within their community-based practice was then part of the context for their narrative.

The participants spoke about the vulnerabilities they experienced as artists and teachers. I expected the vulnerability they would speak about would be the economic instability in their practice both as artists and as teachers. Yet this was mentioned only in passing. Their stories of vulnerability were more relational. They talked about how they were aware of the vulnerability inherent in the creative process as they guided those they taught through this common experience. Kim described how in his role as teacher, he was aware of the risks of putting too much pressure on students, or conversely not enough. He was also aware of the potential for the rejection of his teaching. This was a significant concern as the students were not required to take his classes: they were free to choose whether to sign up for another class with him or not. Iris spoke to factors such as the isolation she experienced as an artist prior to her teaching practice and the vulnerability experienced by the beginning art students as they were gaining their footing in seeing themselves as artists.

Looking for Growth, Finding Roots

Prior to conducting the primary research, I was interested in the growth and learning gained by those engaged in community-based art teaching. However, through my time with Bevin, Iris, and Kim, and through my time working with the field texts, there emerged also a quality of affirmation and strengthening. If this was growth, then it was not only a growth of new knowledge through their teaching practice but also a sending down of roots from knowledge already held. This knowledge already held came from their storied lives. This knowledge was about who they were and what they had to offer. As referenced earlier, Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015) elaborate on learning that occurs in a landscape of practice in terms of the acquisition of knowledge:

As a trajectory through a social landscape, learning is not merely the acquisition of knowledge. It is the becoming of a person who inhabits the landscape with an identity whose dynamic construction reflects our trajectory through that landscape. This journey within and across practices shapes who we are. Over time it accumulates memories, competencies, key formative events, stories, and relationships to people and places. It also provides material for directions, aspirations, and projected images of ourselves that guide the shaping of our trajectory going forward. In other words, the journey incorporates the past and the future into our experience of identity in the present. (p.19)

What the participants told about how they approached their teaching practice matched with their values and beliefs expressed as they interpreted their earlier life experiences. These earlier experiences were translated into practice and reinforced by teaching experience. Although there was change and growth, most importantly the participants seemed to be experiencing an affirmation of self.

Literature Review Challenges and Successes

As I began to search the literature for relevant sources, I encountered factors that both presented some challenges and revealed a gap that I was interested in addressing. I encountered two main challenges. One was that the literature generally covered the artist teacher's experience of working in the school system. The other was that the literature that I did find on community-based art teachers focused on issues of social justice. Both streams of the literature focused primarily on the student's experience. There was little research that highlighted the experience of the artist teacher's experience within a community-based practice. The Teaching Artist's Foundation had some articles related to my area of interest but focused primarily on professional identity and less on experience itself.

I found grounding for my research in the literature on educational philosophy. Theorists such as John Dewey, Maxine Greene, and Elliot Eisner contributed to my research knowledge in a cohesive way. These writers attended to experience in a manner that considered the connections between life, practice, and the relational context. The conversations with the participants drew me again to these writers, as the experiences they focused on were reflected in the ideas of these writers. In this research process I found that I was engaged in weaving together these diverse sources, relying on the participants' experience to bind them together.

Tensions

Tensions as researcher. For myself, tensions in composing field texts occurred around wanting to refrain from engaging in a therapeutic framework for the inquiry. I wanted to avoid making any theories related to their experience by using a therapeutic approach. Although this was a concern for me, I remembered that in my art therapy training we were cautioned not to make any assumptions about the client's experience and to always privilege their own interpretation over our own, when possible. As the conversations did not occur in a therapeutic context, what was shared by the participants appeared to be done so in a research context. Yet the tension remained for me. I understand this experience now as working on the boundaries of practice (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015), and view this tension as a source of learning. I had wanted my graduate studies to be an opportunity to link my learning and practice as both artist and art therapist. This work was already linked through practice, through the teaching work I have done at the local art museum. Further, my work in my different modes of practice are linked again through my experience in this graduate research.

Tensions in the research also occurred around the degree of focus during the conversations with the participants, with references to their artist practice sometimes taking

precedence over conversation about teaching. The tensions here were twofold: I felt my own inclination to ask questions that deepened this discussion, coupled with the participants' own time spent discussing this subject. Alongside this tension around the amount of emphasis on their artist's practice, was the experience of hearing the importance for the participants of their artist's identity as it related to their teaching. This tension can be thought of as a source of knowledge and a reminder to make space for the complexity of experience as described here: "Gradually, we began to understand tensions in a more relational way, that is, tensions that live between people, events, or things, and are a way of creating an in-between space, a space which can exist in educative ways" (Clandinin et al., 2010, p.82). In addition to considering the participants' artist practice in tandem with discussions about their teaching, it called for its own space in the research. This was a reminder that for both the participants and myself as a practitioner, our artist selves inhabited their own space in our lives. This tension around balancing the focus in this research was somewhat resolved through the common narrative threads discussed during stories of both practices.

Tensions around narrative inquiry. I noticed that whenever I felt tension in composing field texts within a narrative inquiry methodology, it occurred when I was not correctly using the methodological style, or not thinking in a narrative way about experience. I had to go deeper into experience than I was used to doing in previous academic work, yet I found that when I did, it resonated with more areas of my life than just that of graduate student; it called upon many areas of my experience. This progress in thinking narratively highlighted the importance of learning through connections with community. The connections I had to the work of other narrative inquirers such as that of my supervisor through his comments on my writing and his questions, or through the reading of the work of other narrative inquirers, helped in learning to

think narratively and made me more attentive to this aspect of my research of learning through community.

Placing the Research within a Wider Framework

Looking at the impacts of this research, we can contemplate the following words: *“Final research texts do not have final answers because narrative inquirers do not come with questions. These texts are intended to engage audiences to rethink and reimagine the ways in which they practice and the ways in which they relate to others”* (Clandinin, 2013, p. 51).

In relation to the field of narrative inquiry. When considering the place of this study in the field of narrative inquiry, in the context of work already done in this field, I look at the knowledge it adds to how this methodology values the gains made from diverse experiences between disciplines and research within this narrative inquiry framework (Clandinin, 2013). The literature on narrative inquiry brought the challenge of applying the concepts generally applied to education which occur in the school system, to education based in the community. This encouraged a reinterpretation of concepts such as the professional knowledge landscape. The concept of the professional knowledge landscape was still applicable but had to be re-envisioned in a relevant way in relation to the experience of the participants in this study. For example, the participants were perhaps without the larger day to day collegial support found in formal school settings, yet this did not mean that support from colleagues was not relevant. It instead encouraged those few relationships to be carefully held, and purposefully sought out. The participants’ interactions with professionals from their communities of practice may not have been as immediate or daily, but were still present in their experiences around belonging. This was apparent when considering the mentorship relationships that the participants described, as well as the professional interactions they had.

Contributions to learnings about experience in general. It can be seen how teaching situations that are focused on hands-on learning can be a source of knowledge about capacity for agency for both the teacher and those they teach. When considering the participants in this study's experience within their communities of practice, we can see how belonging can be a foundation for shaping agency.

Through this study, knowledge was gathered, and insight gained into how professionals negotiate and work between and with their different professional communities. This research showed how working towards coherence in one's life and between one's different practices can be achieved when linked to one's values and beliefs. This research shows how with imagination and through a sense of world traveling as described by Lugones (1987), one can learn about one's own identity and place in the world. From this point of knowledge, a teacher can experience belonging more meaningfully. From this experience of belonging, a foundation is created for agency in both the teacher and conceivably in those they teach.

A gap in the literature on community-based art education. This study attends to a gap in the literature on teaching artists' experience in community-based art education. It enriches the literature already available by emphasising the knowledge that can be gained about community-based art education when we take into account the teachers' experience not just in the classroom but experience as it relates to their whole lives over time and across contexts. The importance of learning about teaching artists' experience as it relates to their whole lives was shown in this study, by looking at the participants' connections to their art practice and through considering elements such as coherence in their identity making, for example.

While this research looked specifically at teaching artists in community-based practice, it also attended to elements of teachers' experience in general. Through looking at the experiences

of the participants, it can be seen that the borderlands of practice can be a site of learning, and how this can be negotiated through seeking coherence with personal beliefs, personal history and other practices. This was shown to be a complex dynamic and there is more to learn.

Teaching Artists' Experiences in Community: A Summary

In this study the complexity of the teaching artist experience was revealed as they shifted fluidly between descriptions of their teaching and art practices. The complexity was also revealed as their life experiences were retold in relation to these two communities of practice. Belonging within communities of practice could be seen to support experiences of agency. The spaces where our conversations occurred had personal connections for the participants and were locations that were both a reminder that I was engaging in this research in the midst of lives lived, and also a rich source of information for our conversations. The two main findings of experiences of belonging and agency were both linked to creative practice. The communication that occurred through visual artwork was important to the participants; in addition, this communication through art colored my experience as researcher and informed the composing of field texts. A space was made in this research for the participants' artist selves, this space being made in part by attending to places of tension in the research process (Clandinin, Murphy, Huber, Orr, 2010). This was a space that illustrated how in their identity making as teachers, the participants' sense of themselves as artists worked to support experiences of agency and belonging in teaching.

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