UNFOLDING THE UNEXPECTEDNESS OF UNCERTAINTY

ARTS RESEARCH
AS A TRIPTYCH INSTALLATION:
A CONVERSATION OF PROCESSES, PRACTICES, PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

This conversation is an invitation to a research and artistic experience engaging in teaching and learning with sensitivity and consideration, and in the course of doing, revealing insights about the transformative processes of becoming-teacher in art education. Invoking the architecture of the contemporary triptych, this installation involves structural frames of arts research processes, practices and products, and iconographic frames of becoming-teacher as unfolding, unexpectedness and uncertainty. I explore how arts research opens possibilities through the act and art of sharing stories and visuals in a triptych which may be read sequentially, or out of order, as a relational experience, entering at any point across and/or within each panel. In doing arts research, I question: What insights are generated through the arts in a case study concerning the lived and learning experiences of women becoming-teachers? How does arts research inform research processes, practices and products? How do I theorize arts research as customary methodological ecotones? Based on this study, a number of key issues are illuminated concerning teacher education. The reconceptualization of teacher education in terms of health and well-being is critical. Emphasis on geographies of self and the evolution of situated knowledges as a means to negotiate becoming-teacher, along with notions of teacher as researcher and collaborative leadership in teacher education, provide a basis for active reform in teacher education. An emotional journey, complex and complicated, rich in artful expressions, this conversation moves between theoretical and methodological considerations and culminates in a series of realizations about becoming-teacher and arts research, honouring the knowledge creation of research partners, and my discoveries and realizations as an arts researcher, to make this expression of arts research an opportunity to share alternate perspectives within teaching culture.
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ARTS RESEARCH AS
A TRIPTYCH INSTALLATION

UNFOLDING
RESEARCH PROCESSES

UNEXPECTEDEDNESS
RESEARCH PRACTICES

UNCERTAINTY
RESEARCH PRODUCTS
Unfolding the Unexpectedness of Uncertainty
This conversation is an invitation to enter arts research as a triptych installation, a research and artistic experience engaging in teaching and learning with sensitivity and consideration, and in the course of doing, revealing insights about the transformative processes of becoming-teacher in art education. Invoking the architecture of the contemporary triptych, harkening in part to the historical purpose of triptychs to teach about social and cultural activities, this installation involves structural frames of research processes, practices and products, and iconographic frames of becoming-teacher as unfolding, unexpectedness and uncertainty. I explore how arts research opens possibilities in a triptych which may be read sequentially, or out of order, entering any point across and/or within each panel as a relational experience of doing arts research. In this case, the central panel represents the act and art of sharing stories of becoming-teachers in the form of creative non-fiction, flanked by accompanying panels of equal importance, balancing doing, interpreting and rendering arts research within the lived and learning experiences of becoming-teachers as a means of communicating understandings. An emotional journey, complex and complicated, rich in stories and artful expressions, this conversation moves between theoretical and methodological considerations and culminates in a series of realizations about becoming-teacher and arts research, honouring the knowledge creation of research partners, and my discoveries and realizations as an arts researcher, to make this expression of arts research an opportunity to share alternate perspectives within teaching culture.

*Unfolding the Unexpectedness of Uncertainty* is a conversation about dwelling in the arts paradigm, lingering in a myriad of relational dialogical enclaves as I resolve a journey of inquiry, only to begin again. Migrating within artful expressions and joining with venerated voices in text, my questioning, answering, extending and deliberating in responsiveness, to inform and include in a communicative quest, becomes an exposition of research possibilities, of Bildung,
the formation of understandings created in the complexity and array of processes the arts bring to the study of education. The self-consciousness of Bildung attends to the aesthetics of lived experiences, to contemplating self in relation to social and cultural practices. It is within this “critical ferment” of “living memory” that I enter into a discussion of theory, methodologies and methods, and the doing of processes, practices and products involving the arts (Prange, 2004, p. 508).

The elasticity of Bildung, already applied to a host of educational situations in creative ways, sustains the original intent in the German tradition of education as “a specific state of mind” in pursuit of an ideal of excellence, of accomplishment (Prange, 2004, p. 501). Pinar (2006) situates the concept of Bildung in curriculum studies, and by extension, this understanding lends itself to arts research as a form of “creative self-activity” through “communication with others” (pp. 3, 8). Bildung involves formations within the culture of education that explore what constitutes and refines knowing. Contemporary Bildung is interpreted as an in-between “temporary exile,” where, in the Shklovsky tradition, “estrangement from what is familiar and everyday” helps generate dialogue around diverse standpoints that prevail in the arts paradigm (Pinar, 2006, p.10). The interplay of educational engagement in Bildung provides a mode of thought through which I have come to learn I need to write against, that in constructing critical questions about the arts within existing dialogues, I am also extending the debate into doing as an aesthetic experience, manifest in the art of writing, visualizing and reflecting.

Engaging in dialogue with scholars established in the arts research paradigm, along with interdisciplinary perspectives from philosophy, geography, cultural studies, art history and more, I begin with an overview of how I perceive the current situation of arts research. From this overview, I move into interior deliberations and weigh recurring issues that hold my attention,
not with the intention to resolve with a definitive answer but to open up possibilities. I invoke Benjamin’s (1968) mosaic technique of writing consisting largely of quotations, and in this conceptual *flânerie*, my deliberations form an intertext, setting the stage for three critical plateau-rhizomatic movements flowing within and across this conversation, movements in concert with educational scholars St. Pierre (2004), Gough (2006b; 2004), Gregoriou (2004) and Semetsky (2006), among others, who are actively seeking to infuse education with alternate understandings.

Firstly, my research questions emerge within this triptych installation as ongoing deliberations: In doing arts research, what insights are generated in a case study concerning the lived and learning experiences of women becoming-teachers? How does arts research inform research processes, practices and products? And, how do I theorize arts research as customary methodological ecotones? By foregrounding how and why I do arts inquiry in particular ways, I bring transparency to my position and situate my works in relation to past projects, providing the framework for rigorous engagement.

Secondly, by threading deliberations and descriptions of my experiences throughout, I provide insights to my patterns of thought, to creating concepts, an aspect of inquiry in the arts paradigm most often described as embodiment or corporeality, and an essential element in connecting arts research to a broader discourse of academic works. Patterns of thought in relation to research that emerge from inquiry reveal thinking as continuous movement, a Deleuzian perspective that links thinking to acting, and it is with a spatial lens that the following conversation of inquiry through the arts unfolds. Because Deleuzian methods may be applied with latitude and longitude, I pull selectively and only when appropriate from allusive writings within Deleuze’s collective works in ways that best enlarge this conversation of arts research.
My understandings of Deleuze resonates with the metaphor of “a set of split rings” in which any one ring will fit into another.

Thirdly, in-between text I layer visual expressions to draw attention to both living and learning experiences seen and unseen, on the surface and beneath, or as in the Deleuzian construct, this study is rendered as topographical plateaus of arts research processes, practices and products connected by subterranean rhizomes of artful moments rendered in narratives and visual expressions. Coming to know is a doubling of geographies of self as internal and external landscapes occurring simultaneously within research, a symbiotic interacting of the physical, spiritual and intellectual self with data, information, research partners and sources, in meaning-making during the construction of knowledge. Tracing concept creation in narrative and visual imprints is an aspect of inquiry that is often left unacknowledged when bringing together multiple perspectives in an effort to generate more holistic understandings in research. Through the arts paradigm, I reveal this inner landscape as a dimension of inquiry that blurs artful expressions with mindful formations, by creating concepts that “speak the event” as acts “of thought” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 21).

As the first panel in this triptych installation, unfolding research processes through Benjamin’s mosaic experimentation, and Deleuze’s philosophy of experimentation, the premise of creating concepts serves as a way into my conversation of arts research. As Deleuze (1994) states, concepts are the “centers of vibrations, each in itself and every one in relation to all the others” (p. 23). Creating concepts is infinite, always in continual movement within other concepts, but also among objects and within the body, in the person, never whole, always fragmented, connecting along divergent lines, overlapping in “innumerable planes, each with a variable curve” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 76). Created in “bursts” and branching off continually, concepts “link up with each other, support one another” and “articulate their respective
problems” to generate understandings (Deleuze, 1994, pp. 76, 18). Deleuze suggests, it is in
criticism concepts are formed as assemblages that facilitate new ways of thinking. This
conversation becomes an ‘archipelago’ of the contours of an evolving arts paradigm, opening up
issues of art-like and Art, aesthetics and works of art, and the potential of social and cultural
gentrification through the arts (Deleuze, 1994). Moving from a general discussion to an in-depth
exploration of becoming art teachers, multiple threads come together, culminating in shifts,
refinements and shifts again, as movement in understandings and essences become a calling into
research that invites continued writing against.

The arts paradigm: Expressive research emerging in the academy

According to Short (1991), the seminal works of Dewey (2005/1934), Langer
(1985/1957), and Phenix (1986/1964) among others, have long infused the field of education
with a tradition of the arts. Commonly referred to as arts-based inquiry or arts-based research,
such practices have “the distinctive purpose of making intelligible subjective human feeling
articulated in the perceptual, aesthetic, and formal qualities of [a] particular phenomena,” which
is rendered “visually, tactiley, auditorily, olfactorily, gustatorialey, kinaesthetically, or
emotionally” (Short, 1991, pp. 17, 18). Scholars from art therapy and art education created the
nucleus of practices that quickly came to include researchers from many subject areas across
disciplines. The term ‘arts-based’ now appears in literature of the sciences, social sciences and
educational discourses as umbrella terms for inquiry and research involving expressive arts
(Barone & Eisner, 1997; Diamond, 1998; Diamond & Mullen, 1999; Huss & Cwikel, 2005;
Lazarus & Rosslyn, 2003; McNiff, 1998; Scott, 2006). In education, such inquiry is
encompassed in an emerging paradigm that “aims to bridge perceived disconnects between
quantitative and qualitative traditions of educational research” by challenging “underlying
assumptions held by many that the arts do not constitute rigorous areas of inquiry” (Sullivan, 2005, p. 59).

Within the arts paradigm there are several core methodological ‘dispositions’ (Gough, 2003) around which individual practitioners and communities of practice are generally clustered: a/r/tography (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004); arts-based educational research (Barone & Eisner, 1997); arts-informed research (Cole & Knowles, 2001a); image-based research (Mitchell & Weber, 1998; Prosser, 1998); and visual art practice (Sullivan, 2005). The title ‘arts-based’ houses many educators, but as methodologies are becoming more precisely shaped, the arts-based education researcher identity may be viewed as a specialization along with visual practice, image-based, arts-informed or a/r/tography, making arts research a collective reference for the scope of methodologies within this evolving paradigm. Each methodological approach reflects particular perspectives on the arts concerning what is researched (ontological), how knowledge is constructed (epistemological) and why philosophical and ethical considerations (axiological) are made in, with and through artful expression. Methodologies in the arts paradigm reveal a multitude of pioneering methods, or ways of ‘proceeding in’ (Gough, 2003). With traces of evermore methodologies and innovative methods of inquiry emerging from arts discourses, inspired by the breadth and depth of expressive genres that continue to expand understandings and possibilities for creativity, this is a dynamic, unstable juncture in the academy, but I believe positively so.

As a practice-based approach, arts inquiry often involves “alternate approaches derived organically” (Tyler, 2006, p. 495). Tyler’s discussion of research models in the field of human resource development affirms aspects of arts research are indeed transdisciplinary. Practices “mediated by contexts,” where the “emergent nature” of the approaches “implies that these designs will only be partial at the outset of the research,” continue to evolve in differing ways
and in different times as research unfolds (Tyler, 2006, p. 498). Tyler (2006) poignantly describes what I believe to be the future for arts methodologies and methods, and that is a move to a spirit of innovation which places imaginative, emotional and artistic processes at the centre of highly, if not entirely, customizable and responsive methodological and method “ecotones,” where individualized approaches are honed just-in-time in relation to the requirements of a given study (p. 500). By mapping convergences between expressive art, research and the educational landscape, arts inquiry further challenges claims of certainty by demonstrating knowledge is individual, contextual, contingent and always in process. Arts researchers are already living in ecotones, a habitat of creative experimentation, as described by Leggo:

   This is a place of tension (from oikos or habitation, and tonos or tension), where two habitats meet and overlap, where they extend into one another and create a place of richness and fruitfulness that is only possible because of the overlapping, a space of productive tension where life can be more complex and intense than in either of the distinct habitats.

   (C. Leggo, personal communication, April 28, 2007)

I speculate the vestiges of movements toward ecotones in the academy are veiled within contentious debates around how the arts function in research. This makes the arts a catalyst to change. The core challenges within arts research may also signal more global and conceptual shifts in definitions of research, and how fundamental understandings of what is research may be revised. In part, the arts paradigm is a building block, bringing forth and contributing to new positions within multiple discursive communities.

   Arts inquiry explores knowing through expressive forms, and each methodological disposition employs a host of arts genres to inquire, interpret, research and disseminate understandings. Genres of arts inquiry are generally formed around four pillars of expression: literary, visual, performative and virtual. Within each genre there are a host of artful methods applied to pursue research questions. Literary arts methods include fiction, creative non-fiction,
poetry, plays and autoethnography; in the visual realm, painting, drawing, photography, collage, fibre and sculpture are among methods; performative methods range from drama, theatre, music and dance to rituals and more. The virtual realm of arts inquiry is taking shape around multimedia performance, with blogs, zines, installation art and online communities of practice emerging across learning landscapes. As modes of artistic production expand, artful participation generates perspectives that are increasingly relational and interdisciplinary, informing research and art making in new ways (Irwin, 2003). As Piantanida, McMahon & Garman (2003) state, arts-based inquiry attracts “individuals with diverse talents and interests” who are “engendering rich and multifocal conversations not only about specific examples of arts-based research but also about the broader meanings of this approach to educational inquiry” (p. 182).

Arts research spans a continuum of scholarship ranging from practices aligned with social science themes to research strategies more qualitatively and artistically radical. Researchers drawing upon features of social science research traditions do so in varying degrees for data analysis, reflection and dissemination. Sullivan (2005) argues that if arts researchers continue to parallel research with more traditional theories, the arts will remain limited and “locked within the constraints of the social sciences rather than within art practice itself,” making arts inquiry ornamental rather than deconstructive (p. 61). Some researchers are calling for an independent form of arts inquiry in which art practice is central to informing scholarship (Cole & Knowles, 2001a). Finley (2003) suggests, “to avoid comparison with scientific inquiry or evaluation by the standards of science, arts-based researchers must undergo a radical break from science as a standpoint for understanding” (p. 289). More radical forms of arts inquiry promote an experimental approach of aesthetic autonomy and/or “intellectual pluralism” that is “neither
subjective nor objective,” but neutral and resistant to epistemological demands of the academy (Peters, 2003, pp. 8, 10; Clough, 2000).

As an alternate way of seeing, sensing, and knowing in teaching and learning, I believe arts inquiry creates a space to muse on aesthetics, consider ambiguity, and engage in the tensions evoked by artful expressions in research. As the debate continues about the merits of arts inquiry as academic practice, a number of key issues and challenges permeate within the academy concerning scholarship, quality and responsibility. In this conversation of arts inquiry, I explore how these issues influence my ongoing engagement and practice, as well as what it means to be an arts researcher, the importance of positioning self and situating works within fluid parameters of an emerging paradigm, and how the intricate metamorphosis of the arts currently underway in the academy is reshaping research processes, practices and products.

Becoming in the arts

My initiation to doing research was formulated within the techniques of social science research practices, and to this day, I still hold the mark of rigidity that was required. Even now, during an interview, for example, the protocols for asking questions in a prescribed order to avoid bias and contamination of results influences my thinking and shapes how I come to moments of exchange (Babbie, 1986). However, the constraints of such traditions were unnatural for me and I yearned for spaces of creativity, for a balance between the logic of structure and the genesis of imagination. Coming to traditions of qualitative inquiry provided a needed shift, and I felt a sense of comfort in practicing case study, grounded theory, phenomenology and more, with the conscientiousness of previous research experiences (Creswell, 1998).
Looking back, it is not surprising I am now drawn to the arts paradigm, a forum which enables me to work in ways previously not possible within the academy. Building on foundations of my research past, I continue to shape and reshape my understandings as I pursue spaces in the academy that facilitate imagination within the scope of doing research. Having employed several arts methodologies at different times in my works, with varying degrees of specialization, it is fitting to collectively place my works in a more broadly conceived arts paradigm than a specific methodological approach. At the same time, I remain cognisant of the discipline instilled by past schools of thought where I learned through stringent rules about benchmarks of practice, how to push the boundaries and even knowingly break the rules.

As an arts researcher, I feel I am best situated as a generalist, a hybridist, a nomadic outsider in the Deleuzian tradition, always in-between, an “intermezzo,” drawing upon multiple theoretical and methodological approaches to customize processes, practices and products of the arts, making plurality the cornerstone of my research (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 380). Deleuze & Guattari (2005) describe nomads as making “customary paths” that crisscross and meander in “nomadic waves or flows of deterritorialization” which “go from the central layer to the periphery, then from the new centre to the new periphery, falling back to the old centre and launching forth to the new” (p. 380). By borrowing and appropriating potentially incongruent modes of thought and practices as required, my dispositions may at times seem paradoxical, but I embrace the appearance of contradiction as a means to reconcile nomadic intentionality. I seek to share patterns of thought that intersect, overlap, and converge as a means to discover movement beyond the familiar, by disturbing what is already known in structured and defined formats and forums. At the same time, I am mindful of the potential of such hybridity to “decontextualize,” or “distort” meaning through “formalistic reduction” of “a phrase or a word” from the whole “discursive logic of philosophical text” (Porter, 1997, pp. 93-94). Borrowing
from Porter (1997), to proceed in the “performativity” of arts research can result in theoretical and methodological tokenism, a “surface form” of “aesthetic features” which can “quickly acquire … foundational significance in relation to text,” as a form of the “discursive power of rhetoric” (pp. 94-95). Rather than relying on such tropes within this conversation, I strive to create an analysis of the architecture of arts research by mapping patterns of thought through the movement of research.

**The politics of inquiry and research**

Like many practitioners in the arts, my inclination is to apply the words ‘inquiry’ and ‘research’ interchangeably, regarding inquiry and research as equivalent practices rather than placing either in a subjective or objective shadow, though I do at times slip into the more traditional structures of methodologies closely aligned with a social sciences orientation depending on the research questions and situations. Yet with the continued development of the arts paradigm, I have come to feel an inversion of meaning in the seamless shifting between inquiry and research. Borrowing from Levin’s (1997) discussion of Foucault, I “problematise practices and institutions that have been naturalized,” recognizing the underlying political connotations of inquiry and research remain ingrained in many parts of the academy (p. 448). Despite the progress of the last decades, perceptions persist that researchers conduct research, and practitioners perform inquiry, implying a hierarchical order in which research makes a more significant contribution. For me, artful expressions spiral through both inquiry and research in ways that are perhaps different from previously articulated patterns of movement. With emphasis on ‘*and,*’ I suggest that inquiry and research are ever-present in forms of expression, making inquiry and research not only interchangeable but concurrent (Irwin, 2003). Drawing on two of my works as examples, I enter the politics of inquiry and research involving the arts, and
in troubling these aspects, I introduce a discussion of Deleuze’s ‘order-word,’ as a broad concept exploring the construction of meaning in language.

I regard *divining INTOXICATION* (Sinner, 2004), a video exploring photographic practice and roles as artist, researcher and teacher with a feminist perspective, and *Sewing Seams of Stories* (Sinner, 2006), an historical account of becoming a teacher constructed through arts-based methods and feminist genealogy, as examples of inquiry and research. As inquiry and research through the arts, each involves theory as practice and practice as theory, producing diverse effects and products in the process. In the case of the former, a few months after the video was published I met a faculty person from across the country, who upon making the connection said, “Oh, the non-article.” In contrast, the text-based article was noted as methodologically experimental, but certainly not a ‘non-article.’

This simple statement suggests an academic subtext is at play, moving beyond resistance to the trend of electronic publication of academic works, to objecting to alternate methodologies and methods of rendering. This was a matter of ‘othering.’ Although many still do not regard inquiry through the arts as research, and it is unlikely consensus will be achieved, comments like this highlight the importance of critically examining sources, practices and positions that continue to shape understandings within the academy. I appreciate alternate methodologies attract advocates and critics, but this comment left me reflecting on the importance of disseminating such work as inquiry and research, and on entrenched locations of research power within the academy. I am reminded of Lynn Raphael Reed, who wrote, “I can feel the gaze of authoritative discourse on my shoulder in disapproval of the venture, and I am reminded to be cautious about revelation” (Reed in Francis & Skelton, 2001, p. 79). Inquiry and research rendered in the video has personal and perhaps social impact, and as a result, in some small way may change some element of practice. By providing a position in the public forum which helps
establish methodologies that do not conform to dominant theories or genres, there is an opportunity to reconsider, rethink and redefine how information is understood, and in this way, there is a potential to move toward greater social, political and intellectual consciousness (Slattery, 2003). Awareness of the nature of resistance within the academy for artful expression as inquiry and as research is a prerequisite for all practitioners engaging in the arts.

These projects have inspired further inquiry and research through the mediums of photography, video, narrative and more, suggesting the influence of both are evident in my ongoing conversations through the arts. I draw on these examples to serve as foils to articulate the qualities I perceive in inquiry and research through the arts. Both the video-article and text-article affirm Genette’s (1999) observation that “the intense emotion a work expresses may very well call up only indifference or disgust on the part of its receiver” (p. 114). Through works of art, researchers may readily take risks to reveal what is hidden from the academic agenda by using different strategies to communicate ideas, and in dialogue, in speaking, find ways to be heard, to be seen, and to answer back. Despite my efforts to attend to positionality and situatedness in arts inquiry, and foregrounding myself as an arts researcher with feminist perspectives, the conversation between the artworks, audience and myself cannot always be executed in the predictable ways of traditional research because aesthetic pleasure or displeasure evokes a response, a feeling.

If inquiry and research are theory and practice, then the question of interchangeability and concurrency becomes a question of doubling. Inquiry is defined in the *New Shorter Oxford Dictionary* as an investigation, the putting of a question, asking, interrogating, a query. To inquire is to seek knowledge of a thing by asking to be told, to search and to try to find. Research is defined as a search or investigation undertaken to discover facts, to reach new conclusions by a critical study of a subject through systematic investigation of study materials,
sources and more. In research, information is collated and opinions surveyed along with background information relevant to a project.

In practice, inquiry is synonymous with self-reflection in education, particularly as a means to build knowledge through critical thinking in relation to teaching practice, yet to characterize inquiry as the realm of self-reflexivity and research as involving the ‘other’ is too simplistic an approach. Babbie (1986) states the “keystone of inquiry is observation,” a social act (p. 10). Through a postmodern lens, the “goal of inquiry, understood rhetorically, is not objective truth, but reasonable belief, the state of being persuaded,” in which research is an act of exploration, description and explanation (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 2000, p. 325). Creswell (1998) defines qualitative research as “an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem” in which the researcher “builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (p. 15). Contemporary educational research may also be defined in terms of critical, theoretical, practical, action and ethnographic modes, as descriptive, analytical, interpretive or predictive (Pinar et al., 2000). Nespor (2006) characterizes research as the product of “a matrix of relations” where “research proceeds by creating links, relations, ways to see other places, things and times” (pp. 115, 116). For me, arts research is expressiveness interweaving theory and inquiry, where inquiry is a conduit to research and often a starting point. Inquiry may be the exclusive site of practice discussed in relation to theory, although in some cases, theory is absent or simply implied. Inquiry and research overlap, yet by definition research moves differently than inquiry, and in the academy, research can still imply a greater contribution in some realms.

To unpack the politics of inquiry and research further, I borrow Gough’s (2006a) interpretation of Deleuze & Guattari’s (2005) “order-words” in an educational context to shift
the conversation from defining the terms ‘inquiry’ and ‘research,’ to considering arts inquiry and arts research from a perspective of “how it works” and what each term “does or produces (or prevents)” (p. 5). Order-words are the “relation of every word or every statement to implicit presuppositions, in other words, to speech acts that are, and can only be, accomplished in the statement” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 79). In the arts paradigm, traces of historical understandings of inquiry and research persist, with research often viewed as a more static investigation with predetermined ends, a process with deliberate structures, and inquiry as a creative entry to open systems, an organic ongoing process of questioning. Such historical contexts still contribute to how and what is produced, and prevented from being produced artfully.

Deleuze & Guattari (2005) describe order-words as commands and acts linked by social obligation, making the “order-word itself the redundancy of the act and the statement (p. 79). In this way, ‘inquiry’ and ‘research’ as order-words transmit what must be thought, where the order is inscribed in the word, making the words ‘inquiry’ and ‘research’ the primary concern, and the related information “only the minimal condition for the transmission of order-words” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 79). This suggests that if the same information is rendered as inquiry, it is already understood differently than if the same information is rendered as research. At the same time, order-words are never interlinking, “nor do we see one represent the other, with the second serving as referent … on the contrary … a segment of one always forms a relay with a segment of the other, slips into, introduces itself in the other” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 87). In this way, inquiry slips into research and research into inquiry, but neither is secondary, both are enveloping and simultaneous.

Since ‘inquiry’ and ‘research’ hold specific social meanings, and the relationships between the words and orders require a specific response, it may be assumed academics perform
‘inquiry’ and ‘research’ as social obligation “to make their discourse function” in a given context (Porter & Porter in Gough, 2006a, p. 5). Borrowing from Russon (1997), I suggest the performance of inquiry and research may be interpreted as reflecting “culturally embedded practices,” rituals that communicate a “sense of self-identity” among members of a community with which there is shared belonging (p. 216). Order-words produce “different effects in different locations” and it is “through a more determined scrutiny of its locatable effects” concerning how order-words operate that inquiry and research in the arts paradigm may be understood differently (Gough, 2006a, p. 13). Reviewing common definitions of inquiry and research and exploring instances of practice in the academy demonstrates how language is used to “bring into being the singularity of an event,” which invests power in words and in associated relational acts, and “determines the subjectivity of the subjects who use it” (Barton, 2003, pp. 235, 237). Employing order-words of inquiry or research then positions self and situates artworks in a broader “politics of domination and repression” (Barton, 2003, p. 238). In terms of day-to-day experiences, order-words shape and politicize events, and by internalizing these social dynamics, “an individual assumes a different identity or takes on multiple identities through the different languages he or she speaks in relation not only to others but to the self as other” (Barton, 2003, p. 240).

Because the terms have a certain cachet, the reception and interpretation of ‘inquiry’ and ‘research’ hold implicit understandings. In this conversation, I seek to rethink inquiry and research as cartographic identities on the same plane, to reflect on how these terms as concepts become conceptual personae, a method “to show thought’s territories, its absolute deterritorializations and reterritorializations” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 69). Challenging order-words within institutional structures and cultural practices of the academy begins to shift implied hierarchical sequences (Barton, 2003). By deterritorializing and reterritorializing order-
words within the arts paradigm, inquiry and research create new linkages that serve to
appropriate value in social and political contexts by attending to how the arts function differently
(Barton, 2003, p. 223). This moves inquiry and research to a third space, doubling applications
and meanings, “in which everything seems to be strangely reversed, since it [inquiry and
research] will be given the task of supporting the other” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 141).

In my practice, inquiry begins when the boundaries of research are blurred, or traversed,
when holistic entry to the world of study generates ambiguity and paradoxes, reinforcing
uncertainty. Inquiry is performed as “a complex, dynamic act that constitutes social relations
within the immanent sphere of the political,” or to paraphrase Culler, research is inquiry bound,
but inquiry is boundless (Culler in Barton, 2003, p. 229). Inquiry and research in the arts are
composite order-words of fragmented, partial practices. Borrowing from action research, where
action leads to research and research to further action in an ongoing cycle that advances knowing
(Jarvis, 1999), inquiry and research in the arts operates like a spiral metaphor, offering a means
to discover possibilities through innovative experimentation. In conceiving of inquiry and
research as spiral movement, the nuances and reverberations of artworks that emerge within
academic pursuits lead me to question if situating works in the political dimensions of inquiry
and research, and foregrounding location and movement should always form part of a discussion
of works within the arts paradigm. In my examples, I suggest the video as inquiry occurs beyond
the confines of text-article as research, but at the same time, both examples are inquiry and
research. To deterritorialize the politics of the academy by reterritorializing both concepts of
inquiry and research together, different patterns of movement emerge, not controlled by the
authoritative discourses and “historically-specific contexts” that continue to emanate “from
various loci of power” within the academy (Barton, 2003, p. 252).
Although the concept of ‘order-word’ illuminates issues of inquiry and research, I also look back to Eisner’s (1997b) standpoint: When engaging in alternate forms of research there is always a potential for a backlash and that in itself is a “good reason for describing the context in which the results of research are to be presented” (p. 9). Eisner (1997b) acknowledges works of art “can stand alone without an interpretive context when those reading, seeing or hearing it bring that context with them … when they do not … when the terrain is new, we need context,” and as educators, we must serve as “our own toughest critics,” not substituting “novelty and cleverness for substance” (p. 9). Given the ongoing debates in the arts paradigm concerning Art and art-like, as well as aesthetics and works of art, Eisner’s advice to be mindful to self-situate in the arts paradigm and to position how works of art function is well-founded.

The art versus Art debate

Arts inquiry may involve works that are, as Maxine Greene suggests, “art” rather than “Art” (Greene in Willis, 2002, p. 8). Although there is no longer a single definition, set of standards or consensus of art, the debate between art-like expressive works and fine art has a long rich history, re-emerging within philosophies, art movements, social and political climates and changing public perspectives concerning art over time and place (Korsmeyer, 2004). Traces of this history continue to surface, making art-like and Art a “vexed subject” in the arts paradigm where dualistic approaches from opposing schools of thought seem to be taking shape concerning art processes or Art products (Genette, 1997, p. 150). Processes involve works of art that demonstrate “specific and generic features that set them apart … enabling us to decide that a certain activity is artistic,” and products involve works which conform to the “traditional notion of a system of the fine arts” with deeply held conventions rooted in the institutionalization of art (Genette, 1997, p. 2). Willis (2002) argues that if art making designates an array of art-like
works, while Art constitutes great works, then the question becomes a matter of difference, but is the difference one “of degree or one of kind,” because the division tends to distance Art while aligning expressive art as a lesser form, as art in proximity (p. 8). Broader social and cultural shifts also influence these perspectives, as Genette (1997) states, the “decline in the number of amateur concerts and our familiarity with professional performances … have made us less tolerant of certain transpositions and transcriptions” (p. 205).

The arts paradigm is a synthesis of many forms of artful expression, including novice engagements, works by practitioners with varied backgrounds and connoisseurs of the arts. It may be said that depending on the situation, arts researchers may occupy each identity in varying degrees, making it inevitable there are moments of disjuncture concerning quality and scope of such works. I believe it would be short-sighted to assume the work of a novice making art cannot demonstrate excellence as Art, or that formal training dictates artists always make works of Art, surely this is not the case. Yet in the arts paradigm, the conversation is caught between blurring artistic and aesthetic values which at times fail to attend to subtlety and distinctiveness inherent in art-like and Artworks. Arts research as transitional spaces recognizes both a/Artists and art-like/Artworks operate at differing levels at different times, so opening up a conversation about quality in arts research is less about the works of art and more about “the function of the event considered as a whole,” or simply, _when_ is art (Genette, 1997, p. 142; 1999).

Questioning how expert must one be, and whether it is sufficient expressions be art-like, Piirto, among others, explores the tensions that materialize when novices undertake arts methods. Reflecting on a conference experience, Piirto (2002) observes:

To observe heartfelt efforts by researchers with little or no background in the art being demonstrated was sometimes painful, especially to those who worked in, were trained in, knew and loved the art being demonstrated … Some suggested that a notion of levels be attached to the abstracts and proposals. (p. 433)
Piirto (2002) states respect for an art medium requires active engagement to achieve mastery of creative expression, and all arts in research must be held to a high standard of aesthetic quality. For Piirto, students wanting to engage in arts-based projects must have at least an undergraduate degree in a specific art domain, or an extensive peer-reviewed history of engagement. Although the qualifications of researchers are never questioned in selecting methodologies and methods, when entering the arts such questions appear to become important, a juxtaposition in which Piirto’s argument for quality and qualification resonates because the arts involve both artistic and aesthetic relation, intention and appreciation, and an overarching emotional response to creative activity. Like many critics of arts research, I have also witnessed works of art where the absence of vigour or the articulation of understandings concerning methodologies and methods has left me wanting. Yet therein is the hint of a formalist assessment of artworks, concerned with structure and composition, while art-like and contemporary art facilitates meaning through expression. This implication suggests “artistic practice degenerates if it addresses itself more to the undifferentiated needs of consumers than to the critical collaborations of experts” (Benjamin, 1999, p. 504). But does qualification in art really assure the quality of art as Piirto asserts? And in turn, does qualification in research dictate good research?

Eisner (2002) argues for a balance of practical and principled inquiry and research, for “practice that is not principled has no compass” (p. 42). Conversely, Peters (2003) pushes the boundaries of the debate further by suggesting not only should art speak for itself, but that arts researchers invoke a “non-methodological method,” a practice-based approach with a complete absence of theoretical discourses (pp. 1, 9). Bracketed by Eisner and Peters, Piantanida, McMahon & Garman (2003) state that not attending to the issues of quality and qualification leaves researchers “in a position of vulnerability,” potentially bringing into question the “long-term viability and credibility of aesthetic modes of inquiry” (p. 184). Piantanida et al. (2003)
argue for a more philosophical “logic of justification” to ground arts inquiry, reminding that within the Arts, “criteria for judging the merits of artistic productions and performances exist” (p. 187). Slattery (2003) notes “art and education, for some, are not always conscious acts,” encouraging researchers to “resist” having their artworks subjected to traditional forms of judgement and instead, as “boundary breakers,” commit to further experimentation to achieve a new paradigm (pp. 195, 196). Finley (2003) discusses “locating quality criteria within a particular context and community, rather than establishing universal rules for evaluation,” noting that when arts inquiry “exists outside of frameworks of either research and art,” questions of whether the work constitutes art or research become meaningless (pp. 285, 288). At times arts researchers may give the impression of “an eminently quarrelsome tribe” boldly inventing new forms of research in a contentious space (Genette, 1997, p. 11). Perhaps as Baudrillard (2005) suggests, through “obstacles and oppositions” the arts paradigm as a system will “bound ahead” (p. 11). The only standpoint all arts researchers seem to share is there are many ways to engage in practice, not a singular vision.

Embracing a position that everyone can be artists and education is the means to facilitate such development, Richmond (2004b) charts the historical shift from art concerned with objects to art concerned with ideas. Making a distinction between traditional fine Art and contemporary art, in which the latter is “more about attitude, a way of working that is improvisational, questioning, ironic, critical, small scale, exploratory, biographical, local, ad hoc, collaborative, individual, process- not skill-based, fragmentary, and ambiguous,” Richmond (2004b) refines the realms of art making in ways that address this ongoing debate (p. 110). Contemporary art may not be “concerned with the visible,” instead contemporary art may be concerned with contradictory concepts and contexts, following no formal structure and taking no required form, where “meaning” and “truth” are derived “from society and forms of representation such as
language” (Richmond, 2004b, p. 110). Such artworks often involve new media, “photography, scrapbooks and journals, found objects … accessible techniques … and being reflective of the concerns of theory, is deconstructive and conceptual” (Richmond, 2004b, p. 110). Although contemporary art has broadened understandings of artworks and artists, Richmond (2004b) also cautions contemporary art can be “self-indulgent (no standards), overtly theoretical and elitist since only a few insiders know the hidden codes and banal visuality” (p. 110). By positioning Richmond’s discussion of contemporary art in-between spaces of art-like experimental expressions, and Art as skill-based products concerned with visible beauty in form and style, a viable method of engaging in artful expression emerges. The tensions between art-like (everyday art) and Art (high culture) may be negotiated through a third space of contemporary art practice (mass culture). In this way, arts researchers engaging in art making may position their renderings as a blend of practices, or dominantly art-like, Art or contemporary art expressions.

Like many inquiring through the arts, I bring to my practice a degree of specialisation in a specific genre (photography) acquired through ongoing engagement over many years, a practice which has found a public forum in traditional arts venues: juried exhibitions, gallery shows and commercial publications. I venture that these same works may not resonate for everyone as a/Art, though my photographs may well be aesthetically pleasing or displeasing in a receiver’s view. For the most part, I pursue more traditional notions of beauty in my photographic renderings, and seldom undertake strictly contemporary art projects, though at times I may knowingly blend aspects of all three realms, art-like, Art and contemporary practices. I also witness photographs with a set of technical criteria and expectations which may be finer in detail than that of a wider audience. Genette (1999) describes this as “levels of reception,” in which anyone can perceive a work of art, but there are different levels of reception.
underway, “the fact remains” an artist “takes in more features of the artistic phenomenon in question … thus taking the phenomenon more fully into consideration” (p. 188). In the arts paradigm, I often feel photography is a (if not the) most accessible genre, ubiquitous in methodologies, as Richmond (2004a) judiciously states, it is “the artistic medium of our age” (p. 83). Photography is rather indiscriminately applied as both an art form and a means to document other art genres, without recognition for standards or levels Piirto suggests, but often as a ready-made art expression, and I admit, for me this is at times problematic. I have been, and will likely continue to be, displeased by works which fail to demonstrate basic photographic understandings. Like Piirto and others, I always want excellence in the arts, especially photography, but intuitively, I also know advancing up this slippery slope, far too easily taken in the arts paradigm, is destined to slide me back to the messiness of the quality and qualification debate. So how do I reconcile a myopic view of photography, based on my embodied knowing, in which my degree of expertise will always be more or less than the next, but like most practicing artists in all genres, unlikely to achieve the pinnacle of photographic insight, a definitive voice and vision for all?

Along with photography, I explore additional genres such as creative writing, in which I am a novice, and even though I draw upon insights and skills which represent a culmination of various arts interests over a lifetime, I am nevertheless untrained and offer at best a layperson’s expression. Because of the diverse venues in the arts paradigm, and the opportunity to experiment within arts approaches, I may well discover I am more effective as a writer (or other genre) than photographer, regardless of a degree of mastery for the latter. My movements within modes of artful expressions are responsive to research scenarios. Rather than imposing my primary form of expression, I seek to recognize the idiosyncratic nature of doing arts research and the importance of honouring the stories that shape emerging artful expression, making each
case unique and customary. Arts research is predicated on the act of undertaking and sharing in
Art, contemporary and art-like expression where creative pursuits are a means to help nurture
skills of observation, interpretation, self-reflection, insight and more.

So the questions resurface once again: How do I proceed as a writer in the arts paradigm
given Piirto’s thesis? Do we lessen the value or subvert the quality of mastered art practice by
encouraging all levels of participation equally in arts research? As Eisner (1997a) suggests,
“expertise does matter” (p. 269). Or are we in danger of pushing too far, of creating an almost
nihilistic ‘anything goes’ paradigm? Alternatively, as Richmond (2004b) cautions, does
emphasis on aesthetic form tie expression too closely to the Western canon in the postmodern
age? And what of the arbitrary nature of quality and qualification in contemporary art? Is the
debate of art-like, contemporary and Art more about power politics than quality and
qualification? It is conceivable that through the arts paradigm, art-like expressions may shift
power from institutionalized Art to a new form of expression, a sort of arts “reduction,”
effectively making art “readable, or even attractive and easily accessible” (Genette, 1997, pp.
180, 194). Works of art that do not adhere to traditional forms of quality and qualification may
offer a very different effect and different meaning, ultimately relocating artful expression outside
of existing institutions of Art.

I remain uncertain the art-like/Art debate shall (or should) be definitively resolved, but I
am convinced this issue cannot be uncared for if the arts paradigm is to advance, and so I turn to
issues of aesthetics and works of art as a means to complexify and continue deliberating.

On aesthetics and works of art

If questions at the heart of the a/Art debate are unpacked in a broader discussion of
aesthetics and works of art, then questions of quality and qualification take another dimension
when engaging methodological dispositions in the arts paradigm. Arts methodologies can be interpreted as dominantly focused on artistic and/or aesthetic qualities, as exemplified in two methodologies applied in this project, a/r/tography and visual art practice. A/r/tography is a subjective, postmodern perspective, which Irwin (2003) describes as cultivating an aesthetic way of knowing where “dialectical relationships” include “theory and practice” to actively create knowledge “through sensing, feeling and thinking” (pp. 63, 64). In contrast, visual art practice, a methodology framed by acts of agency and structure, defined by dialogue and discourse, consideration of art materials and properties, and meaning making that is socially understood, is reminiscent of discipline-based art education, a more technical orientation. As Genette (1997) suggests, it is easier to define what is artistic, than what is art, and this may in part contribute to the aesthetic and conceptual impasse between Art, contemporary and art-like expression.

Focusing on artistry, Genette (1997) defines “not the arts, but the artistic character of this or that activity or object” to “mobilize a criterion” that is relational, rather than visible (p. 4). A work of art qualifies as an aesthetic object when there is an intentional aesthetic function producing an intentional aesthetic effect from which follow “theoretical consequences” (Genette, 1997, p. 7). Genette (1997) draws a distinction between “aesthetic relations in general,” and aesthetic relation “to works of art in particular” (p. 1). Works of art are occurrence-works involving activities such as music and literature, or object-works, graphic forms like painting and photography. These works are autographic (a unique, authentic work) and/or allographic (a work from which multiple copies may be made). Within all works there are provisional works, where the ébauche, an incomplete state, creates tension, similar to what Irwin (2003) describes as aesthetic unfolding. Irwin (2003) applies the metaphor of underpainting to express how “what is first seen may be hidden, only to emerge years later” in making art and in making curricular decisions in teaching (p. 66). The ébauche is the underdrawing, underpainting, the pretext that
“provides evidence of evolution to the trained eye” (Genette, 1997, p. 193). Most arts practitioners crisscross asymmetrically between occurrence and object works, autographic and allographic works, and ébauche and definitive works of art, making the very shift between a source for critiques concerning quality and qualification.

In contemplating the benefits to the arts paradigm of a more substantive discourse concerning how works of art function, I extend Genette’s (1997) thesis of modes of existence, that is, when “enlarging the scope of an inquiry … it becomes incumbent upon us to say what kind of human practice it is,” I question if Genette’s methods for engaging works of art provide a formation around which to build such a conversation (p. 2). As Genette (1997) reminds, “competence of the audience, or even the sharpness of their senses,” along with the “fluctuating relation between the intention of the artist and the attention of public,” has an impact on how works are, or are not, understood (pp. 126, 155). For example, I appreciate avant-garde musical composition, but I have no background against which to gauge such works. If the artist-researcher informs me the piece is in process, in the ébauche, I begin to incorporate language and context to understand the composition in new and arguably more informed ways. Returning to my previous examples, my video-article is an autographic work that is also allographic. The video documents process, the ébauche, and as a definitive work of art, the video is a product resulting from ongoing inquiry and research. In contrast, the text-article, an allographic work, does not offer evidence of the pretext, only the definitive research is provided.

In arts research, I am equally interested in definitive products as in the detailing of processes and practices, whether the practitioner is invoking new genres, and what considerations were made in light of the genesis of such explorations. Without this information, works of art represented as products are expressions without context, an unacknowledged position, and because “the reception of a work is partial” and all “properties” cannot be absorbed
during the event, it sometimes remains unclear to me how I am to receive a work. If an arts researcher is willing to, as Genette (1997) suggests, accept the risk of misunderstanding and rely on my guesswork, then I must concur with Piirto’s thesis, quality and qualification is a safeguard from the novelty of expressions through arts that may remain underdeveloped in conception, presentation and interpretation. But if the artist-researcher foregrounds a work, for example in Genette’s language of aesthetics and works of art, the context shifts perspectives, expectations and judgements from reception of the event as a formal, professional demonstration to the processes, practices and products involving ébauche in research.

By positioning self and situating works of art in the arts paradigm, the conversation moves from a perceptual debate of criteria of Art and art-like, to a “conceptual mode,” where questions draw attention to the product by moving through the practices and processes and back again to the product (Genette, 1997, p. 154). This encourages arts practitioners to adopt expressions of arts research as “gestures” that “propose something to the artworld” and I would suggest, to the world of research (Genette, 1997, p. 143). Without a sense of gesture, questions of Art often slip into the equation, provoking assumptions about the “type of artistic function, but also the presence or absence of an artistic function,” rather than attending to the continuous movement of the arts as research (Genette, 1997, p. 256).

By virtue of the scope and fluidity of the arts incorporated into inquiry, innumerable readings, responses, and aesthetic experiences are potentially possible. As Genette (1999) states, it is “not sound methodology to include in a definition a trait characteristic of only the ‘best’ members of the class it defines,” instead, it is critical to “perceive all the details of its construction, and thus to appreciate it knowledgeably” (p. 22). I believe this is also true of arts research, only when “works of art are received and valued on different planes,” will the arts paradigm mature (Benjamin, 1968, p. 224). Given inclusiveness is foundational in contemporary
postmodern education, as educators, it is of foremost importance the distinction between amateur and professional does not overshadow the significance of learning through the arts, but serves as a forum to extend conversations of the arts paradigm to embrace artful creations as “insights into human life and its meaning” (Korsmeyer, 2004, p. 11).

Because the “artistic is not always bound up with the aesthetic,” rather than assessing arts inquiry as Art, it may be more constructive to contemplate the possibilities of the “relation between the artistic and the aesthetic” (Genette, 1997, p. 138). Genette (1999) underscores the importance of relations of works of art which are often “not aesthetic,” but “scholarly” or “scientific (historical),” and only when the works of art have an aesthetic intention do they constitute art (p. 121). In the arts paradigm, expressive research is not necessarily a work of a/Art by definition, and conversely, not all works of art are artistic, but works may have aesthetic merit. It is in this understanding of when is art that arts research makes spaces for both a/Artists because there is not necessarily a presumption of formal training. Returning to my works as an example, the video-article can then be assessed aesthetically and artistically as inquiry through the arts, as an expression blending traditional notions of beauty along with contemporary art practices rooted in theory, but the text-article, while aesthetically written, is not an example of art, but arts research.

From a position of aesthetic relation, arts inquiry may be cultivated and interpreted in terms of quality and qualification without necessarily assigning value to the resulting works of art. In this way, the arts may bring together practitioners of all levels to formulate creative research ranging from novice to connoisseurship, where works function as both an “intense, rigorous perceptual activity,” and a more subjective perspective rooted in “cursory, synthetic or distracted” impressions (Genette, 1999, p. 9). What makes works of art quality may not be mastery of specific art skills, nor a cumulative increase in competence and complexity in art.
abilities over time, but flexibility and open-endedness. If works are encountered from a relational aesthetics point of view, a position that acknowledges subjectivity and frames “the concept of judgement” involving “both the act of appreciation and the perceptual activity leading up to it,” then the active condition of a work of a/Art does not remain ambiguous to the audience, which is so often cause for critique (Genette, 1999, p. 12).

Genette (1999) argues the subjective nature of aesthetic appreciation is always at play, and subjectivity determines an often immediate emotional response to works of art where “every appreciation of an object is relative to the subjectivity of the individual who appreciates it,” and diversity of opinion, including disagreement, is a “necessary consequence of subjectivity” (pp. 118, 119). Regardless of education and experience, Genette (1999) states, it is unlikely anyone can be persuaded to change their feelings, their “inner agreement,” but by sharing positionality and situatedness, Genette’s theory of aesthetic relation may offer the basis for understanding works of art in meaningful and constructive ways (p. 62).

Like Richmond (2004b), I also “do not wish to give up on the sensuous, qualitative nature of art” concerned with aesthetic pleasure and appreciation in the process of making and in engaging with art products (p. 110). Appreciation as an act of “sustained perception, understanding, and appraisal of a work’s form, meaning and value” is an aesthetic activity underscoring much of the discourse in the arts paradigm, which is intrinsically woven into aesthetic individuality (Richmond, 1998, p. 13; 2004a). I realize this entry into aesthetics is susceptible to criticism for my simplicity and selectivity, and by no means do I suggest concrete answers. Certainly different theories of aesthetics, such as aesthetic banality and transaesthetics (Baudrillard, 2005) and/or negative aesthetics (Menke, 1999) offer other readings of artful expression in the arts paradigm. I am interested in developing means of engaging that extend beyond dualistic responses and move to contemplative considerations. Refining a conversation
of a/Art and aesthetics in this way allows my attention to be directed outward, to the transdisciplinary dimension of arts research, and the potential consequences of the movement of the arts paradigm within extended communities of art practice.

**The potential of social and cultural gentrification through the arts**

In this interpretation, I borrow the concept of gentrification from urban and social geography as a means to read the arts paradigm, to examine more critically how academics across disciplines are reframing social and cultural landscapes through the arts and why the actions of arts researchers may change broader arts conversations. Much has been written concerning the role of artists and higher education in gentrification, and the close ties of gentrification to the arts (Bridge; 2001; Deutsche & Ryan, 1984; Peck, 2005). Applying the term gentrification to the arts paradigm, and suggesting academics engaging in the arts are among the ‘different sorts of gentrifiers,’ a group I refer to as *artademics*, opens this conversation to new ways of thinking about the relational nature of the arts paradigm by interpreting patterns of movement (Redfern, 2003). Gentrification offers insights to shifts underway in the academy that have a ripple effect in terms of how wider society perceives the arts and art making.

To date issues of arts research have remained largely focused on shaping methodologies and methods grounded in the arts, but it is also important to turn attention outward, which raises a series of key questions worth problematising: Do artademics gentrify the arts? Are other a/Artists displaced? What are the consequences for society, for the movement of art and culture? Are a/Artists denied spaces to begin circulating their works because artademics are filling those spaces? If, as Lees (1999) suggests, “academics have become conformist, complacent … and now ignore or avoid public issues,” is there a chance artademics are instilling a culture of sameness in social and cultural landscapes previously noted for living with uncertainty (pp. 377-
Given the rhetoric of self-evolution and concern with social justice, how do arts practitioners so closely tied to these issues reconcile the impact of engaging in the arts upon Artists, community artists, and art and culture in general? Should there be a critique set in a healthy scepticism about the role and the artworks of academics?

While gentrification is often cast as redevelopment, a positive change, it is the dubious aspects I am most interested in exploring in this conversation. Motivated by “notions of status,” the processes underway concerning artademics parallel what Redfern (2003) describes as the historical gentrification of professions such as lawyers and doctors in the 19th century, professions that came to be treated “literally like the gentry” (pp. 2355-2356). In the present-day, academics may seek new associations through the arts to enhance understandings of self and social status in a new neoliberal period where economic, political, and public success is closely tied to creativity (Peck, 2005). In the academy, some may feel ranked behind those in sciences and other professional practices, and the arts may serve as a means to negotiate a sense of difference in the new era, making identity as arts researchers “precisely about recognition, honour and respect” found in spaces of artful expression (Redfern, 2003, p. 2359). In this way, artademics express what Lloyd (2002) calls a ‘neo-bohemian’ disposition, invoking artistic innovation while at the same time increasingly making art a cultural commodity through the vehicle of the academy. Like gentrifiers in other domains, artademics are making art and culture a place of their own, and while this may result in a new order in the academy, Artists and community-based artists as activists may be displaced from the very conversations that artademics, as theorists, are striving to facilitate. As Redfern (2003) aptly states, “gentrifiers create anxiety for others, whose identities they threaten, to whom they pose a ‘danger,’ specifically because, in realising their goals, they deny those they displace the opportunity to realise theirs” (p. 2364).
In effect, artademics encroach on Artists under the auspices of conceptually-based contemporary arts practices, making higher education plus art valuable credentials in funding opportunities as well as in securing venues outside of the academy which may facilitate even more opportunities and greater access to publishing, performing or exhibiting than academics already possess. It may be argued that academics are displacing traditional voices in the arts through their proximity to such systems of distribution, resulting in an artful sprawl in the academy and wider society which ‘glamorizes’ inquiry and research (Cole, 1987). Cameron & Coaffee (2005) suggest “aesthetic valorization” makes art “a ‘marker’ for tracking the evolution of gentrification” (pp. 40, 54). Ley (2003) also states an aesthetic disposition requires both “middle class origins and/or high levels of education together” (pp. 2531). By disseminating ideas through art, “tensions in structure and agency” occur when a group like artademics “deploy their considerable cultural capital” to restructure a “habitus” of previously known social and cultural relationships within the arts (Bridge, 2001, pp. 205-207).

Because artademics (of which I am one) reinforce such values through the “autonomy” the group possesses, and because the same practitioners then determine “prestige” in the arts paradigm, there is a potential to subvert the roles of Artists and community-based artists even if partnering with leaders in the arts (Ley, 2003, p. 2531). In this context, artademics function as gentrifiers through the aesthetic appropriation of social and cultural place. The deliberate positioning of artademics pushes these boundaries while at the same time colonizing the “broad matrix of the arts” (Ley, 2003, p. 2537). The arts as part of a larger social geography becomes a “stylisation of life,” where works of art are no longer “material products with a creator” but “a symbolic product,” in which value resides in the social dynamics that enables art making (Ley, 2003, p. 2532). How then, as academics, do arts practitioners protect the spaces of Artists and
community-based artists without creating boundaries around inquiry through the arts and arts research?

While weighing detrimental aspects of gentrification by artademics, it is important to recognize this same transition also holds the potential for constructive contributions as the way to challenge and change existing domains. Through gentrification, artademics claim a position in both the academy and the wider social and cultural milieu which may ultimately bring the role of the academic full circle. In the past, academics were public figures who also disseminated research in “broad common language and created a national audience” (Lees, 1999, p. 377). The current move to the arts may provide a means to re-establish once again academics as public figures beyond ivory towers, where artademics, not impinged by the organizational censorship of the academy, lead an academic counter-culture that gentrifies systems of meaning making and knowledge production through the arts. It may be that within the academy, only in alternate third spaces such as the arts will academics find the personal freedom needed to reshape purposes and contributions, which will ultimately create a new arts scene, ideally in conjunction with existing spaces, rather than at the expense of Artists and community-based artists.

Ruminating on the arts paradigm

Genette’s analytic aesthetic approach concerning when is art suggests works of art are always in relation, individually or collectively, and always subjective. In the arts paradigm, relationships to works of art are integral, regardless if the works function autographically or allographically. Situating works of art requires a conceptual understanding of artistic and aesthetic characteristics, and the different ‘symptoms’ of intention (Genette, 1999). The artistic experience is one process which may double as an aesthetic experience, but not necessarily so, instead, the aesthetic experience may exist only in relation to the product, the work of art itself.
In tracing social and cultural shifts, arts research emerges as living, organic inquiry in which questions of aesthetics demonstrate a spatial relationality to past and present art movements. From a theoretical perspective concerned with positioning and situating, I question if an historical echo is underway, a resurgence of art history, reflective of former movements of Academic Art (academism) and Anti-Academic Art (anti-art) at the turn of the twentieth century (Harrison & Wood, 2005). Much like the shifts to the arts paradigm in the academy today, a similar shift took place in the past that may inform how the function of art is still understood.

In the Academic Art movement, art was created under the influence of university disciplines (Harrison & Wood, 2005). Academic Art came to be viewed as bourgeoisie, without style, and overtly constrained and conservative. In response, the Anti-Academic Art Movement, instigated in part by artists within the Academic movement making bold and innovative expressions, inspired a new era of avant-garde expression in a cultural revolution that led to modernism. Artademics as boundary breakers and counter-culture figures in the academy are also ushering in a new era. Within the Anti-Academic Art movement, some artists continued to draw upon traditional modes and understandings in ways not dissimilar to artademics pulling from the qualitative paradigm, while other anti-artists broke with convention and created forms against art as a profession (Harrison & Wood, 2005). As Korsmeyer (2004) states, “tradition unavoidably frames the work of even the most iconoclastic artists” (p. 129). The evolving postmodern arts paradigm has hallmarks of both bourgeoisie sentiments (as academics in the context of gentrification), and counter-culture resistance (as artists), forming something new in a conglomeration of ideas where arts research opens and proceeds into artistic and aesthetic symptoms, or to paraphrase Harrison & Wood (2005), new art lies in creative construction.

The arts paradigm as movement, as a transdisciplinary spatial relationship of inquiry, in-between works of art and academic practices, blends areas of study to form a new aesthetic of
artful expression that seeks alternate meanings in research, not necessarily truth claims. Residing in critical tensions and calling into question existing academic formations, the arts paradigm emerges as an expanding emancipatory ecotone, where artful expression as intimate communication transforms understandings in the construction of new knowledge, and in the course of doing, stimulates further inquiry and risk-taking. From an overview of the arts paradigm and a discussion of ongoing issues that continue to influence my thinking, I now unfold doing as part of the first panel of this triptych installation. Deeply reflecting on arts research, and documenting in detail the processes in action, this conversation moves to a one-year investigation concerning the lived and learning experiences of three women becoming art teachers. In the following account of doing research, I offer critical interpretations and understandings against which my positioning may be gauged, layered within multiple planes, across and through multiple latitudes and longitudes which constitute textual and visual inquiry of research partners and myself as researcher.
Doing Arts Research

Nathalie
Moving this conversation of arts research to the realm of doing, I begin in the ébauche, the underpainting, reflexively sharing my engagement with pre-service teachers, and my practices of investigating their lived and learning experiences becoming high school art teachers during a one-year teacher education program. I offer a commentary and an overview of processes to articulate the research experience as an aesthetic event of relational, interactive and collaborative practices, embedded in conversations, e-mails and visual images demonstrating the creative and unexpected ways arts research can unfold.

**Prelude to research**

*Dear Researcher:*

*The application with the above noted title has been reviewed and approved by the Behavioural Research Ethics Board.*

*(Office of Research Services, e-mail)*

Weaving my research experience with the voices of research partners makes the processes of arts research a site of methodological inquiry, exploring what it means to partner with participants, what kinds of challenges and tensions define such a study, and what relational connections emerge during the course of inquiry. Being rooted in feminist understandings helped negotiate changes within this study in ways that are not part of typical academic discourse, enabling me to constructively respond to the challenges which emerged over the course of our year together (Reinharz, 1992). By documenting research processes as an arts researcher, I am, as Pillow (2003) recommends, “critically conscious” of my location, position and interests as researcher, making the research process “an object of the study” (pp. 178, 179).
I continue to critically reflect upon my situatedness as I write about our shared experience. I am compressing time and telling only parts of the whole story within the confines of the typed page. At best I offer a partial view of our research process, a view that emerged from a given time and place, but from which I may begin to theorize about arts research as partnership. Partnership is a critical piece of the research puzzle too often lost in traditional expressions of research. In partnership, inquiry may be renewed by establishing research relationships that are deeper, broader, more intimate and more meaningful, enriched with new understandings and questions. A discussion of research processes as a generative space, infused with creativity, collegiality and community, illustrates arts research as a relational and interactive experience.

An invitation to share

“...yes I'd love to participate as much as possible...”

(Ann, e-mail)

A senior faculty member at a western Canadian university announced my research study to the secondary art teacher cohort in early September, with an invitation to contact me for more information. I had no idea whether students would volunteer given they were entering a demanding program of study, and as an outsider to the cohort, I was unknown, manifest only as a name and e-mail address. I felt a measure of angst concerning volunteers: What if they do not share? What if we do not like each other? How would I ensure this study did not feel like a clinical research experience objectifying volunteers as ‘other’? In my practice, I am also wary of being among “academics, similar to tourists, [who] often only manage to get to the surface of any area of inquiry they pursue” (Pelias, 2003, p. 369). Given this was a long-term, in-depth study involving bi-weekly meetings and any materials volunteers wished to share, I anticipated a small group, perhaps even just one volunteer might express interest, so I was excited when six of
twenty-four students, or 25% of the cohort, agreed to participate. Although gender was not a criterion for participation, all who volunteered were women even though 13% of the class were men. I recognize gender may have shifted the study in different ways, and depending upon perspective, may represent a limitation of this case, yet I believe the extent of our “woman-to-woman talk” was only possible because we shared understood social patterns as women which enabled research relationships to form as conversations unfolded (Reinharz, 1992, p. 23). The intimacy and bonding that emerged during the year may not have developed within a mixed gender study.

My initial area of interest concerned how beginning art teachers incorporated new media in their curriculum, but the focus of the study soon shifted within a framework of feminist grounded theory (Wuest, 1995). Although I bring pre-existing theoretical frameworks which define my worldviews and shape my research in relation to those views, feminist grounded theory meant I did not impose those views of what was most significant. Instead, during our conversations from September to August, “data analysis occurred concurrently with data collection,” and research questions for this study emerged during the course of data collection (Wuest, 1995, p. 129).

Feminist grounded theory acknowledges the complexities of experience inherent in a practice-based profession like teaching and provides a method for understanding emerging social realities over time. Because I actively documented lived and learning experiences ‘as it happened’ over an extended time period, I ensured immediacy of the moment as raw data, not experience viewed from a distance. My approach, like that of Kushner & Morrow (2003), attends to agency, structure and critique, and extends to an analysis of organizational influences. In feminist grounded theory, there are no steps, fixed methods or procedures laid out in advance, rather this study had its own sequence based on interpreting data. As Mason (1998) states, “the
‘theory comes last’ view,” while controversial, “ensures the researcher will develop theoretical propositions or explanations out of the data, in a process which is commonly seen as moving from the particular to the general” (p. 142). To apply the tradition of feminist grounded theory with integrity, I engaged in ongoing critical reflection and journaling, continuously reviewing research processes and practices in relation to lived and learning experiences of becoming-teacher (Wuest, 1995, p. 125).

Our one-to-one meetings began in early September and set the tone for our evolving research relationships. As an arts researcher with feminist perspectives, I sought to “avoid control,” preferring to develop “a sense of connectedness” in an “atmosphere in which women felt knowledgeable” (Reinharz, 1992, pp. 20, 25). Women who volunteered were research partners with me, not participants in the usual sense. I invited collaboration on every aspect of our process: questions, transcript reviews and later, member checks of the written report. I asked for permission at each step, inviting their interpretations, and as partners, they were encouraged to take control of their transcripts and segments of the writing to ensure they were represented appropriately in the research. Our partnerships were at the centre of our research process, making the first phase of the study a period of emotional closeness. We met frequently in person, engaged in extensive dialogue and built solid working research relationships that sustained the study over a year, resulting in the quality, type and broad scope of information which informs this research.

In practice, these research values were reinforced in everyday actions, for example, we routinely met in an available office, sometimes a classroom or a café. In the office, I consciously altered our seating and often took the guest chair to visually demonstrate shifts in power as I sat lower and I did not control the space from behind a desk. We shared tea, coffee, and snacks, attending to our comfort during our conversations. Our meetings were social encounters,
planned for an hour, but frequently extending two to three hours. We spoke with ease, and as an active listener, I reciprocated, sharing personal experiences in self-disclosure (Wuest, 1995). I brought questions to serve as prompts and to guide our conversations. Partners were invited to pass on any questions as they wished. Yet despite these checks, I sometimes wondered, can I really gauge how they feel in this particular moment in time? Perhaps as Bateson (1989) suggests, in such situations we are in the process of composing our lives within a community of learners, where we “gain even more from comparing notes and trying to discover the choices of our friends” (p. 5). I was equally conscious my decisions and actions in the course of our encounters were consequential. Each woman expressed early in the project aspirations to continue with her studies at some point, which may account for the decision to join the study. As this was their first experience with research, I felt it was essential to model good practice, good research and good etiquette, as had been modelled to me during my learning journey by individuals who taught me through their actions what it meant to conduct research with meaning. My strong commitment to a feminist orientation was in part solidified through such mentorship, and in this case, I sought to reciprocate and to facilitate with caring our research relationships.

After the first round of meetings, I transcribed our audio-recorded conversations, and sent transcripts to the individual partners for review, a process which continued until the completion of the study. Transcribing our conversations myself over the course of the year was exhausting but vital in analyzing data while collecting data. As Riessman (1993) suggests, “close and repeated listening” to our conversations helped develop multilayered interpretations (p. 60). I employed voice-activated software, listening and speaking our recorded conversations in small snippets, and upon completion, verifying the conversations by listening again and editing the transcription as required. The experience of transcribing verbally and textually allowed me to relive the conversations, to hear nuances in life stories and segues of experiences that were
emerging at varied times, linked together across several conversations. The more I listened while re-speaking their words, the more connections were lifting out of the transcripts. My understandings of becoming an art teacher began to take shape, both as particular and general understandings. I believe such revelations would not have happened if I had relinquished transcriptions to a third party. This is part of how I learn. I learn by doing, and the hands-on laborious task of transcription was an aesthetic experience of sorts, for I lingered in and resonated with tones, words and expressions, making tactile action central in my coming to know. As a researcher, understanding this part of the research process was critical. My work has been, and will likely continue to be, small-scale, detailed and in-depth inquiries involving few partners, rather than large-scale studies which do not allow a researcher to develop such close relationships with partners and with data. For me, the effort to transcribe in research is essential to how I make meaning. Without this step, the importance of deeper layers might have been lost to me.

It was clear after the first set of meetings research partners were most interested in talking about issues relating to the experience of becoming an art teacher, even though we touched on a range of topics including curriculum development and technology. They were already teaching me about becoming from an expert position, disclosing stories in ways I could not have anticipated or been sensitive to had I undertaken another research design. I felt it was my duty to follow their lead, to discover what they knew to be of value in their journey. I quickly became immersed in their experiences, reformulating my approach to seek understanding about the social world of becoming-teacher. I continued to think within their stories of becoming, a process through which I unveiled my own subjectivity as I attended to aspects of our research process through analysis (Pillow, 2003). In this holistic approach to research, we came to operate on multiple levels, as friends, peers, mentors and learners. The events which took place during
research, and how research unfolded is a story of success and frustration, and of hopes and
disappointments, where “learning is making: making sense, making a life, making ourselves,” for
research partners and myself as researcher (Randall, 1997, p. 8). In our year together we
engaged in intense and extended conversations, accounting for many hours of interviews and
hundreds of pages of transcripts, with each step of the process involving member checks and
ongoing consultation.

Critical moments

“Things aren’t going so well. Won’t get into details…”
(Nathalie, e-mail)

The one-year teacher education program may be broadly viewed as having three key
phases. Phase One, To Be an Art Teacher, spanned September to December, or the first term of
the program, culminating in a two-week field experience known as the short practicum. Phase
Two, Becoming an Art Teacher, took place January to May, and involved a thirteen-week
assignment in a classroom known as the long practicum. Phase Three, Being an Art Teacher,
describes the final months of the program of study. The teacher education program prepares pre-
service teachers to apply for certification, but does not certify new teachers. Upon successful
completion of the teacher education program, pre-service teachers apply to an external agency,
the College of Teachers, for certification.

After we had established our research relationships, I joined the cohort on a field visit to
a regional high school, randomly photographing interactions of pre-service teachers as they
worked with high school students. My intent was to adopt photo elicitation techniques during
follow-up conversations with research partners, to generate ethnographically informed
perspectives on their experiences of becoming. I quickly found this approach did not work. In
our one-to-one meetings, we had already formed relationships of trust that allowed partners to
speak freely about matters involving events in the cohort and day-to-day issues in their lives. Inserting myself into the cohort as an insider-outsider created contradictory roles, and I sensed uncertainty in our next meetings. The photographs did not generate much commentary and our conversations seemed somewhat muted. As I reflected on this ‘bump’ in the research process, I became aware that my act of photographing pre-service teachers was problematic on a number of levels. By controlling the camera, and thus the renderings, I held authority over visual constructions. It would have been much more meaningful had I handed over the camera and asked partners to create photographs of their field experiences. More importantly, my participation in the field generated a disjuncture in how they perceived my role and our relationship. It was critically important to me that we continued to share our authentic selves during this journey. I did not want to inadvertently create research blocks in the trusted space of our meetings. In consultation with partners, we concluded this was not an effective approach for our inquiry. Later in the year, partners photographed their field experiences and in some cases, they chose to share those images as data. I believe if I had persisted in joining the cohort, I would have truncated the depth of expression that emerged in this study.

At the same time, I faced numerous ethical and personal questions along the way. For some partners, becoming art teachers involved unexpected events, and it was during critical moments of the program three participants eventually withdrew from the study. The first participant did not continue with the study after a month due to the heavy workload. She continued in the program and successfully achieved certification upon completion. As the cohort prepared for the short practicum, a serious personal crisis emerged for a second research partner. The short practicum marks the first critical test for students; they must pass a two-week trial period in the classroom with a sponsor teacher in order to continue with the program. As stress levels of research partners grew exponentially, the increasing anxiety to perform as a teacher was
clearly at the forefront. Conversations with the second partner had taken a turn in which I sensed she might potentially harm herself, and while I was reassured this was not the case, I faced a difficult decision. What should I do? What was my ethical responsibility? What if I did nothing? I expressed to her, as a person, let alone a researcher, I was bound to intervene if I felt there was a likelihood she might hurt herself or others. I urged contacting counselling services and to my relief she did. After hospitalization and ongoing treatment, she withdrew from the program but wanted to continue meeting, and like a Deleuzian fold, I considered, why not? Our meetings continued sporadically in person and online until the end of the study. I enjoyed our conversations, although our dialogue shifted considerably from the focus of the study. Her perspectives on learning and living were a source of insight and originality that inspired my thinking, taking me in new directions. She bestowed upon me a new awareness of the well-being of students in our classrooms, as well as a thread of research I wish to pursue, understanding the experiences of students who do not complete their programs of study. So often research reports only positive outcomes and progressive results. Students who withdraw are invisible in much of the literature. Where are the stories of learning interruption?

When I look back on this experience I still wonder if I could have done more and at what point. I felt ill-equipped to respond adequately. I have no training in crisis intervention and relied on common sense and intuition in the moment. I realized too that I was deeply affected by the suffering I witnessed, an empathy rooted in concern for the welfare of this research partner. This experience was not only a test of faith in my self-perception as researcher, but in my ability or inability to be objectively apart from the research study. With a measure of reproach, I often asked myself: Was I too intimately tied to the lives of research partners? Could I conduct a meaningful research study without maintaining a high degree of intimacy? The experience influenced my interactions with other partners, in particular, a woman who visually and textually
expressed mortality metaphors in her journals. When I questioned her about the meaning of these constructs, she described a symbolic shift from her previous self-concept to that of teacher, a transition in identity suggestive of ending a chapter in her life. I had to ask given the experiences of the second partner, an experience which has proven to be a vital lesson learned as a researcher.

In Phase Two, during the long practicum, an experience of extreme difficulty for some students, a third partner expressed viewpoints that were increasingly concerning, and this dialogue continued after the practicum was completed. The impact of the practicum had been exceptionally negative in a number of ways for this research partner, and talking about experiences in our conversations seemed to make matters worse. Over a three week period, we discussed the situation and deliberated on what was best. My sense was, continued participation in the study could potentially cause harm, and on that basis, she should not continue, yet I worried if I withdrew her, I might aggravate an already delicate situation and she might feel isolated or even abandoned. It was a deeply unsettling time that required careful negotiation of sensitivity for the research partner while balancing her perceptions of the program, attending to all research partners and the intricacies of their experiences, both positive and negative, while also considering what was best for the research study. In due course, we came to the mutual understanding withdrawal was best. She continued with the program and completed her studies.

I reflect on withdrawals as turning points, each unique in reasons and each requiring a thoughtful response. By inviting partners to share experiences in a study, there is a reciprocal responsibility to consider the after-effect, the potential lasting impact research decisions and actions may have upon an individual. Although such an ethic of caring is generally not detailed step-by-step in methods textbooks, as an arts researcher with feminist perspectives, I feel I must attend to the haziness of research involving close working relationships, and how the imprint of
such experiences may be traced in perceptions, ways of knowing and ways of being in future endeavours.

Looking back on a year with three to six research partners, we shared moments of elation, joy, imaginative ideas and inspired collaboration, but as in all working relationships, we also shared moments of awkwardness, discomfort, annoyance, hesitation and silence. There were a host of issues at the heart of our differences, including our gender. We grew up in different geographies and we are of different generations. We hold differing understandings as women and in our views of feminism. In some cases, we shared opposing views on the social construction of gender and consequential experiences in society. Ironically, the differences I came to feel in some cases were reminiscent of the feminist generational gap articulated to me when I was in my twenties by women who engaged in feminist pursuits in the 1960’s. In this regard, there were views expressed in our conversations which made me uncomfortable. At some points conversations were deeply objectionable and I felt a sense of estrangement, yet I did not express strong disagreement or articulate an argument from another perspective fearing elements of the researcher power dynamic would take hold in some form, and having encouraged open, free-form conversation in a place of safety and partnership, I would create a paradoxical state within the research process. How then do I honour partners and balance power as researcher? How are moral challenges negotiated in collaborative research spaces? I am still seeking these answers.

**Becoming teachers**

*I know I WILL BE ABLE TO DO THIS!*  
*(Ruth, e-mail)*

Information in this study was derived from a variety of sources, including personal journals kept during the year, e-mails, telephone calls, letters, photographs, artful expressions
rendered in many mediums, a self-directed project, as well as the voluminous transcripts of our meetings. These interrelated sources of information required different lenses to explore the experiences of partners more fully, to develop a greater sense of the many private and public dimensions which defined experiences of becoming-teachers, and equally, to better understand the nuances of my research inquiry. By unpacking the research processes, a more in-depth understanding of the issues framing research encounters emerged. For example, narratives and artful expressions of becoming through arts inquiry reshaped my orientation in relation to sources of information, generating greater complexity in theoretical and methodological engagements in the study. In this way, we became a community of inquiry, partnering in doing research as well as in the research experience.

Ruth, Ann and Nathalie (pseudonyms) completed the study and their narratives and visual expressions about becoming art teachers form the basis of interpretations. Ruth, Ann and Nathalie are demographically close in age and share similar educational backgrounds. They are diverse in culture and ethnicity, and identify with different social classes (see Appendix 1). In accordance with the ethical review, only partners who completed the one-year study form part of the final report.

In my ongoing deliberations on process, I wondered about the possibilities of partners writing their individual stories from interrelated sources, but for a number of reasons I knew this was not feasible. Partners were fully involved in their personal and professional lives, and as the researcher, it was my responsibility to assume this role, to make the final discretionary decisions, yet I continued to trouble my actions, particularly concerning ownership of understandings. It seemed inevitable my political and theoretical perspectives would influence authorship and determine what was selected as significant and what was omitted from textual and visual interpretations. In the course of preparing interpretations, I came to regard both the narratives
and visuals as markers of how well I understood what had taken place over one year, and how well I understood the dynamics of the research process.

**Shifting understandings of becoming**

Periods of distance took place during Phase One, the short practicum of two weeks, and in Phase Two, the long practicum of thirteen weeks. Due to the demands of practicum, we did not meet in person but continued to be in contact via e-mail and telephone. After both practicum experiences, partners were emotionally and physically drained, in some cases describing the experience as an emotional rollercoaster, yet threads emerged in follow-up conversations which suggested partners were actively deliberating on broader social, cultural, political and economic factors that influenced becoming-teacher. These threads signalled another shift in the study.

As partners developed stronger teacher identities, there was a parallel move towards more active engagement in art practice and this extended to our research. I was most interested in exploring opportunities for partners to further shape the direction of the study, and given their specialisation in art, art practice as a research strategy was most appropriate as a means to conceptualise lived experience (Cole & Knowles, 2001b).

Traces of emerging standpoints culminated in my decision to adopt a self-directed arts project in the third phase of the study. As a practice-based approach, artistic forms of knowing generate alternate ways of seeing and sensing lived and learning experiences. With the scope of information collected, and the creative orientation of partners, arts inquiry was a natural next step in the study. I provided journals and disposable cameras, as well as some guiding questions to help facilitate process if needed. For the last two months of the program, Ruth, Ann and Nathalie worked independently. It was critical they had time and space to deliberate without my
I did not want to mediate their ways of seeing as they completed the program (Pink, 2003).

We came together again for a final conversation at the end of the program to conclude our year together. At that point, if they wished, I included photos and journals in the study, but this was not a requirement. I was interested to discover some partners had incorporated the journal and photographs into course assignments. More importantly, partners did not necessarily take up journaling and/or photography to express experiences, instead research partners often utilized art methods they were most comfortable with in their existing practice, including sketching, collage and painting. In Ruth’s case, engagement became an integral part of her final months in the program and she completed two journal books, but few photographic images. She described journaling as an embodied experience:

I took it everywhere. It was always in my bag. I would take it to dinner. I would use it in the most random places, like we were on the bus going for a visit to see my parents. I knew I could be really honest with it. It was my way of relaxing. The journals were better for me. I don’t understand photography to its fullest and in photography you have to be intimate with the camera, you have to understand it. I felt disjointed from the camera but I felt really in tune with my journal.

For Ann, the self-directed component became a space to explore transitions through visual expression, poetry and written reflections. She created several sets of photographs during the final phase. Ann’s depictions suggest the project was a means of crossing perceived boundaries as a student and finding self-definition in self-expression:

I did get to reflect in the journal without worrying about it being judged. The freedom I found in doing it was excellent. I particularly liked being able to use it as I wanted, for whatever I needed it to be. The section where I considered the parenting aspects of teaching and teaching aspects of parenting helped me think about what kind of teacher I want to be, what attributes and habits I hope to develop. The photos were fun to integrate but I feel I ran out of time to truly explain the photos. Mostly I took pictures of places that gave me great feelings. Many were of nature. Some I could relate to or use as metaphors for teaching, learning, living and desire. Others I just
couldn’t help but take. I used to work front to back … now I work more freely and experiment more.

In Nathalie’s case, she elected not to work with the journal or disposable camera, even though visual journaling was a core component in coursework in the art education program:

I wasn’t very strict about doing it. I couldn’t use the disposable. I don’t know why. I did take some pictures but I haven’t finished the roll. It just felt very forced or something, I couldn’t do it. And the journal, it wasn’t as reflective or ‘out of body’ as I would’ve liked it to have been. It was very much about the classes I was taking. I didn’t have time to do it justice. So in a sense, in the way that I use photos and the journal for my understanding of becoming a teacher, I think it is still ongoing.

Ruminating on research partnerships

From my perspective as a researcher, the data sets of narratives of becoming, art practice and the self-directed project, which emerged under the methodological framework of arts research offered different streams of information in which I needed to dwell to appreciate the significance of key events in the lives of research partners. Each source of information offers multiple interpretations. With expansive information and interpretive possibilities, I increasingly drew upon heterogeneous threads of theoretical and methodological approaches, integrating different forms of arts research as well as qualitative methods. I opted for customary approaches, seeking understandings that broaden and strengthen interpretations by connecting interrelated threads in multiple research approaches. At the same time, I recognize I open my arts research and interpretations of sources to criticism for arbitrarily blending strategies, which some researchers may view as weakening the research, or corrupting, indeed fetishizing research findings.

Following the research protocols of feminist grounded theory, analysis was concurrent with data collection during the course of the year, but only after the completion of collection,
having come to my own understandings of each source of information, did I begin to engage in
the existing literature. My interpretations of becoming a teacher of art are situated in a
interdisciplinary framework of rhetorical, aesthetic and ideological dimensions, where different
renderings of information unpack lived experiences textually, visually and integratively.

The interpretation phase of the study presented a set of unique challenges given the
intimacy of our research relationships. Hoskins & Stoltz (2005) suggest researchers with small
sample sizes may not “fully anticipate” how research relationships affect analysis as well as the
rendering and presentation of research (p. 95). There were moments when I felt that
predicament. I sought to balance the “privileging of knowledge and expertise” of partners and
my role and ability to “analyse and interpret,” while not wanting to offend partners by taking “a
critical stance” (Hoskins & Stoltz, 2005, pp. 97, 102). Even though each form of interpretation
was put before partners with an invitation for consultation, there existed underlying concerns for
me. I felt an obligation to check, double check, to outline potentialities, and to ask again: Do
you want to include this part of your experience? Do you want to include this image? Despite
written consent, did they really understand what it meant to include their experiences in a public
forum? Was I growing reluctant to invoke the researcher role in the study?

Doing arts research may be described as being on the margins, where emotions are entry
points to understanding the aesthetics of lived experiences. In the process of analysis, I also
wondered if partners felt confident to question and disagree with my interpretations. I had
further concerns that research about lived experiences can appear as academic property. When
research partners are known as pseudonyms in written text, their anonymity and confidentiality is
protected, but arguably, a layer of invisibility is imposed at the same time, despite fostering
collaborative relationships.
With a backdrop of ongoing reflexivity, I now enter the second panel of this triptych installation, the unexpectedness of research practices, shifting this conversation to narratives as creative non-fiction in an in-depth engagement that enriches and enlightens my understandings of becoming-teacher in unexpected ways.
II

UNEXPECTEDNESS: RESEARCH PRACTICES
In the central panel of this triptych installation, I introduce each partner and their experience of becoming an art teacher in their own words. The richness of the following narratives represent portraits of three determined young women with very different worldviews as artists and very different professional goals as becoming-teachers (Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Working from hundreds of pages of transcripts and multiple data sources required filtering information and condensing experiences, generating narratives approximately thirty pages in length, yet I feel much is absent from between the lines. During our member checks, I stressed narratives were open to change and encouraged partners to engage in a process similar to approving transcripts. They were invited to revise their narratives and add segments of importance I may have missed, creating an opportunity to collaboratively refine individual narratives from the draft I presented. Positive responses to the drafts confirmed we were in unison as research partners, and our perceptions of events were consistent.

Narratives are explored as creative non-fiction, a textual form of retelling lived and learning experiences of research partners in which I enter research practices of creating “with care and openness and critique,” and in so doing, invite readers to consider multiple readings, interpretations and writings of the full narratives rather than closing stories to a singular, static interpretation (Leggo, 2007, p. 10). In this way I seek to pose more questions and generate differing perspectives to further possibilities for knowing through arts research.
Ruth’s story: The bridge I have to walk over
I’m going to build a bridge

I always wanted to be an art teacher. It started off because my mom wanted to be a teacher. She was a teacher’s assistant and she worked with a lot of special needs kids, and I have always been the one in my family to pick up the pencil and paper and draw, whether it be my favourite image, Ariel the Little Mermaid, or anything else. That was always me, and I think loving drawing, and watching my mom at work and hearing her stories came together and became a goal for me. It just always made sense to me that teaching is what I wanted to do. So I’ve never really looked away from this goal. I would never doubt that I’m supposed to be here. I went from high school right into university and completed my arts degree with a major in fine arts and a minor in French. I don’t really have any outside experience in terms of teaching a class. I’ve observed in classrooms of my own accord. I had a tough time deciding what grade level I wanted to teach, elementary or high school. In the end, I decided that high school is really where I wanted to be because that’s where I can teach the kids the kinds of things I love to do. It is one thing to colour with crayons and have kids make abstract stuff and say ‘that’s so cute’ or ‘tell me about that,’ but I really want to go a lot deeper and work through difficult issues with teenagers. It’s not that you’re not influencing kids when you’re in an elementary school, because you are huge influence, but just in a different way. Being able to express yourself and everything that comes along with being a teenager, and experiencing everything is where I want to be. Kids need good teachers to help them through their five years of high school and that’s what has brought me here.

Now I’m taking teacher education and I’m quite young still, so that is one concern of mine about teaching high school. I don’t want to fit in too well with the high school kids. I will be teaching kids that are only five years younger. Other students in the cohort have had experience in different jobs, they’ve done some traveling, they’ve done different things and now
they’re coming back and they have the life experience. I don’t have that kind of life experience so to speak, outside of school, so what if I teach Grade 8 and they are sassy, and what about those Grade 12’s, they’ll tower over me! How am I going to be able to keep the peace, have the classroom management and just be able to teach them what they need to know about art, and why art is relevant these days? I thought back to my high school years and the way my teachers taught me, and do I want to be that kind of teacher? How might I do that? What would I want to change? A lot of questions started to fill up and although I know that they will be answered, what do I do in the meantime? Even though there’s still that deeper fear, it looks more realistic now. I can feel comfortable knowing I will be taught how to deal with everything that comes along, and how to deal with changes. So even if there is something I’m not sure of now, I will know how to do it by the end of this program.

Our first day was really great. There were so many readings in the first week, you’ve got to read, article, article, article, chapter, chapter, chapter, reading response, reading response, and then visual journal. I want to do all the readings and I want to retain everything I can in the readings, but they are telling us, skim and scan. It isn’t about understanding everything, it is just about having those ideas. You just want your brain to hold everything in, but then there’s that point of saturation, in one ear out the other, so by the time we got to the end of the first week I just wanted to do it again, to start over.

In high school, I tried to fit in and not to be noticed. In Grade 11, I started dating my husband. He was involved in everything: student council, student action, Counter Attack, everything. It was good for his resume, and it was good for scholarships. He has a real ‘get those marks’ attitude, and I’ve always had a good grade average, so he was the one who really got me into being a part of organizations, and in turn made me realize it was really good to put yourself out there and that brought me out of my shell. When I was in high school, I didn’t miss
class unless I absolutely had to. I wasn’t necessarily the most energetic student, like ‘I know this, pick me, pick me,’ but I was very attentive. I’m a real people pleaser so I don’t want to ruffle any feathers. I don’t like to give my own opinions a lot of the time, especially if they differ from somebody else. I usually change my opinions, and say, ‘Well that makes sense too, maybe I’m wrong.’ In high school, I did an art piece at graduation about me starting off to university, looking into the sunset with my arms extended. In it, I’m outside and I’m going to build a bridge.

I am a very personal artist. During my undergrad, we had to think of the concepts. I like to paint things that make sense to me, but it might not make a lot of sense to my audience, so at this point I would not be a good gallery artist. I don’t think people understood what I was trying to say in my undergrad years. I tried my hardest to fit the whole family personal thing into concept art but it didn’t work out well. I remember making one project which was about my father, he’s a policeman, and I loved this project. I wanted to portray my dad as more than a policeman. It is not just the suit. So I painted a series of three and it was my dad in the police uniform on the job, he’s a highway patrolman, there was another one with me and my sister and my mom in an intimate setting, and then there’s a third one. It was a very personal piece for me because I see my dad as so much more than a policeman. We had our critique in the classroom and I saw how much an audience can dismantle and turn around what you want to say. There was one student who apparently did not see policemen as useful assets of society and interpreted it in such a negative way. Really, how can I say it, it really hit me personally, because my work is so personal. I realized I don’t like critique. At that point, even though I wanted my art to be personal, I had a hard time describing my art. It’s all about my own experiences, my imagination, how my life is. I think my perception is really going to change this year in terms of
how my art looks, and as I think about the students and what I want them to do. It’s really pushing my own boundaries of what art is and how you can express yourself.

As a teacher, I’m a little bit unsure of myself, mostly because I have such a smattering of knowledge in a lot of places and I don’t realize that the students I’m teaching are not going to have any. In the future, once I know a little more about students and about being a facilitator or guide, I will help students come down the same path that I did, in whatever way they are going. I’ll have a lot to offer them, a lot of energy to impart to them, to give them the reins and say, ‘Let’s go, let’s just have fun!’

I really do feel like a seed, being opened up and putting roots down and waiting to find the sun, and just grow up. I’m really excited about everything. Right now I’m going everywhere, my brain isn’t stopping. Last night I dreamt I was teaching. Everything in my life is teaching, teaching, teaching, but the fear of failing is always there, like when you do something for the first time that other people do professionally. I think, ‘Oh, did I get it? Will I get it?’ We’re doing lesson plans right now and I went to talk to the instructor today because I’m really confused. There’s so many different lesson plans, all these different templates, and all the words are different but they all mean the same thing. I don’t get it. Other people are writing within the hour allotted and I’ve written down ten things but I’ve completely missed the process. That was a real eye opener. I had question after question. I don’t get it, why don’t I get it. I know I’m going to succeed because everyone is there to help, so it is unnecessary fear.

I might teach things differently than how I was taught in school. So much of art class is about identity and trying to figure out who you are. Anything from body image to self-image to gender issues, then there’s the social justice classroom and teaching diversity and I could do so much with that. It isn’t about the process necessarily. It can be about context and personal issues, and it can be anything you want it to be. I want to further that goal. I want to be able to
make art about anything that the students want to do. I want to help them get where they want to go because whatever they have in their mind to do is art to them. It doesn’t have to be open to critics, so I think that’s my biggest goal for this year.

We went on a field trip with the cohort where we were in the role of observers. I wasn’t a student anymore and it was very weird, because you’re very familiar with the role of a high school student and a university student. I’m used to listening to a lecture for an hour, but going in the classroom, I wasn’t made to sit, I was just listening, it wasn’t about a lecture anymore. It was about getting the kids involved and then letting them do their own thing. I really felt between worlds almost. I wasn’t quite a teacher, so I wasn’t in charge and I certainly wasn’t the student, but at the same time, I was young enough still that a lot of things they are interested in are interesting to me too. It was very easy, and surprising that I could go up to a table of Grade 8 boys and ask them how they’re doing, and we got into a whole discussion about Nintendo. As a teacher, I was wondering, is this allowed? As a teacher, do kids talk to them about their everyday stuff? But I still wasn’t one of the group. I was an outsider. I was like a teacher, an incoming source, so they were careful about what they said. We talked a little bit about hockey starting in a couple of weeks and they were excited about that. It was a very out of body experience because I was so many things at once. I actually found it easier to talk to the guys, who have always intimidated me, than the girls, especially the Grade 9’s, oh, they’re snotty! I figured, I’m a girl, so sisterhood, but it was just after lunch and they were chatting rather than doing their art. The funny thing was, the other student-teachers were able to talk to other groups that I wasn’t able to talk to, so it was weird, the people who I felt more comfortable with and less comfortable with. I think back to my high school, the art room was always open and kids would eat in there, and I think that is what made our room such a great place because we could sit together and talk. It created a sense of community.
In our cohort, we are practicing dressing as an artist or art teacher at the moment, and it is amazing how some people look so much like art teachers. Totally teacherish! I just love it. What should I wear? What’s artsy? What does an art teacher look like? You can’t wear your best dress. I braided my hair, but that made me look 15, so I would never braid my hair again. I wore some big dangling earrings and a wrap that my mom got from the Caribbean with tassels on it. I wore some blue dress slacks. I’m really concerned about how to dress. You are an art teacher but an art teacher dresses differently than a regular teacher. I don’t remember my art teachers ever wearing suits, you don’t do that because you are going to get messy. So my mom and me went shopping and found six blazers for the price of one, which is fabulous. They were all different colors and they are all artsy. One of them is an empire waist, it’s my favourite. I’ve got to look young and fun, but I have to look professional, and there’s a difference between old professional and stylish young professional. I can see what people wear, but I can’t necessarily put it together, and I get ideas from other people in the class, like one girl she wears the coolest necklaces, I just love them, I want them so badly! She wears them everyday and so having a little bit of funky jewellery can mix up a more professional outfit. This is as important as lesson plans.

**If you fail to plan, you plan to fail**

I’m at a point now that I’ve gotten to so many other times in my life, and I’ve never actually taken the next step. There is a threshold between the really wanting to, and actually doing it, the thought and the action. I have a lot of thresholds with learning language, even though I have a French minor. Learning and speaking a language are two very different things. I can understand French very well. In my classes, I never spoke a word because it was the threshold. I was scared to be wrong. I was scared to have my grammar in the wrong positions or
forgetting words or pronouncing things incorrectly. I got into French as an English student, I never went to Immersion. I love languages and I love French, it is a beautiful language, I wish I could speak it. I can speak in my head perfectly, so someone says something to me, I know exactly what to say in my head, but in class I rarely spoke. There was that fear. I had the opportunity to go to Québec, but in the end, because my husband and I got engaged and then the marriage thing, the whole planning, I had to say no. So there was another threshold that I really wanted to cross, but at the same time, it was kind of comforting that I could say no because I didn’t have to cross that bridge. So I’m at that point right now again. I really want to be a teacher. I’m really excited about being a teacher and I want to do it. I want to teach what I have been learning, but there’s still that fear, the whole bridge thing that I have to walk over. You can’t walk over it in steps almost, you are either doing it or you’re not. I mean, we teach one lesson at a time, but you’re either the teacher or you are not. We’ll be observed in the first week of the practicum, which is really good, and then we will teach one lesson a day. It is like I have to jump to the whole other side, which is really scary for me, so I’m excited and at the same time scared out of my mind. I thought countless times of my dad saying, ‘If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.’ This is a big one, now I hear his words in the back my head.

I really want to go on Monday to my practicum and get over the initial fear. I want to be in the back of that classroom to document everything that happens and every single thing the teacher does, I want to model action for action, word for word. Then really what I’m doing is putting everything that I’ve learned so far into perspective which I want so badly but that fear is kind of right there. I know how to write things down. I know how to write the lesson plan. I know how to do the research because I learned that from my undergrad. I could have all of the information but it is the presentation of the information that’s hard, that I’m not used to, because I’ve always felt, well up until this year, I would probably never do presentations in my life! I
never liked getting up in front of people, so getting up in front of a class of who knows how many kids because of class sizes, let’s say, 35 maybe, that I don’t know. I have to teach them something that they may or may not know about. At least in art there’s much broadness and there’s always new things happening and old things that are being found, new interpretations, but I still feel like I don’t know a lot, you can’t do the whole thing and say, ‘I know everything!’

I don’t even know what grade I’m going to get yet. I would love to have a Grade 8 class. I used to think I would want to teach Grade 10, 11, 12 and in this moment now, Grade 8’s would be really good because they are still scared! Then I could work my way up. So even that perspective has changed in the last month and a half, of where I’d rather be. This is going to sound really bad, but I’d rather feel a little older than the kids, because Grade 8’s, that’s manageable for me. I’m nine, ten years older than them. I have a good chunk of time, and I’d have a little more control obviously because they’re new. Control doesn’t have to be in the sense of you do this, you do that, but having classroom management. I never thought my favourites would be the Grade 8’s. I always thought that Grade 6, 7, 8, 9’s were really snotty, didn’t want to pay attention and didn’t want to work, but when I observed a Grade 8 class on our field visit, they were the best, I couldn’t believe it!

The more I talk about things, the better I feel. I’m one of those people that has to walk around the mountain quite a few times, but each time I feel little bit better. I find my steps each time around, and with each of those steps, I get little bit more wisdom, and every time I go around I get another piece of the puzzle, and finally after ten or fifteen times, I get it.

**Walking over the bridge**

There are a lot of words I would like to use, such as frustrated, stressful, but I figure in the spirit of being positive, there was just so much happening and it was just such a whirlwind, it
is hard to explain it all. There were moments when really inspiring things happened, and moments of real encouragement, there were moments of tension, and fear, and my first teaching was eighty minutes of fear because my teacher left! The students had berries that they were throwing. So anyways, other than that, I guess it was very surreal in a lot of ways and the biggest thing I learned was that teaching is not a pedestal job. I’ve always seen teaching as a category that takes a long time to obtain. The ‘teacher’ was a huge heading and the teachers who do teach, they are so noble, they do such great things and they inspire kids, they encourage kids, they are monuments in kids lives really. Now that I’m there, the job has totally been taken off the pedestal. I’m experiencing it from a low-end up, so I’m in an awkward position where I have to learn just like in any job and it’s not, from where I’m seeing right now, it’s not as noble as I thought it would be. I don’t mean that in a negative way, but I have obtained it, it’s not an unattainable position, and that really surprised me, that took me aback. Now to be able to say that I am the teacher, it is something that I guess, I never saw myself taking the step.

Teaching can happen in such different ways than I expected. I needed to see where the kids were going and what they were doing so when I was teaching them in the next week, I would know as much as I could. With my teacher I didn’t feel a lot of context happening, and I didn’t see the same creativity that I expected, I guess going to that pedestal ideal now, something that has taken its place is the perfect lesson. Because I have all these things I want to do and I want to teach, I would like to get the kids to be so involved, and I’m kind of reaching for that now and I saw bits and pieces of those things happening but not to the extent that I want them to happen. I want that idolized position now because I will always be trying to attain it, but as our professors have said, they never teach a perfect lesson or perfect day or perfect week or perfect month, things always happen that you don’t expect.
I thought I would teach and the kids would be pumping out this great stuff. I come in with a hook, roll assignment, and we are going to do teacher action plans, we’re going to talk about what we are going to do, we are going to include context and image development, and elements and principles. The kids are going to be excited and discuss things, then we are going to work, and cleanup and that’s how it is all going to work! There aren’t going to be any tables where kids aren’t working and they’re all going to be excited because they are going to be able to do their own projects. In reality, the kids that are self-motivated were that and the kids that didn’t care just sat there.

It was a shock, right there. One kid brought his basketball to class and he just bounced it the whole class. And then there’s those certain kids who may have been ESL, there were quite a few ESL kids in the class, and I didn’t know if they understood or not, or if they just didn’t want to do the work. There were so many different things. They would sit there and during one lesson I taught, I had directions up on an overhead, I talked about what we were going to do, and then I went over to their table and said, ‘OK, we’ve already talked about it twice, how are you guys doing?’ And they hadn’t taken their sketchbooks out yet! So how can you then motivate those sorts of kids? I found that was something I really focused on. I call them the kids at risk. Then I got the Grade 8’s to work in groups of four or five and that was really hard for them because some of the groups worked well, other groups didn’t know what to do and they would sit there and shrug. I think good teachers make it look easy.

I did some marking for my teacher, but I didn’t ever see the criteria. I’m assuming there must’ve been some criteria. Some kids just had their name and decorated the letters. Some kids went all out and did a whole full-blown picture and included their names, so when I was asked to mark based on which one I liked best, it was very very hard because there obviously were some kids that had put a lot of effort into the execution of their work. The colors were great, they were
really deep, things were outlined that needed to be outlined, and if you held it up from far away you’d be able to see the right things and the composition was great. And then there were the kids that probably did the criteria, put down their name, coloured it in and they’re done. How can you give the person who did all the extra effort an A or A+, and the other person who did what they were supposed to, how can you not give them an A+ too? I need to have criteria, out of 10, out of 10, out of 10. And I’m a woman so there are things that look more aesthetically pleasing to me than to a man. There was one folder in particular that had a race car, the RPMs, and the boy’s name in letters that implied movement. It was a great piece for him but it didn’t inspire me in any way. So how can you really level that in terms of marking? I would mark much differently. I think it would be important at the beginning of the year to give the kid the syllabus, and say this is what we’re going to be doing. I would have an overall marking scheme for every single thing they do. We’d go over it so they always know what is expected.

I often stayed until six o’clock like some of the teachers at the school. It would be much more advantageous for me to be there until maybe 4:30, help cleanup and then say, ‘I’m going to go home to work on my lesson plans.’ I didn’t really want to stay late all the time, but I felt I had to. My teacher helps with a number of clubs, but I’ve never been big on dancing, so staying for the salsa club, I’m doing it because she does it. She asked, ‘Can you make a poster for me for the salsa club,’ so I made a poster, and it became assumed that I was going to stay. I left early because my feet hurt so bad from all day, and I felt so bad after, I felt so awful. The whole way back on the bus I thought, oh I should have just stayed, why, what propelled me to go home? In the moment it was the selfishness of my feet, my feet hurt. It made me grumpy so I just went home without really thinking about what I was doing. And I really wanted to have my own space. I didn’t want to show anybody my frown. I felt I would’ve snapped at anybody if
they had talked to me. I wanted to go see my husband. I didn’t want to make any tensions or any uncomfortableness at the school.

I was surprised at how tired I was everyday. I know that sounds a little bit negative, but teaching is a very wearing job. You need to have enough of yourself to go home and still be yourself. It was pretty easy for me to come home, take off my shoes and get in my pyjamas. I think taking your clothes off and putting on your home self is very important. Every day I would have an hour to watch TV or I would play on the computer a little bit, or I would do something that was not work related at all, and that really helped me get into it. I don’t know how people go about having a private life after being in school and being so busy all day. My sister visited us during the first week. She helped me pick out my clothes for the next day. She ironed for me once or twice. Teaching the second week and not having her there was hard. I think we ordered pizza almost every night because I didn’t have time, and I was too tired making my lessons every night and doing a PowerPoint. It took three or four hours, so you take an hour of rest time, make dinner, and I wanted to be in bed by 11 p.m. I wouldn’t get to bed until 12 a.m. or 12:30 a.m. every night.

Before we went on practicum, it was drilled into our heads, Code 5, Code 5, Code 5¹, don’t speak ill about anybody. Be as positive as you can out there, if not too positive. Make every effort to smile at anybody you see, you say hi to everyone, you butter them up, you make yourself look the best you can. Sometimes on the practicum, things were said to me that were very surprising. I couldn’t believe it. Teachers break Code 5 and you automatically become part of a private space. I didn’t like that. I don’t want to make any assumptions about anybody, and as student-teachers, we need to be extra careful about all the codes. So how we answer that is by

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¹ According to the BC Teachers’ Federation Code of Ethics, Code 5 states: The teacher directs any criticism of the teaching performance and related work of a colleague to that colleague in private, and only then, after informing the colleague in writing of the intent to do so, may direct in confidence the criticism to appropriate individuals who are able to offer advice and assistance. (Source: BCTF Professional Rights & Responsibilities)
keeping that to ourselves. If we make that public, it will create a certain atmosphere around us, around the teacher who told us in the first place, and then it could take any direction. I didn’t like that at all. I’m a person who can keep secrets but I don’t like keeping secrets especially between me and my husband. I don’t think there should be any behind-the-scenes talk in an institution where you are working with everybody so closely together all the time. There is a real, oh, what is the word, hierarchy of people, and there’s a lot of animosity from the people who don’t have the positions they want in schools.

One of the teachers talked to me because he wasn’t sure if he was going to take me on or not. I said, ‘I’ll do anything just let me stay!’ He recognized right away that I wasn’t really putting my opinions out there, I was saying, ‘I’ll do whatever you like, where can I fit in?’ That’s how I perceived myself to be most useful, because then they can say just go here or go there and what he wanted to hear was, I can do this, let me do this part at this time in this class. He wanted straight up answers rather than agreement. He said to me, ‘You have to be really careful because you can give of yourself until there is nothing left to give because there’s always people there who will want your help.’ When I’m in a public role I always try to watch what I say, I try to be very PC, which is hard. I’m nervous to put out my opinions because I’m a harmonious person so when I’m in public, I’m the most people pleasing I possibly can be, and that really showed during the practicum. When I was out during the practicum, my teacher would ask whatever, I had no boundaries really and that is something I have to work on. Life as a teacher really depends on the reference letter your sponsor teacher writes for you, and as bad as that may sound, you have to make sure everything you do is in line with what they think and I don’t want to ruffle any feathers, I will always ask my sponsor teacher, ‘What do you think about this?’
I think I gave the impression to the kids that I’m a very serious person. I have to smile more, even though I’m trying to distance myself, I still need to be very approachable and I don’t think I showed that very well. I even wrote that on my lesson plan – smile – so that I would remember. Going back to the whole idea of the bridge, I recognize in myself that I’m a real perfectionist and that came out in my teaching skills because I wanted my first lesson to be perfect and I wanted every lesson after that to be perfect too. So when my faculty advisor came to watch me, I felt very pressured to be perfect and I don’t even know what perfect is. Even in other instances in my life, earlier on the bridge, or walking over the bridge, I’ve always been scared because it’s not perfect and that’s usually why I don’t go forward. So in teaching a lot of things go wrong and learning from them is needed to get better, but it was a painful period of learning. I would’ve rather walked around the pond, taken the long way, but really I know that theory doesn’t help after a certain period. You have to practice using it. The short practicum didn’t change me, it fortified the idea of identity, that you need to have a public time and then there’s time when you have to go home. You have to let go for the day and then go fresh in the morning. I was really nervous those two weeks, really tense. My faculty advisor said I need to relax more and have fun.

I had a kind of out of body experience in that first lesson I taught. My mind wasn’t thinking about the lesson, it was completely thinking about when the lesson was done. It was the time factor, there were forty minutes left and these kids weren’t listening to me. It was really hard. My brain was racing and the body was kind of there, my mind was totally in the moment. I just wanted time to be up so bad. I wanted the teacher to come back and take control so I could go sit down and watch some more. So that first experience with the Grade 8’s, it was very scary. I did not want to be there in that moment! But by the second day, it was almost the opposite. We made masks. They couldn’t finish the lesson because they were rowdy, but they had so
much fun and I almost felt like a bigger brother or sister. You have to be careful about that line, but I felt really comfortable with them and I was able to walk around and say, ‘How are you doing?’ It was fun. I was surprised the first day took so long, and the second day was so fast. Having the time go by fast is much better!

I learned I’m very interested in assessment. I did my own marking for the two-day project that I did. I had a criteria that was ten marks for creativity, ten marks for group work, ten for use of material because it was earth art, and ten for a written paragraph that each student had to write. We did a self-assessment and most of them graded themselves quite honestly, which was very exciting. I really enjoyed that. Most of the paragraphs were very good. I had them answer whether it was two-dimensional or three-dimensional, what they did, why it was earth art, what materials they used and I got them to explain what the work was because that’s how they were going to document their work. And I took pictures. It was really great.

I also had an experience that fortified the idea that I can just be who I am as a teacher. I saw some students in the library doing a project on war and peace, and one student was drawing a picture of an apple and a sword, and I saw the apple and I thought, oh, I wonder if that’s what I think it is, and I went and asked her. Now looking back right at this moment, that could’ve been putting the student on the spot because it was about her faith. Had a teacher asked me, I would have shied away. She said, ‘I was thinking about the original sin and how that’s the idea of war and peace.’ For me, to hear that from a student, because she obviously holds the same beliefs as I do, that really encouraged me that kids will, what’s the word, they will allow themselves to express that in art. I did that when I was in high school and I worked through some very difficult issues. For her to be working through that in a similar way really inspired me that you are free to express yourself if you want to in schools. I would really encourage that if students want to try. It was really cool for me.
When we came back from our short practicum, we talked about all the positive stuff, and I was really appreciative of that, for me it was really really helpful to pull out all those positive things. It made me feel better about what I had done. It was good to be back at university. Hearing from other people was really what I needed so that was just great in reinforcing that yes, I still want to be a teacher. From what I heard, I had a better experience than a lot of people. There were some things that people probably needed to talk about and they didn’t think they were allowed, so everyone was getting a little antsy. It is also the end of the term and everybody’s stressed. For others it would have been helpful to hear some encouraging words, like ‘It’s okay, this is the hardest part, we’ll work through it together, and we’re all here to support you and keep going, keep trying.’

Coming back to the cohort and being able to wear jeans and sweats, it feels nice, but I’m starting to notice there is a professional me and then there’s the comfortable me. I think I took a lot more time thinking about what I was going to wear than anybody else, and it wasn’t because I’m a vain person, but because fashion is not me. I like comfortableness, but I really felt I had to look professional and I had to just make myself stand out. Every night I had at least a twenty minute stare in my closet trying to figure out what was going to match. How could I wear my blazer? I couldn’t wear jeans and I couldn’t wear khakis, so what was I going to do. I want to have fun jewellery, which I don’t have, so every morning I would wear some earrings, or make sure my hair looks nice, and that in itself stressed me out because I wanted to look different. I had this amazing revelation just yesterday because we went observing to an independent school and again, I wore black slacks, a pink sweater, and a gray blazer. So I dressed for the part, perfectly. I went to the bathroom at one point and I caught myself in a full-length mirror in the school and I kind of stood there for a second and I thought, I really do look exactly how I wanted. It made me realize that I was really successful in this goal and I got comments
throughout the two weeks on practicum, like, ‘You know, you look really nice today.’ Let’s say it gave me a little sense of peace.

**I am the paintbrush**

As a spiritual person I want to imitate Christ in my life and the way I’m living my life, so I want my spirit to embody Jesus, which means I’m humble, very humble, very wanting to learn along with students, being a learner with them. The biggest thing I want is to love the kids. I want to make sure that I’m someone they feel comfortable with. Since the short practicum, how I approach my work as a student is different. As a student, it is easy to procrastinate, which is a bad thing. This is still part of my mindset. With a job like teaching, you might be at the end of the year, your kids are finished but you’ve got so much still to do.

I wonder how much time I’m going to actually have during the winter break to do art. I haven’t been doing a lot of art, just a lot of writing in my visual journal. My mother-in-law and father-in law bought me a movable easel for my birthday so I’m very excited about that. I have a sense that I’m going to be helping kids in their learning now and they can be the canvas, and I’m the paintbrush. I want to do art, but there’s so much other stuff happening. There’s work that needs to be done so I’m ready for the long practicum. It is hard to make sure that I’m the wife and have all the qualities, how do I say this, the ten most important things that a wife and husband need. I always want to make sure that I’m loving him, taking care of him and he would do the same with me. I’m very preoccupied because I’m a new wife too. I want to make sure I’m doing things for us, and making time for each other. I really feel it is important because I’m busy and he’s busy. During my two-week practicum it was really difficult. He had a really difficult week because he’s taking courses, his electives, and he experienced the all-night paper, along with a presentation and his thesis presentation the same weekend, and another paper, so
that was a hard week. At a certain point you don’t really know how to help any more and I’m sure he probably felt the same way with me and my practicum. We’re learning those ins and outs.

I want to embody the pedagogical practices of a teacher so I’m working towards that and it is taking time. I think I take on too much sometimes. Our professors pump us up so much, saying, ‘You can do this.’ And I wonder, how am I going to do it? Schools aren’t always going to have the supplies you want to use, and if you want to have intense discussions with your students, you need to know them first before you can have those discussions. Say for instance, we were talking about Disney movies, are they good for your kids? I was a Disney kid so that was really hard for me! I don’t step on people’s toes, so even though I might think otherwise I really don’t say. I have my own opinions in class but I don’t share them because there was a very ‘for’ side and a very ‘against’ side and either way, if I said something, I was going to have to pick a side. So I kept quiet. I mean I have my own points and people were already commenting on that so I just stayed neutral. It could be great to talk about this in your classroom, why something is good to watch or why it is bad, but you can’t just go in there and put on a movie and say, ‘What do you think?’ Their minds aren’t as developed as mine so they’re going to have a different debate than in my university classroom, which was very heated. Sometimes kids don’t want to talk about public things, they want to keep to themselves, so how do you have a discussion then? A teacher has to be really careful about the debates you are going to have, or the art projects you are going to do.

I’m also thinking about what my classroom would look like in the future. I’m doing a unit on spaces right now. We talked about this briefly in class and someone said they would like to have a couch in their classroom. So I was thinking about that all day and I think it is such a
great idea to have a couch in the art room. Could I have a Nintendo there to make it a more comfortable space? Does that cross the line? I know I’d be right there playing!

The long practicum went really well

For the first week of my long practicum, I was quite timid, and then one of my sponsor teachers said, ‘Even if you don’t feel confident, you need to give off the impression of being so, because the kids pick up on it and don’t behave.’ Boy is that true! The next lesson I was much stricter, and ended up having a wonderful discussion with my kids about colours and emotions. We moved into how the classroom feels with certain colours, what bedroom colours usually are, and we did colour theory, which is like the periodic table, perspective and tone and value are equations that students need. I asked everyone to participate, everyone paid attention, and there were some who had a great time! It was really neat to see immediate results. Students were thinking about concepts and then participating.

I learned a few things about myself as a teacher. I can get very stressed out if I create unrealistic expectations but still expect to get them done. I’m not ready to improvise as of yet. And when kids don’t listen and wait time doesn’t work, what do I do? I really want my class to be organized, none of this papers everywhere or students not being able to find stuff. There were times I had to be quite strict with some of my students. All the teachers and advisors told me that they have to know who is the boss. One sponsor teacher said, ‘If a male teacher is strict or mean, the students respect him. If a woman is strict or mean, she is automatically a bitch.’ You need to be able to find a balance, so your students know when you mean business and when you are being a friend or confidante. During my practicum, I did see this strategy play out successfully. I also found that if I have a constructive criticism for a student’s work, if it is given on a more private level, with positive points to sandwich it, they are usually very receptive to
change. I had a student or two who didn’t want to be at school. Therefore they didn’t have anything to say to me, and constructive words, or encouragement seemed to fall on deaf ears. I believe a couple of times I received a smile, or a short ‘thanks,’ which was by far most rewarding. Because I’m young, I find it particularly easy to relate to students. For example, one group of students was talking about Nintendo and DDR, Dance Dance Revolution, and how it was so much fun. Well, my husband and I still play Nintendo and recently we bought ‘DDR.’ I felt however, that I should not engage in that conversation with students. I don’t know yet what constitutes boundaries or not, that would have been more friendship and less teacher. The other major difference was the amount of responsibility I had all of a sudden.

I did a ‘concept of the day’ where I gave a small demo and answered questions, something I’ve just learned how to do. For the first half of the week I forgot to ask if there were any questions, and the kids just got right to work! My students had a passion for art, and their imaginations got to work very promptly. I did student self-evaluations every class so they told me what they liked and didn’t like about the lesson, and rating the class on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being worst and 5 being best. I got a lot of comments saying they just wanted to make art, however, I also got a lot of comments saying they really enjoyed the lessons. I find that those self-evaluations are one of the best ways to see if the students have engaged in learning, because their comments, short or lengthy, really gave me a sense of what they thought the lesson was about, and whether they liked it or not.

I learned that attendance isn’t important to do right away. I like doing attendance once they’ve started work. Sometimes it’s good to do as a classroom management skill. In my own classroom, I think it would be nice to have sketchbook time every class for fifteen minutes. My teachers in high school did that for my Grade 11/12 years, and it always worked to get my creative juices going. They would give us a topic for the week, and we had to work on it all
week long. My sponsor teachers don’t do this for their own reasons. Sometimes, I’m finding that it’s okay to just make an announcement about what the day is for, catch up, work period, etcetera, and then after half the class, do a short demo, so if the students are finished, or need some new thoughts, that shakes things up so to speak.

I try very hard to shape my questions so that I encourage upper level thinking. I’m not sure how successful I am at that yet, but it is usually in the back of my mind. I know that in the objectives for each day, in terms of creating/communicating or perceiving/responding, they are working towards upper level thinking activities such as creating their own ideas. I also encourage upper level thinking through my self-evaluations. I usually encourage students as I walk around, but if I see a problem, I ask them if I can give them a suggestion. Really, if they don’t want to accept what I have to say, I’m wasting my time as well as theirs. Many of the students will ask me what I think, which is an open door for me to then ask them, ‘Well, what do you think? Are you happy with your current outcome? Where do you think some trouble areas might be?’ Now that I know most of the kids by name, I can have a bit of a conversation with them, and that makes a world of difference. My comments now have some validity to them, they know I know what I’m talking about. They produce amazing work!

I think getting into a routine is also a big part of this job. You have to know where you’re at, what you’re marking, what you’re teaching next, and you need to be organized! I’ve tried really hard to be organized, but there are always things you can do better. With my faculty advisor, we often talk about classroom management, since that is one area I’m having trouble with. In one class, I barely had control of the students the whole time, but it was a GREAT learning experience for me. It gave me the opportunity to talk over classroom management with all three of my sponsor teachers, and think about it myself. The next lesson I implemented their suggestions and the results were amazing. It felt good to be in control, not like a dictator, but
authoritatively, and have the students listen when I talked, and vice versa. The tone and the atmosphere of the class changed for the better. I think a good teacher evaluates fairly, relates well with kids, turns kids on to learning, is flexible, provides ways for success and management, knows there is more than one learning style, doesn’t show stage fright, has compassion and cares.

I’m just starting a new unit plan with my Grade 8’s, and I did a small lecture on art history using classical, renaissance, ready-made and cubist references, showing the students the idea of shape, how it works in a composition, how shapes are used to build bodies and how the master painters have done this. *The Last Supper* is so wonderful for this! Anyways, the students were all very engrossed in the lesson, and I think they all really enjoyed it. I think it’s important to fix the concept or technique within them, so that they can ‘break the rules’ so to speak. After they have mastered the technique they are learning, the final project is their time to shine. Although there are guidelines such as use two of the four techniques we’ve been learning about, or neatness, or whatever, they can still create their own project, and I get the opportunity to watch them work. I find it very helpful to have students write an artist statement after large projects. My Grade 8’s just wrote an artist statement on shoe transformations, but they had to write a story about how their shoe was transformed, where it was born, what did it do, almost as if the shoe was magic. They loved it! I think that developing the students’ skills in art is one of the most important things an art teacher teaches. I teach in small lessons, usually no longer than ten minutes, and then I give them activities that I hope they find fun and that helps them practice.

My private life affected my practicum in positive ways. My husband keeps me upbeat more than I realize. My husband is extremely positive and supportive about my experiences and often offered helpful suggestions or read over my ideas. When I stayed late, or had homework prep for the next day, he understood and helped where he could. He asked me to be finished by
9 p.m. every night so we could have time together. Although hard to do at first, this helped me learn how to time manage quite effectively. I was motivated to finish before that time. It helped me stay on task, to get done what was necessary for the next day, not necessarily the next week. Weekends were a good time for me to prep a bit extra for the coming week. If I was diligent, I could plan up to Wednesday, which then helped free up time during the week. I wouldn’t say that there weren’t stressful nights. My sleep patterns changed, thus my husband’s sleeping patterns changed. We were up at 7 a.m. He had to deal with a tired and sometimes grumpy wife if I didn’t get to bed on time.

I would have to argue that my practicum was probably one of the best experiences I’ve had. I had a fantastic time. The long practicum went really well. The weeks went by so fast and it was so much fun. I had great sponsor teachers, a wonderful, helpful faculty advisor and great kids, not to mention a supportive husband, family and God! My practicum was a very caring experience. My sponsor teachers were there to help me and encouragement was given far more often than criticism, and we were often in collaboration. I wasn’t kept sitting on a problem. Of course, I tried very hard to make this atmosphere work as well. I tried to be as flexible as possible. I asked opinions and advice of my teachers rather than going on my own opinions, and part of my final evaluation took this into account. I participated a great deal in the life of the school, in clubs, attending meetings and more. I got along well with the school staff and I thoroughly enjoyed the kids and my classes. I liked feeling that I was the facilitator, that students were learning things I was teaching, and seeing process and product. Each day was different and exciting. One of my teachers wanted to team-teach with me through the entirety of my time there, which helped with the rough patches since she did most of the disciplining. The other two left me to my own devices, which allowed me to expand on my understanding of teaching. It was a lot of work being the teacher! Just recently, my sponsor teacher who is
retiring allowed me to go through all her lesson plans and take what I wanted, and she sold some
of her art books to me at a fantastic price. I was really excited. As well, she and I have kept in
touch by e-mail and she has let me know that if I ever need ideas or help or advice, or just
someone to talk to, she’d love to keep in touch. I’m very lucky. Now my husband is looking
into education as a profession.

**There’s a new bridge to cross**

I’m feeling very happy to be done for lots of reasons. It has been such a long year and
not having a summer has been really hard especially seeing everyone else do whatever they like.
Now it feels as though there’s a new bridge to cross. I’m finished the program and I have a long-
term job, something I’ve never had before, something I’ve always wanted. But between the end
of school and starting a job, there is no time. I have my week of holidays and then I have two
weeks to get ready for a job. Two weeks is not a lot of time. I’m feeling a bit burnt out. I’m
looking forward to doing nothing for a day or two.

I have new fears arising, as fast as the excitement! I do know however that I have much
more confidence and it won’t be so hard as beginning the first practicum. I now have resources
and contacts and I have learned how to be flexible with what comes my way. I feel as though I
have grown significantly in this moment of being student, versus now being teacher. It is a very
new feeling. Thinking back to the actual job interview, I did feel comfortable in the space, and I
felt that I was a qualified individual for the job at hand.

As a teacher of art I hope to inspire creativity and a love of learning during my lessons. I
will encourage student participation as much as possible and set reachable objectives that
hopefully will be interesting to my students. I feel very passionate about what I teach. With a
new class, sometimes it is important to be a bit strict, but encouraging students to ask questions
is good. I love to walk around and compliment students on their work. I find it gives me a bit of a personal connection with them. They like to talk about what they are doing, and the majority of the time, conversations lead to life outside of the classroom. Once I have my own classroom, I would hope to do more group assignments to encourage student relationships. I would move kids periodically to also help relationships develop and I believe more importantly, I would like to develop a sense of respect for everyone and every artwork produced. One of my sponsor teachers did ‘walk abouts’ which I believe was good for students, to see each other’s work as well as learn different styles. Organizing the classroom as a gallery space would also help create a community of practice.

I talked to the director of the school and the art teacher that I will be working with, and they are both lovely people. I’m really excited. It is going to be a great working atmosphere. I feel there are a lot of expectations. I think the expectations are coming in little increments, and I’m only beginning to understand what sort of a school it is. It’s not just practicum anymore. I really have to be good at what I’m doing now. When I talked to the director, we talked about parents a little bit. I had read in their magazine about students who were in major productions internationally, and their parents are CEOs. The director said, ‘Well you have to remember that when the parents come to the school, they are the mom or the dad.’ But it is still pretty intimidating. One of the reasons I want to go into the independent school system is because I want the parent involvement. I find that so important and lacking in public schools. So I’m excited about this!

The other teacher is also really friendly and they are going to buddy-me-up so that I have a mentor. The first day of school is a big Pro-D day for us to get to know each other and figure out how the school works, and the more I thought about it, the better off I am having a smaller position because I get to learn it. I’m looking forward to concentrating on four classes a week,
doing them well, and building on what I know. I’m pretty excited but at the same time I don’t want this to go to my head either. It’s great to have a position in that school but I don’t want it to become, ‘I work here,’ you know? I think that could be so detrimental. I went into an independent school for certain reasons, but it wasn’t to become better than people, and stereotypes get pushed onto people all the time, so I don’t want people to look at me that way. I told two people in the cohort about the job, just out of pure excitement, but I found out later, one of them had failed and the other person hasn’t been hired at all. So then I felt bad afterwards but they were excited for me that I had a job. I realize I’m pretty lucky. After coming back to the cohort for the final term, I found that I had been particularly fortunate in my experience on the practicum too. Many of my classmates had horrible experiences far beyond what I think is fair or professional. I had it really good, and I consequently felt bad talking about my experiences.

This reminds me of my friend who has been a teacher for about five years now. I have talked to her and it was so funny, she said, ‘Doesn’t it feel great when you know you’re supposed to be a teacher? It’s exactly where you want to be and everyday is a great day.’ I mean, obviously there are mistakes, but you learn, and it’s exactly where you’re supposed to be. It is just fantastic! I remember when she went through her education program and some of the things she said then have really resonated with me since, about the idea that not everyone is going to make it, and hearing about people in her program that were just not cut out for it. It is funny now to start thinking about that and to see the parallels.

On my practicum I was removed from the rest because I didn’t have an art specialist, I had a generalist faculty advisor. When everyone got back, no one wanted to talk about anything. It was just, ‘How was your practicum? Good. And how was yours? Good.’ It is only in this last term that people have started coming out and saying, actually it wasn’t that good, or they
didn’t do so well. Somehow we talk. I know that support and sympathy is needed, and I think I do sometimes exhibit those traits and people see that.

Our final day in the program was anti-climatic. We were done and that was it. Because we were a cohort for so long, it felt weird that the actual last day was last term. This term we weren’t all in the same class, so it wasn’t a good bye. There was no final ‘See you around!’ Certain people had parties and some people were left out of that too, and me being one of the people, I never really made really good friends with anybody. I was on good terms with everybody. So I was a floater. We are now all doing our own thing, and people are going to get jobs and people are going to move. Some people are going to have kids. So I don’t feel a particular landmark I guess, it is not ‘The End.’ There are these group e-mails, ‘Oh it’s all over, it is so sad.’ And I think, ‘Oh great, another sappy e-mail to read!’ I’m more focused on jobs. The end for me was more at the end of the practicum. I became much better friends with the group that was at my school and I think because it was such a different way of learning than in the university classroom, we were all learning to be teachers together. There were a couple of people there that I will keep in contact with and see how they’re doing and I know they’ve got jobs. What you have done this year, and how hard you have worked is now showing and I guess it depends on how much you wanted it. How does my dad say it, ‘If you fail to plan then you plan to fail.’

In the last term of this program, I discovered even further that I hate conceptual art. It is so academic and it is so exclusive. No one can understand it. I really don’t like it. And if I want to make an art piece during one of my courses, it had to be conceptual, and that was a second frustration for me. I can’t make art and I’m in the art program! Conceptual ideas do not come easily to me. I like a painting because it looks nice! When I think about art, my motto should come from that movie, *You’ve Got Mail*. It has to start by being personal. I make art for myself
but if I want to make it for a viewer or an audience, I will make it for a viewer or an audience. It also creates a conflict for me because it’s one thing to teach identity and whatever you like in high school but how does that prepare students for university art? I find that really frustrating. I will be teaching Grades 6 and 7, so I don’t have to be worried about that until next year, but if I’m going to teach those grades later on, in order to keep students in the loop and help them move forward, I’ll have to teach conceptual art, but that is not why people go into art usually. It’s not to be part of this elite group. It’s because they enjoy expressing themselves in a different way. I don’t think there’s anything wrong with art being narrative!

I’m asking myself some life questions now. I’m really happy the program is done but I’m not coming back to university unless I choose to do so later on. If I were to do a Master’s, I would do it in art evaluation. I’m starting what I want to do for the rest of my life. I hope it is going to be everything that I wanted it to be. I know one of my friends and I have often talked about how you grow up a lot when you start your job. So I wonder how much I’m going to change now. I love art and I believe this comes through in my teaching and I’ll benefit from teaching this subject as will my students. I will learn new things everyday. I teach to the kid’s freedom of expression. The teacher education program has stretched and moulded me in ways I could not have imagined. I have walked, crawled, and run over many bridges in the process of learning what it means to be a teacher. As a teacher, I am building my own bridge of student and personal success. Every student cannot be reached, but it is my responsibility as a teacher to try. My experiences on practicum have already started this bridge. I am often frightened by bridges, and this one I am about to build is no different. I believe though that I will build self-confidence with each experience. One of the greatest things about becoming a teacher is the fact that I will be a lifelong learner and that is exciting to me. My bridge will never finish, so mistakes and
experiences will only make my journey more interesting. I accept this opportunity with vigour and excitement. Let the building begin!
Ann’s story: I grew up on land on the Nechako River

The place to improve the world is first in one's own heart and head and hands, and then work outward from there.

—Robert M. Pirsig
It runs in my blood

I love art and it is the only thing I can see myself doing for the rest of my life. I’ve always had a big interest in education programs and education in general, and I would like to make some big changes, where it lacks and where it is strong. It runs in my blood. I have lots of family working in the education system. My whole family is very artistic as well. I have two aunts who are teachers, another is an administrator, some cousins in teacher training and my mom was a teacher’s assistant and First Nations counsellor-type person, but I came here for my own reasons. I think I would like to see more diverse teachers because I remember going through school and it was all European descent and everybody taught and thought the same way and I got really bored with it. The only people of cultural or ethnic diversity were working as First Nations coordinators, counsellors or in alternative education.

I thought I was going to have to jump through the hoops here. I thought I’d have to conform to the traditional teaching methods, but those are sort of starting to go out the window. I was hoping to get rid of them in my own fashion, as I teach. I thought I would have to just get through this school and pretend to do what they want me to do, and then do my own thing, but it seems it is starting in the right direction. The constructivist methods of teaching are totally in line with what I am thinking. I thought I was going to have to hide that part of me, so it’s great. It always seemed like with the teachers, even the ones I had at university, this is the way it’s done, you do it this way, very sequential. I liked my art classes in high school, and that inspired me to be a teacher because it was more random and fun. I could be myself and explore my own interests. It was a break from everything else, like those academic courses that focus on memorization. Even some of those teachers inspired me. I had a science teacher who would randomly do crazy things and it kept us interested, rather than just learning through blah, blah,
blah, and write, write, write, which is really boring. I want to change that and make the school more interesting for people. I like teachers that are like that.

I decided to become an art teacher for so many reasons, but the main reasons are that I see the potential of the art classroom in including and educating students in all areas of life from history to science, architecture, design, human studies, and the list goes on. I see the art class as a great place for students to find themselves and their place in this world. I also have a passion for creating art and learning from art. On a more personal ground, I am a member of the Lheidli T’enneh band. I grew up on some land on the side of the Nechako River just out of the city limits. Here I developed a close relationship with the natural world, which greatly informs my art practice and worldview.

When I went to public school, I was always striving to be the top of the class. I was always in the top 5% or 10%, and if my marks went down it bothered me. I wasn’t quite the teacher’s pet. I was the one that would sit quietly, do my homework and try to get it done before class was finished because I didn’t like homework. I had other things to do! I was a pretty quiet student. I took Toastmasters a couple of times. I was always considered the observer-type learner. There was a year, around Grade 9, that I went off the deep end. I got really bored with school. It was the same thing every year. We were learning the same things. I thought, why even bother? I’m not learning anything, it’s so repetitive and if I get my homework done before the class is even over, am I really learning anything? So I had a hard time with that, with the classes, and being motivated to go there. And then, I don’t know, I started doing drugs for about a year and stopped, I don’t know what it was, I started skipping classes. I thought, I’m not learning anything anyways, I’m not missing anything. I was still going to pass the tests and I was able to keep up with the class when I got back. I managed to keep my grades up to a decent ‘B’ for a long time. I went through a period where I started doing drugs really heavily and didn’t
go at all, and my grades went down. I still did homework and still got the tests done, but that was minimal, and my grades went down just because the teachers decided I wasn’t taking it seriously. So when my grades went down deep, it knocked me back, and it worked. My grades went from an ‘A’ to a ‘C,’ and bam, I was back at school again.

There was always high stress in my family as well. Maybe I put more pressure on myself than anybody else. I grew up in an all white family. My sisters and I are the only Natives or persons of non-European decent. We didn’t know any of our Native half, only the French-Italian half, and they are all really high academics and we always felt like they look down on us. My mom’s half, the Native half, they all grew up in really small communities and most of them got into the drugs and alcohol and just can’t seem to come out of it. So I’m actually kind of grateful that I wasn’t in contact with them all the time. I have a feeling it would’ve been a bad influence. But also now, I’m starting to feel my place in the world more. There was a moment when I realized I’m different and that’s why the family treated me so, and then once I realized how different I was, it made me really insecure for a long time. So I just try to stick to myself and try to do my best to prove everyone wrong about what they thought about me, and little things that happened, that probably had nothing to do with the fact that I was Native, that’s because of this or that.

When I thought about getting into the teaching program, one of my main reasons was that the only First Nations people employed in the education system were always in counselling or First Nations studies, never in an administrative position, and that bothered me. I thought, you know, we can do more than that and we are needed in more places than that. We need First Nations people teaching history because history is not told properly and we need them to teach everything else, so that we can prove that we can do it, and to influence First Nations students who want to do those things. We can teach things in different ways that make things connect.
It’s one of my main goals. I want to try and inspire people to expand their horizons. When I was in school, there were a lot of First Nations people who would say, ‘I can work in the mill after, nobody’s going to hire me anyways so why should I bother.’ It is pretty bad. It is true in a lot of cases that people are not hired because of their race or appearance.

I remember I went home for Christmas and I went into a store to buy some art supplies. I found what I was looking for and then someone asked me to empty my pockets. I was just shocked. I replied, ‘Seriously? OK.’ I was a little embarrassed and shocked, and I thought, ‘What the hell!’ So I emptied my pockets and I was really embarrassed. She said, ‘Okay, sorry, I just had to ask because I thought I saw you stealing.’ So I left the store really mad. I ended up having to go back because it was the only store that had what I needed in town. I was biting my tongue when I went back, thinking I should be talking to the supervisor but I thought, you know, it really wouldn’t go that far. I know, honestly, that’s as far as it is going to go. It’s just common around here. That is when I realized that how I dress and how I act makes a big difference in how people treat me, which is really sad. I started playing with my image for a while, sometimes I dress down just to test people. I want to wear whatever I want, but then I realize how much a public image you are in teaching. Now I’ve started feeling I’m like a teacher, I am more aware of how people perceive me, even my own friends, instructors, family. It doesn’t matter what situation you’re in, dress makes a difference. I have always had the impression that if I was to ever lose a sense, I would rather lose sight. I wish everybody else would too. We rely on eyesight too much and make assumptions from it. I would still be an artist and still trying to be an art teacher even if I was blind!

When I went to art school, I tried a little of everything because I wanted to be a teacher, so I wanted to know as much as I could, planning to teach those methods. Not many people did that actually. In art school, we were expected to develop our own style and in the end, I did have
my own style. I thought all my work was really random, but after looking back on four years of work, a lot of it is connected in concepts or themes or styles. I don’t like my style, but it is my style, so I go with it. At first, I did a lot of landscape painting because I missed home. But such paintings weren’t highly regarded because landscape painting is dead in a conceptual art school. It is all concepts and nothing else. I could have been developing my skills with landscape art but we had this other stuff, so I learned how to BS my way through it to make things I wanted into conceptual pieces, which is all different points of view and seeing things differently. I just decided to start exploring other things and fine, if you are going to be conceptual, I’m not going to pass, so what do I need to do to get the grades. It was all jumping through those hoops, but that’s what you expect with an education built that way.

I want to be the kind of teacher that totally relates to the kids. I’m not going to be that old teacher telling you what to do and where to go while you’re sitting there beating your head against the wall waiting for the class to end. I’m hoping to be that fun teacher. And I’m sure it’s going to take a while to be what I want to be. It’s just not my natural self, humorous and flamboyant, so I got to try to work on those traits. I’m just seeing things in teachers that I love, and I want to try to be more like the teachers that I like. I do want to touch on the conceptual aspects of art for sure but I don’t want that to be the only theme in high school, it’s just too much for high school students to have to learn. They should try to understand it, but it should not be pressured onto them to create it all the time. I like focusing on art more as a personal thing, and if you do art for therapy, for yourself, or just for the enjoyment, for the aesthetic, or if you do it to sell it, you can focus on what you want to focus on. Art doesn’t have to be one certain thing.

I was excited to get into this program, very excited, because I love to learn things. I feel I can learn much more than in my previous degree in art. I’m learning about education and people, I’m taking courses on adolescents, special needs and stuff like that, so I’m hoping to
learn a lot. I was excited, but I was scared, a big school, compared to my old one, and new people. I was afraid of taking seven courses, how was I ever going to do this when I’ve done five courses tops, and they were pretty slack.

Most of my family and friends, they were excited. They knew I had planned this out for a few years now. This is what I was going to do. Everybody said, ‘You are going to be a great teacher!’ And I thought wow, that’s so encouraging. People think highly of me and my abilities to teach and that kept me going. I didn’t really express too much to too many people. A lot of my family still don’t really know what I’m doing. My sister got married this summer and that was a good time, when socializing, I told quite a few people then but I didn’t really broadcast it. I would rather them hear about my accomplishments than create expectations.

I was already nervous before I arrived at university. I was overwhelmed looking at the amount of work. I didn’t know what to expect. I was very apprehensive, especially when the courses became confusing. Some courses were split between two days, and the art cohort has three core classes with three different instructors that teach four days of the week. But coming back to school wasn’t too bad because I was very familiar with the city. It would have been worse if I hadn’t been here before.

On the first day we met the cohort. I walked into class and I was amazed because there were five familiar faces. I wasn’t with a bunch of strangers so it put me at ease a little bit because then I wouldn’t have to push myself so hard to socialize with people I don’t know. So I think we all felt comfortable with the familiar faces in the classroom and from there it is easy to socialize, we had things in common, we talked about what different experiences we had. The first day wasn’t that bad. It wasn’t till the end of the first week that I started to freak out. It was the handouts. There were piles and piles of handouts and assignments. It’s hard to organize what we’re supposed to have for each day and who’s going to be there. I understand it now, but
it was very confusing for those four days. I think I freaked out a few times and well, I broke
down and cried a couple of times, thinking, is this what I’ve paid for? I tried to figure out how to
organize all these binders, all the different classes. I’ve been getting a lot of headaches lately
from the stress and the confusion. It also probably has to do with health issues, like not eating
well, not getting enough sleep and trying to balance academics with personal life. I feel guilty
for doing something that’s not school! I shouldn’t be doing this! It is such a big headache and
there is not enough time to do everything. I don’t even know how I make it to all of my classes.
I had a really hard time the first week getting up. There is no time for groceries, cooking, eating,
sleeping.

I just find it amazing how people’s mindsets here are so different from mine. There’s no
way, even when I’ve tried in several different ways to explain things, for them to get it. In my
courses, I see how people are marking my stuff, not marking it, but look at what I say, and they
don’t really understand what I’m saying. It’s kind of difficult dealing with that sort of situation.
I’m not sure, I’m considering talking to some of the instructors, and explain to them, maybe
they’ll understand me more if they know more about my history, because a lot of them just
assume that I’m from here, that I grew up in the city, and even the assumption that I’m going to
do my practicum here. Because I’m going far away, my experience will be totally different, and
they are offering all these resources, but I’m not here to have access to them. I’ll be so far away.
It’s interesting, some of things they say and I realize that it doesn’t apply to me, so how can I
make it apply? I’m enjoying learning all the skills I’m learning from the instructors. There are
certain instructors that are teaching me how to teach, which is really great. My cousin, who is
also in the teacher education program at this university, told me she doesn’t know how to teach
yet, so I’m getting all this knowledge about this and that. Actually, we’re overloaded with
strategies! It is so much to take in. It is hard. I’m afraid I’ll forget a lot of it when the pressure
is on, the next few months, just time management, health. I don’t know how to deal with a classroom at this point. At first, I didn’t think I could relate to young kids, although I’m starting to question that now. Then I thought, secondary students are older than me in some ways, and they know more than me, and what am I going to do? And knowing how to deal with all the crazy situations that could come up and learn how to better myself in those situations. If I were to go into a class right now, I don’t know if I could do it. I was considering, finding out how demanding teaching is, I want to put everything I can into it. It might be possible that I just want to be a part-time teacher.

I just felt like I was going to a residential school or something

We went on a field visit to a high school. It was super crowded. I didn’t expect to feel that crowded. The classrooms were too small, it didn’t really seem too organized, and there was a bunch of clutter on the walls and stuff they don’t even use. I just felt it was too cluttered and especially with all the kids sitting there, nobody can move around. They didn’t even have room do their work. They were sitting on top of each other and with one piece of paper in front of them and they need more than that, they have all these materials, and books and backpacks and stuff. It was impossible. I’m really hoping that my classrooms aren’t going to be like but I’m pretty sure they will be. We were observing in groups of six. It was insane. I noticed there was a lack of attention for people with disabilities, the girl in the wheelchair, I felt really bad for her. She could not even see the demonstration that was going on because the tables were too high. I talked to her a bit and I didn’t really go into her disability or how she feels about it, I just helped her with the assignment. She didn’t know what was going on, there needed to be a better way of facilitating. Nobody talked to her. I felt so bad. She was already apart from the other students and none of us were going there, which was amazing. I was just amazed. That was the worst
thing I ever saw in a class. I felt so bad, but I helped her. I’m sure every classroom is different but it was embarrassing for her not really knowing what was going on, and how many times has that happened, how many classrooms? Everything was so narrow for us, so imagine someone in a wheelchair in there.

During this experience I actually expected myself to be able to engage in conversation with students more easily, but it was actually pretty hard. I didn’t know what to start with. I didn’t know what to say to them and I think that’s mostly because I didn’t know them at all. When you start knowing people, you know what they’re interested in and create better dialogue that way. I was afraid. I was really afraid, intimidated by the classrooms when I first went there, but the students, the kids started doing work and we started socializing with them and stuff, and all my fears went ‘swoosh.’ It’s not that bad, they aren’t these big scary high school kids, they’re all kind of small and pretty nice.

I guess I expected it to be quite intimidating an experience and really crazy and chaotic and actually it was, but I felt when I was there, it was good chaos, they were doing stuff. I always thought, you know, when that happens, how am I going to get control back? But there’s some good methods used there that I picked up. I just hope that because of my age that they’ll take me seriously, that’s my biggest fear, that I’ll go into a class and they’ll say, ‘You’re not much older than me! Who are you to tell me what to do?’

We had a presentation last week in the large lecture hall. Oh man! It was horrible. Everybody left just devastated. It involved students and teachers from a high school. Those kids came in more like teachers and a lot of people felt like they were talking down to us. They focused too much on appearance. How is that going to affect our teaching? Is our teaching going to be more effective if we dress properly? Or if we look proper? I don’t think so. You know, they’re saying we should wear business attire. We thought it was very Eurocentric. They
were all whites and most of them are all, well I guess, they came from upper-class families.

Three students seemed to be keeners in the class, where as we would have liked some input on how to deal with the hard kids and see what they expected from us. I mean, we know how to deal with the girls and the boys that are going to be good, we need to know how to deal with those that are going to be a problem. I think it was a general consensus that nobody really liked it. We really didn’t get anything from it, just feeling bad about ourselves and that we’re not good enough.

The two or three days that followed, we were all uneasy, and it would come up in general conversation in class, and someone would say something that related to the presentation. It happened in every class. In some classes, the instructors asked what we thought. We were trying to be nice, but after letting it sink in, that really wasn’t a very good experience for me, I didn’t like it at all. Nobody really did. They had ten do’s and ten don’ts. So the ten don’ts: don’t be lazy, don’t be late, or unorganized, don’t be inconsistent, don’t pretend to be your student’s friend or their age, which really blew us away. Why would we pretend to be their friends? We’re not supposed to be friends with them. Don’t take an unreasonable amount of time to mark, which made sense. Don’t use sarcasm, don’t give too much homework, don’t say just because, don’t think everyone loves and understands the subject you are teaching, don’t bring emotional baggage or use pressure or intimidation. There were two teachers at the presentation. One seemed sort of artsy, she teaches English, and the other said, ‘I don’t tell my students anything about my personal life. I don’t tell them my first name, I don’t tell them if I am married, if I have kids, where I live, anything, they don’t know anything about me, and that’s the way it is.’ She was like the school master type. It was scary. She was really scary and they actually like that type of person! They’ve been conditioned to it since Grade 1, so it works for them, but how many of us are going to be in schools like that?
I thought it was ridiculous. Sometimes the best way to get to know people is to be friendly and honest, students need to know you are human too. It is respect both ways, we’re all people. If you are just going to be a drill sergeant, I don’t know. The do’s were: Be energetic and dynamic, give encouragement, be prepared, be friendly and approachable. OK. For appearance, look put together, admit when you’re wrong, have a sense of humour, earn respect, be adaptable, care and show it, be passionate, which is kind of contradictory. They went off on a big long tangent on how important it is that we look professional. First impressions and if you come in looking any less they won’t take you seriously, blah, blah, blah. It was just amazing. The way they were talking to us, putting us in our place, they were telling us what to do when they should have been giving us suggestions rather than do this, do that, and don’t do that. But they were really articulate, they were standing up there giving us a presentation and it was way better than any presentation I could possibly do in my life. If I could do half as good as these kids are doing! It was intimidating, the way they could stand up in front of this university group, no matter how many people were there.

Well, I went out shopping. Even before that presentation, our instructors were saying it’s really important that you look professional. This is really tough for me because I’m an art person and my art teachers didn’t look professional, they sort of did, but not really. I mean, you always just knew who the art teacher was. It’s totally different being a math teacher or an English teacher which would make a little bit more sense dressing up. I bought a pair of shoes because I’ve got runners, and leather boots, and stuff like that. I went to Value Village and The Salvation Army. I have a few friends that have gotten too big for their clothes, they gave me some blouses and a button-up shirt, and then I had to go bra shopping which I thought, ‘Oh great, this is going to be fun!’ I hate shopping, but you have to wear a bra under a white shirt. I bought a jacket, an overcoat jacket, a couple of skirts, so that was fine. I already have some black skirts that look
good, but I got some colourful skirts and different ones. Everyone’s going shopping, unless they’ve already got professional clothes. But what if you don’t want to? Can’t you just be yourself? No, they’re looking for drone teachers. I’m in transition I guess. I’m trying to be myself but it’s hard to mix the two. I’m realizing how public we are in a teaching position. I have to go get some new clothes and there’s nothing wrong with that, but I’ll get clothes that I can wear, and that are not promoting a certain kind of person, but clothes that reflect me.

We had another field visit, and at that school, everybody, the teachers, the principal, the students, they were all in black, gray or white. I just felt like I was going to a residential school or something. I don’t think it’s a very good example of what we’ll experience as teachers. It might be a good example for people who are just going to those schools but not many will have that option. Going there made me realize that those people are already conditioned to certain behaviours, so you’re not going to see them do anything else. I felt there weren’t very many minorities, there weren’t that many lower-class people in either school on our field visits. It would be totally different if we were to actually go to a school downtown, which I think we would totally gain something from. It would be much more beneficial. I’ve been thinking, maybe I should actually write them a letter and say that next year, I’d suggest a presentation by members from three different schools. What about the troubled students, what do they have to say?

It will be interesting when we all get back after our short practicum and share our experiences. I’m actually fearing being placed in one school, I just don’t want to be there. But I figure, if I end up getting placed there, it’ll be a good challenge and maybe it’ll break down whatever it is that is making me not want to be there. The practicum is coming so soon. I guess I’m still worried mostly about the practicum, and the workload. I’m afraid if I do my practicum
at that school, I’ll make all sorts of mistakes and what if I really screw up? Then I’ll have to leave home, I’ll have to move somewhere else.

I’ve always been an activist-type person

The first day of practicum was overwhelming. This was my experience: As soon as I walked in the door the teachers were like, ‘You are going to be doing this, and this is what you are going to do, to find this you go here and blah, blah, blah, blah.’ In the end I just felt like it all went over my head. It was fine once we started to get to know each other. I was split between two teachers and I went between two classes, spending two classes with one and two classes with the other, no break between. I really liked it because they were two completely different teachers from each other and I got to see their different ways of doing things.

I’m not sure if I had Grade 8, but I know I had Grade 9, 10, 11, 12. One of the classes was a Grade 11/12 3-D art class, very self-directed, and the kids were there because they wanted to be there. They were coming up with very creative things. It was pretty open, they used various media. The other class was where they just stuck all the students that they couldn’t find a place for. It was all Grade 10’s. The class consisted of mostly special needs students and behavioural problem students. It was most teachers’ worst nightmare, but they weren’t that bad, all kids aren’t that bad. It was pretty crazy. I ended up teaching that class for the full week so I learned a lot from doing it. I don’t know if they had as much fun as me! I was told by the faculty advisor after she had observed a few classes that last year a student-teacher failed because she couldn’t handle a class like that, she freaked out and just ran off crying.

The only thing that didn’t work for me was having to overcome the students’ idea that I’m not their teacher. I diffused the situation by not letting them convince me that I don’t have the power of the teacher, cause I did really, that’s why I was there, more of a sub than a student.
That was the only thing that kept me going over their malicious attacks within the classroom structure. They were just testing anyway. I don’t start yelling or raising my voice. I tried to keep it short and sweet. One of the biggest things I learned was that I can’t expect or assume my students can read. I was trying to get them to be engaged by reading, but a few of them had a really hard time. This poor kid was stuttering, and I thought, ‘Oh no! I shouldn’t have done that.’

The short practicum made me think, maybe I won’t teach full-time. I would not have so many time management problems and more time for myself, a better balance. A typical schedule only has one spare block, but I didn’t really have a spare block when I was observing and I was running around and I couldn’t do that all the time. My sponsor teacher taught four blocks, and next term she’s doing two. I don’t know how she did it, she’s got kids. I wouldn’t want to have kids and teach full time, it just isn’t going to happen! It’s really hard to teach full-time in art. There is only one full-time art teacher in the district, the rest are sporadic, getting an art course here and there, so I have a feeling it will work out that way. I would prefer to stick with the art, only if I’m able to teach it the way I want to, because it is most important to me to try to teach a lot of subjects through art. I’ve considered teaching art history and even social studies and English because they all link to art. Looking back, I thought teaching was a lot harder, to stand up in front of the classroom. Maybe it’s because the class I had seemed so young, it was very comfortable for me. I also didn’t realize that students are so used to having a power structure, even the ones that challenge it.

It was really hard in one of the art classes to hear that the students were not going to be able to do a project if they didn’t pay their fee, which was an extra fee the school was not supposed to have, but the teacher decided to put it in place. She said that their artwork, which was clay, would be recycled when they were done if they didn’t pay. I was really concerned
about it. I mentioned it a few times and I think that really affected the teacher, who decided in
the end to drop the fee. Only five of thirty students paid. I said, ‘How are they going to be
motivated to do the project if it’s just going to be destroyed in the end and what do you guys do
for students who can’t afford to pay this extra fee?’ And the response was there’s nothing they
could do. In the end she decided that because they had a little bit of extra overhead from last
year, she would put that aside. She used it as a power thing over them to pay if they could, but I
think at an earlier point she should have mentioned, if you can’t pay, you get to keep it anyways.
I saw a lot of them just not doing it because it was going to be destroyed and I couldn’t tell them
that she changed her mind, that was her decision, so I just said, ‘Come on, do a good job.’

I wouldn’t do that to students. I would find some way to fundraise or something because
I saw how it affected them. There were a lot of little things, like in the photography class, the
teacher would make them draw cameras instead of taking pictures, if they couldn’t afford the
film and developer and stuff. So it was absolutely ridiculous. It was such old school stuff. It is
very discouraging when you’re actually out there, and people start hating you for stepping on
their toes all the time. I felt like I couldn’t say anything during some conversations. I do feel
that we should have had a little more time to sit and observe and not have to worry about doing
things and writing things, and juggling a million things at once, which is what ended up
happening. It’s frustrating though because I have so many ideas of where I should be and the
things I should change. There’s so much I want to do in life. I guess I’ve always been an
activist-type person. I want to do things but I feel like there’s a barrier between knowing it all
and doing it all, and I don’t know how to get between the two.
I found myself in a place I visited often

I’ve been thinking about the role of the student in the role of the teacher. This is probably the last time I’m going to be able to be the student, I’ll probably go to school again but not like this. I see myself as equal to all around me, staff, students, administrators. I reluctantly use my power, position and authority as the teacher to meet the requirements of the Ministry of Education. I try to fit in, blend in, until I can have the freedom of my own class where things will be different, where I will work towards creating a learning environment where there is less authority and more learning. But I feel, know and internalize the struggle. To undo what has been done, the conditioning of the students, and myself in my K-12 education and in my post secondary and teacher education, and in society as a whole, is going to be the biggest struggle ever. I feel like I work alone, like I am trying to put out a grass fire in the field with the wind working against me in every direction.

I see being an artist coming out more in the role I play of being a teacher than student. I’m coming from an academic perspective, not getting anything done, and even the things I am getting done aren’t of great quality, like my ceramics. I’m working more textually than visually lately. My hands and body feel so distant from creation. My role as an artist has transformed from what it was, or more like, the role has evolved in a way. It was about creation before and it moved towards sending a message, but that message I know did not reach many, so now teaching has become my paintbrush and it paints the faces of hopefully many more warriors than it would have on the canvas.

Sometimes what I read or learn not only makes sense but really excites me and relates to my own life, the life of others around me and my beliefs about what education should be about. For the most part, I embody the wonderful teaching strategies and ideas that pop up along the way. Strategies and ideas that are fun, inclusive, inspiring, engaging and educational. Classes
on multiculturalism or antiracism, or gender roles and stuff like that really spark my thinking. With any of these issues, you want to be ethical and moral, but you don’t want to impose it on other people, so if you promote multiculturalism and the acceptance of other people, and some cultures don’t accept people who are gay, what then?

Being First Nations, these issues are very important and the reason why I’m here. I saw a need for it and felt a need for it. In my family, we were distanced from the negative, the downside of First Nations life. We didn’t live on the reserve, we didn’t develop the social language. I think it impaired our social abilities at first and it took a long time to regain that. We also didn’t get the mainstream culture, we didn’t have TV, and I think that really helped finding out who we are. These social issues have me thinking outside of my perspective, and also thinking of the struggles between social issues. Sometimes the questions seem to have obvious answers but when we dig deeper, consider it from a different point of view, not just ethnicity, class, religion, but many different points of view, the answer becomes questionable, the question needs definition or more questioning. It’s a complex system we are entering into. The biggest question I have is, as secondary school educators teaching adolescents, will it be too much for them to handle or to comprehend if I bring up these questions? Of course, the easy answer is no, but in reality they need a lot more information, knowledge, experience and background in order to understand, not to mention tackle such questions. There are a lot of inequalities that need to be addressed and rectified in the world, much of it is hidden beneath the surface, in cracks and corners.

I remember specific moments in the school I was doing my practicum where I had strong feelings throughout my mind and body. They were like flashbacks but stronger. I spent a lot of time skipping school in the 9th and 10th grade, where I skipped classes to see friends at the school I was doing my practicum in. I was there a lot, had many experiences from the hallways,
bathrooms, smoke pit, schoolyard, and surrounding areas. Being back there brought back many of the feelings I experienced in that space. It was quite an embodying experience that really shook me actually. I can’t explain exactly how it felt or what it did to me, but it really did affect me. I guess it brought me back to the level of understanding the youth in the class, understanding the things that they value and struggle with in their position, in their personal lives. The other thing I noticed was their attire. Many of them were wearing clothes much like I remember wearing. The shirts from bands that I remember being in love with while I went to school and now even. I guess they are timeless legends and their music just relates to the school experience for adolescents.

I think being home for the practicum was very important. The land and objects hold memories of past experiences and feelings. They talk to you in a way. It seems everyone has a place they go to unwind and find their center. You might question why this place does that for you. Is it the environment? Is it a memory or ritual which brings you back to that place? When I went on my practicum, I took a weekend to get back to my roots, to unwind. I found myself in a place I visited often in the past. But this time it was different, it was a different season with different smells, appearance, and feel. I hadn’t been to this place in a long while, six years or so. It was much like the flashbacks I felt in the school, but deeper. It brought me back to a very calm place, into a spiritual dialogue with the world and myself. The environment spoke to me, not so much spoke, but showed me what I had been missing. The season was late autumn, calm, still, crisp and fresh. It showed me what I already knew in my head but it showed my body. My body needed to remember and feel that space so it could find its way back. I often knew in my mind and body that I needed to be there. I guess my mind and body had forgotten exactly what and where that place was, how it should feel, and how to get there. So now it remembers. I go there daily, hourly even, because I have to.
I just swallow hard

While on practicum, I felt invisible to some people and visible to others. It seemed like some people hardly acknowledged my presence while others were very aware and treated me almost as equal. Some people were completely not acknowledging my existence, maybe they mistook me for a student or maybe they didn’t want to, maybe not knowing what to say. So a few people were friendly, and I got into a couple of conversations with a few other people but I stuck to my teacher and to a couple of other practicum students that were there. Sometimes during practicum, I felt like I wasn’t listened to or that I should be silent in order to maintain my status. Mostly I feel oppressed or marginalized due to my youthful appearance. Most people say something about my age even if they don’t realize it. I feel like I am subject to a lot of political debates and structures. I also notice a hierarchy of politics within the school during practicum.

Not having the acknowledgement of other teachers was weird. In the staff room, I felt like I was eavesdropping during conversations. I could’ve jumped into the conversations but I didn’t want to because I didn’t want to say anything out of place and they would probably think, ‘You don’t know the half of it!’ And I just felt like an outsider. I didn’t really feel any extremely welcoming moments, except with my first sponsor teacher, she was absolutely amazing, very helpful. And I think she’s probably the reason that I stayed there and why I’m going to be able to deal with the next semester, because I was able to talk to her once in a while and say, ‘This is what’s going on.’ The rest of them are really busy and in their own little worlds. I’m not too sure what may have been the problem, negativity, not quite negative but, they’re kind of standoffish and that may have been the problem. They had problems before with student-teachers and maybe they don’t say anything around them because they may say something to the wrong people or who knows. I’m sure I would have been received totally different at the other school, the one I graduated from. Everyone would have been friendly, ‘Oh
hey, you’re back. It’s great to see you.’ And people who didn’t know me, they would probably introduce themselves, and here, if parents walk down the hallway, they would probably just walk right by parents.

I am a very quiet, in my own world person, so maybe it’s good for me. I don’t know, I would rather have the family environment the other school has. I think it adds to the experience. When you are in the staff room and you are having a good conversation with people and you go to class and then you start teaching and you’re still in that mood. But when you go to your staff room and you’re sitting there by yourself and eating lunch, and you’re looking over things that you’ve got to do and go to the classroom and you’re still on mind-time, there’s no real slowing down, no relief time. On practicum, I tried to be neutral, but I tried to influence things once in a while. I think the practicum is kind of like a long-term interview to find out what kind of person I really am and if I’m the kind of person they really want there. Because if they want people who will do things differently, I can do that, but I didn’t want to do something and then be kicked out of there. I have strong beliefs about the world, about a lot of things, and I’m the kind of person who usually gets up and starts saying something, to say what I think. I’ll take whatever consequences even if I have to lose my job sometimes. I just can’t do it now, it is too important to get through this program and also not to gain too many enemies. It depends on the people who are around, who I’m with, if they’ll receive me graciously or not. Some people would be totally offended and would hold a grudge forever.

Being part of a minority race within education, not to mention Canada, puts me at some advantage as the education system seeks more diversity in its staffing. I think being female is advantageous because students are often more willing to open up to female teachers than male, but that is just an assumption on my part, males may feel more comfortable opening up to male role models. As I am part of the lower class, I have totally different views about many things. I
notice middle and high class people take their financial stability for granted and they assume that anyone can afford the little things. I find I don’t have the luxury of buying new clothes, wonderful school supplies or going out for lunch, dinners, drinks or other extracurricular experiences. I noticed that in my social issues class everyone seemed to assume that the people in the class were middle class or better, and heterosexual. They often saw people of different races as representatives of that race and they had a hard time commenting on issues of race when that person was present.

I have always been the type of person who enjoys solitude and seeks it often. But lately, throughout this first semester at university, I feel very isolated. The university is large but it seems that everyone is confined to their quarters on campus as well as within the faculty. Science people never mingle with art people and so on. Outside of university, I have very little time to become involved in anything else. My daily routine consists of waking up, eating if I have time, saying hello to my boyfriend online, then heading out the door to the bus, waiting for the bus and on the bus there is no interaction, people read, sleep, talk on cell phones and listen to music. I get off the bus and it’s the same thing, walking in crowds without any conversation or interaction. I get to class and have a few minutes to chat sometimes. After class it’s time for homework, or eats. I went out a couple of times with students from the cohort, but then it is back to homework. My roommates are not great company so I shut my door. Sometimes, I don’t want to get up and out of bed, especially when my body feels very negatively towards something. I just swallow hard, especially if it seems I am the only one having the problem. I sometimes try to keep my distance from the other students so they don’t influence my decisions and assignments too much, or so that they don’t take too much of mine. Sometimes it is good to gain from their ideas too. I don’t really feel like a teacher. I feel more like a coordinator than a teacher. I feel that a teacher is sometimes too strong of a word for how I would like to run the
classroom. I would prefer to be more in a coordinator or in a participant-type role. I mostly fear how my sponsor teacher will receive me and my teaching methods and strategies on the long practicum. She is very strict, old school, my way or no way type person. She said she acknowledges that we will have different teaching styles and that will be OK, but I fear she has no idea how different we really are and I hope that doesn’t interfere with my experience and practicum, or my life too much.

Many of the schools in the school district I’m entering are resistant to accepting student-teachers. The teacher that finally decided to take me after the short practicum was very resistant to having a student-teacher come in. She seemed resistant towards me until one day she got to know me on a more personal level. I wrote an introductory letter so that she could relate to me better. But my head and body are resistant towards the long practicum. Fear or something is setting in but I won’t let it take over. I have the same feelings toward this family reunion t-shirt I am supposed to have designed by now. Too much pressure. I just don’t feel I can do it. The fact of the matter is that I just have to do it, just do it!

I want to try new things and experiment

I’m kind of afraid of how things will go with the teacher because I’ve been sending e-mails back and forth and she seems to have a lack of confidence in my abilities I guess. I sent her an e-mail with some ideas for my first week, but she sent me an e-mail saying that it was too much classroom management to start with, and it is only one class! So I e-mailed her back, saying, ‘Oh, okay.’ I understand she has experience and all that, I was just trying to start with something a little easy. I put it nicely, but I was worried that she lacked confidence in me. I also said that there would be a time where I wanted to try new things and experiment and stuff. She e-mailed me back and said basically that I won’t do anything that she hasn’t seen before. I was
just like, ‘Wow! Okay.’ I’ve already had a couple things rejected and if I do too many it’s a lot of wasted work. I bit my tongue and thought I had better just leave it at that. But I was already thinking, it’s not about what she’s seen before, it’s about me. I’m paying to be there and they need to know that. I don’t know, it’s got to be sort of a power thing, and that will be the hardest thing to get over.

For the long practicum, I’m working with the Grade 8’s because they always have sort of a book of things that they cover. I’m just going to jump into it. All these things I’ve been thinking about are coming into my dreams lately, like getting to sleep, getting to the class on time, and the classroom, thinking, what am I going to do? How am I going to make these kids listen? And then, I keep thinking, I should have pushed, really pushed to go to the other school. There’s less personal interaction in this school amongst the teachers and amongst the teachers and students. But I would be too afraid of it being a conflict of interest, where people see my request as a negative thing because the only other option would be going to the other school with the same art teacher that I used to have when I was a student, and we’re already sort of friends. I’m afraid of being too much of an easy-going pushover that the students will take advantage of me. I just don’t know if I can actually pull off being a tough me. I can’t wait until it is over.

Right now everyone in the cohort is just fending for themselves and dealing with their own problems because everyone has different teachers. There are a few things that we do talk about, we talk about teachers, we discuss problems and issues, and what we are each doing. I would consider teaching in other places and see what it is like because I have a feeling there might be a place with better things. But then, maybe this is the best it gets! When I’m done, I’m going to take a year. I’m hoping not to get a full-time job now. I would like to be TOC’ing². I want to deinstitutionalize myself! I feel like I’m a total foreigner from all these

² The term ‘TOC’ refers to teacher on call.
kids in the class because I have all this knowledge I want to give them but they’re not going to understand me at all. I need to understand them. So I think I need to tone it down a little. I learned a lot about the restraints that teachers have and things they can’t do, and the powerlessness they have in the classroom because overall, government has power.

My head is just going a million miles a minute. What do I do, what do I need, I’m up all night, I don’t want to be up all night, I just can’t sleep. I actually got some sleeping pills from my doctor. I think it’s just that my sleeping schedule from the holidays is totally messed up. I think my biggest fear is that it’s not going to work out between me and the teacher and then I don’t know. I’m just wondering if I will give up because of too much stress. If I just can’t do it anymore, or it’s not worth it, or something like that. I hope the long practicum will just fly by. I just want to get it over with. It was scary, the first week of the short practicum, I was all over the place and felt like my head was chopped off for just one class and I’m going to have three later on, and I’m thinking that’s a lot of work. I’m wondering how the students are going react to me after being in the classroom and telling them what to do. Are they going to listen or are they going to do a half-assed job or what? And if I can’t get these kids to do their work then what good am I as a teacher? I just don’t know what I’m going to do on the practicum and how I’m going to get them interested in art when they don’t have any supplies.

I had to be a root of care to the tree of unhappiness that lived in the classroom

My long practicum was physically and emotionally draining but encompassed with rewards and lessons throughout. I found moments where my point of view and ideas on teaching, school or students differed from my sponsor teachers. I need to work on how I approach such situations. I need to be more cautious so as not to seem argumentative, I need to
avoid conflict, and offending those involved. I learned that I am strong, I can overcome any obstacle and I want to give as much as I can.

I was successful with classroom management. Most of the students respected me and behaved appropriately. My most successful lesson was on the ‘Mandala’ because the imagery and statements turned out very strong for each individual in the class. I also felt quite positive about having a guest speaker and artist come in to diffuse stereotypes with knowledge and lived experiences for the students to learn from. I had a hard time when students expressed negative attitudes towards lessons. I took that personally. It’s like getting a bad review on an artwork that you have invested a lot into, or a bad grade on a paper that you put a lot of time into and feel strongly about. Trying to get through to some students was frustrating as well. I also struggled in dealing with the sponsor teacher always being there, sticking out like a sore thumb, constantly jumping into situations and taking over as she pleased. It was hard trying to satisfy her standards. There was a need for space and distance from the sponsor teacher that I was unable to maintain under the circumstances. Later in the practicum, I struggled with morning sickness throughout the day. I realized that good health and energy is crucial in teaching to my fullest abilities. It takes a lot of energy to teach and organization is essential for survival.

My life contrasted greatly with many of the students’ lives as well as the sponsor teachers’ lives. My life has many complexities and difficulties that many of the students and teachers could never really understand. This made it hard at times for the students and teachers to understand me and for me to accept their lives and attitudes without being judgmental. Although, in some cases, it brought my sponsor teacher or faculty advisor and me closer together, bonding, as you could put it. When I became pregnant, I did not feel comfortable telling my sponsor teacher or the school district for fear of judgment or jeopardizing chances at obtaining a job. It was difficult hiding the fact and dealing with its effects on my teaching. I
would have liked to be more honest in order to have their support and understanding along the way.

On another note, how private lives affected my practicum experience, I did not expect to have to deal so much with the private lives of the people involved. My sponsor teacher regularly delved into her private matters, using me as a support system and friend, asking for advice and thoughts about situations I personally did not feel I should venture into. My faculty advisor also had many personal matters and health issues throughout the practicum to which I had to be sensitive to, work around and deal with. I was previously under the impression that our relationships were supposed to be strictly professional but they ended up becoming quite personal and in so doing, it was hard to tell where I might cross lines in our relationships. I felt like I had to be a root of care to the tree of unhappiness that lived in the classroom.

I felt a neighbouring teacher showed the most care towards both the students and me. This was where I turned to for help and recluse throughout my practicum. The care in my own classroom, especially from my sponsor teacher, seemed limited and superficial but it did exist. My sponsor teacher, faculty advisor and fellow teachers were excellent mentors in my teaching. They provided me with a variety of techniques and tips that came from many valuable years of experience. My mother was also a great mentor, providing me with insight, knowledge, skills and supports that she had gained from her experiences working in elementary schools. It was both more and less work than I had anticipated. It seemed to take up every minute of time I had, plus some! I found myself doing things I had not anticipated would take so long, such as gathering resources and preparing for demonstrations. I spent less and less time on lesson plans and learned to take things as they come. Looking back, I would have planned more self-directed projects for the students to explore their own interests and artistic abilities. I would have also put more effort into getting to know the other teachers and participating in more school-wide events.
When I was feeling ill, drained both physically and mentally, and especially when the students seemed so disinterested, I questioned if this was really for me. I kept thinking of how much I would rather just be working in a studio doing what I love to do. I also thought about all the other jobs that I am already qualified to do that probably pay about the same or more and the workload is much less. In the end, I practiced discipline knowing I would regret making such decisions in the long run. The practicum was tough, and so it should be, but I had to focus on the fact that it would get easier and there is light at the end of the tunnel. I had many reasons for choosing this path, and to jump off it because it got a little rocky would surely prove to be a mistake. Other things that helped keep me on track were the Grade 8 students’ passion, energy and creativity. I also had my family and friends supporting and encouraging me, but not pressuring me.

I hope to open their eyes

Now that I’m done, I feel relieved, excited to enter the workforce and a bit nervous about the first day back. I’ll probably be alone and a little rusty. I wonder how the students will receive me, and will they behave? How will the staff receive me? What classes will I have to TOC for? Will I know the material? How well can I improvise if needed?

The last day I attended classes I remember thinking, I was glad that there was only one week left but also overwhelmed with the amount of homework and pressure. Since I ended up in the hospital for the final week, it took me an extra couple of weeks to finish the final classes while on bed-rest. The instructors were somewhat accommodating to my circumstance but in some ways, they really could not have understood the severity of the situation. It was hard to concentrate and perform the tasks needed. In the end, it was hoop jumping.
As a teacher, I am still young and energetic, full of great ideas and willing to take risks both in the classroom, as well as with administration and staff. I am strong and soft when needed. I think that my desire to create change and willingness to challenge the system when needed could make or break me throughout my career. I figure I will try to use good judgment as to when and where to exercise my freedom of speech and power, when to push and when to flow. As long as I stay true to what I believe I will be okay with the results of my actions, whatever they may be. I am a visionary with not enough time, money, space, energy or material to complete my ideas. This has been my artist self since I can remember, but I am determined and when inspired, I do manage to complete some of my artwork. I am always seeking answers and driven to succeed. Beyond that, I am driven to learn, about EVERYTHING. I’m not looking at knowledge as power but knowledge for understanding and informing decisions within myself, my life, and for passing on such knowledge. I want each student to grow as opposed to achieve. I hope to open their eyes rather than tell them what to see and do. I view teaching as much more than passing on information and skills. I see it as so much more, but at the same time I feel like teachers are caged birds held back by society. This will never change. So when we get the opportunity to sneak out of the cage once in a while, why not take it, but be wary of the cats waiting for just the right moment to pounce.
Nathalie’s story: A game of dramatic hats
I have no real expectations of this program

I have a background in art. My ideas for my work come from what I observe in my environment. When I finished my art degree, I started exhibiting. I began pushing myself because the program has a great opportunity in that when you graduate, you put on an entire show in a gallery. You have to go from start to finish and work it out. It was wonderful. After I graduated, that show went to Edmonton, Regina and to other places. It was a really great experience, but I feel like I left that life. It’s been on pause for three years.

My first experience teaching was with ESL, Grade 1 to 9, and I loved it, but I was really reluctant to go towards teaching because everyone in my family is a teacher – grandma, mom, auntie. My grandma was a one-room schoolteacher on the Prairies, teaching Grade 1 to 12. I wasn’t sure about teaching. The weight of the whole commitment scared me. Do I want to sign up for a thirty-year plan? Because that’s what everyone in my family has done. But after the ESL experience, which was just amazing, I thought I really do enjoy this.

I only moved to the city a month before the program started, so I had to get a place to live. I don’t really feel like I have a social network yet, but that will come. I’ve been feeling really depressed, and I think it’s because I am still in transition. I have no real expectations of this program. I think in some ways that is working to my advantage because I don’t really have any room for disappointment. Still it’s been very hard coming back. I get emotional even talking about it.

I thought it would be great if I could be creating things while teaching, and combining those two realms of my past. And even today, I’m realizing this is good, I’ve made a good choice, I mean, it is pretty stressful. We were talking this morning, holy crow, it’s only been three weeks but it feels like a year. When I talk to people, they seem more excited than I am, my family or friends, they’re just so excited. Well, I thought, I’ll go and see what it is like, and even
the first day, I wasn’t definite. But this is it. I’m pretty certain I’ll finish the program, it’s only a year, it’s such a great opportunity and it will give me so much. I think what always worried me is that I didn’t know what kind of teacher I wanted to be. I don’t want to be like the memories I have of the authority figure at the front, that memory put me off teaching for a while. Seeing as I grew up in a house full of teachers, I’m very familiar with the strict, stern voice. My mom totally has a teacher voice and when it comes out, you know you’re in trouble.

I want to be a teacher who is open, available, involved, a good listener, can laugh at oneself, who is fun, open to change, someone who can learn from others, who takes risks, who experiments, explores and evolves. I feel I’m back in the educational system as the student even though we are training to be teachers. Teaching ESL taught me the stresses of being a teacher. You ask yourself, ‘What am I doing tomorrow? What materials am I bringing? What are the students going to be doing? What are the objectives?’ But those worries aren’t present for me at this point. This program asks you to get back into a scholarly mindset where you have to sit down and write an essay response to a reading. So at this point in the program I really don’t feel like a teacher. Although even when I was teaching, I’m not sure if I felt like one. When I was teaching in the classroom and responsible for curriculum and all that stuff, I didn’t feel that it was my room, even though I often refer to them as my kids, it was our room. So I come to this program from that perspective.

We’re training to be art teachers and it’s really great that the professors are emphasizing the fact we need to be continually working on our art while we are in the program. A lot of the people in my cohort know each other. I don’t know if they are friends but some went through art training together. I talked to another girl last night who said when she walked in on the first day she looked around, she thought she was in the wrong place because everyone seemed to know each other. She actually left and then checked the door, no this is it, and went back in. I am just
amazed that people have spouses or families and are doing this program. I was thinking about it, and maybe because I don’t have a social network yet, I have all the time in the world to do this, but I’m feeling pretty consumed by it already. This is all I’m doing on weekends. I was here all Saturday.

We were on a field visit to a school last week, and I know our instructors talk a lot about Code 5, but I felt like I was really in the way as an observer and it made me so uncomfortable, the room was small, but it felt even smaller because of the atmosphere. After that experience, I just thought this is not for me, unless I can reinvent this entire profession, this is not for me. It was my first time back to a high school art classroom in ten years, so there’s been a big gap. I just felt terrible, I didn’t want to walk around and interact with the students because of the atmosphere conveyed, and even if it’s not directly articulated, it is in the air. I felt very intrusive, but the saving grace was there was another situation where I walked into the room and the room embraced me. It seemed bigger and everyone was smiling. I was included in the lesson and encouraged to use materials, sit down, have a chair, and it was great. I feel so sensitive right now, this emotional roller coaster, within two or three hours of seeing the classrooms, we were discussing our experience and no one really seemed to say what I just said. I think because I’m self critical and constantly analyzing myself, I have the chance to grow into something, something really great and I hope that happens because it could go the other way and it could cave in and everything could come crashing down. Sometimes I wonder if it’s just my nature. I’m constantly questioning myself, I guess we are our biggest critic. I really hope that when I come out of this, I’m confident, I know what is expected for each grade level, and I really want to stay informed. I just hope that once I’m comfortable with set criteria then I can really explore and have fun with what I’m doing.
Looking ahead, I’m concerned about the practicum. I think it’s my fear of being in front of an audience. I’ve heard that it’s much easier to stand in front of students on the practicum than when you’re in front of your cohort peers. I hope that is true. The whole ‘everyone look at me I’m going to say something,’ that makes me nervous.

She wants to be the ‘cool teacher’

We had a lecture with three high school students and three teachers, and it was a hard lecture for me. I thought the point of view they presented was so narrow. The students were all white, high achievers, excelling in math and French. It was interesting to me, when we got into our cohort, none of that was addressed. I was still processing what I had just seen, so I didn’t bring any of this up in class and it was just kind of skipped. I’m thinking of doing a response in my visual journal. I don’t know if it was what they were actually saying or how they were presenting the information. It came across as, if teachers aesthetically present themselves in a certain way, they’ll be fine. It’s almost like saying, ‘OK, if you spend all this money and buy all new clothes and you are hip and trendy, then you will be accepted, no problem, and the kids will like you. Providing you don’t show your thong or wear a velour tracksuit.’ This is all coming from the high school kids! Recently we had been talking about wardrobe and presenting the teacher image as a cohort. There were a couple of exercises where we had to come to school dressed like an art teacher and then had pictures taken of us. I wanted to make a paper doll, just to give myself some different options for costumes and see two-dimensionally what is really going on with that kind of peer pressure as the teacher to fit in. It was just bizarre. Of course, I know some stuff is inappropriate even just in a professional definition, obviously, I can’t wear jeans or sneakers, that’s just common sense, but the way it came out at the lecture, I feel I have to portray this really fashionable person. It seemed a lot about income and displaying your
income through your dress and that is how you are going to get respect, and I thought that doesn’t make any sense.

When I think about the teachers I had, I remember my two art teachers, what they wore. One lady was very hippy, lots of floral and wide muu-muu style stuff, and lots of wood beads and big hair. And the man, this British guy, would always wear cords and a collared shirt, that was his uniform. In some ways I want to reinvent myself in this role. So I thought maybe before I go through the anxiety of standing up in something that doesn’t feel right, maybe I should experiment with that on paper. You have to be presentable and businesslike and you do have to be different than the kids. I don’t think you necessarily have to spend a lot of money or have to change everything, maybe you could wear a blazer with the sneakers, and just find some give-and-take. It really got me thinking in the morning as to why I’m choosing certain articles, that there is a conscious decision I make every morning and I thought it was a good exercise to get me thinking about the teacher image, I really had to think a lot more. I wore my glasses because I thought it gave me a more librarian look. So I’ve just been thinking about that in terms of imagery. I don’t know. I couldn’t wear jeans and I couldn’t wear a sleeveless shirt and things that were too short, obviously you can’t show midriff at all and you can’t show chest, even a bare arm is kind of bad. No jewellery, no hair accessories, unless you are very modest, like a black elastic or white elastic for your hair, or something that blends in and no nail polish and stuff. It’s very laid out as to what is acceptable. So I think I will buy some key pieces.

Today we just had a meeting about our short practicum, and things to do and not to do. I really want to seem engaged, but not intrusive. I’ll probably lay low for a bit and then work my way around, that’s how I’m comfortable. I don’t like barging in and saying, ‘What are you doing?’ I’d rather connect through osmosis, slowly blend in. I’m still pretty nervous about the practicum. I feel like the short practicum is looming. I’m getting a lot of questions from family,
like where are you going, so it’s adding a little bit to my anxiousness, and feeling the pressure of
the clothing and that countdown to practicum. I have to go out to Value Village and Winners
and try to find some good deals. I overheard this girl in one of my classes talking about how she
wants to be the ‘cool teacher’ and I thought, ‘Oh.’ She just kept going on about this pressure to
be the cool teacher. I don’t know. I don’t really care if they think I’m cool. At the same time, I
guess I do have some pressure. My initial reaction was to reject what she was saying but then
maybe deep down, what she’s saying isn’t so foreign to me, and so I judged her, but at the same
time, I’m thinking as I walk by shops, realizing I’m looking in the window thinking, ‘Okay could
I wear that? Could I pull that off?’ I feel like I need to do something to change, like I can’t just
go in and be me.

There are things coming up in other classes as well, discussing gender roles, the pressure
of being a girl and you have to look put together. Even today in my cohort, one of the girls said
to me, ‘Is that your natural hair color?’ And I said, ‘Yeah.’ She said, ‘It’s beautiful but you
never style your hair, you should really try.’ I come from a place where my mum doesn’t do
anything with her looks. She doesn’t do up her hair, she’s very natural, she doesn’t wear
makeup, and I only have brothers, so how am I supposed to learn how to style my hair? Then we
go to this lecture about how teachers present themselves and I wonder, is everyone feeling this
pressure, or is it just me, or is it just girls or? We don’t really think that what we look like
influences our message, how people hear our message and hopefully no matter what, it’s going
to be the same message. Just recently, I started to become more aware of how that is not
necessarily the case. My gender is a major issue for me during this process, being very aware of
being female, and I don’t know if that is something I’m always kind of dealing with or because
all of the teachers in my family are women. I’m aware of the percentage of women in the
program versus men. Yet it seemed to me, the qualities I have, I don’t know if they are specific
to my gender, but qualities I have, sensitivity, things like this, aren’t being valued. It seemed like
the program is very male oriented yet almost all of the members, the majority are female and so I
didn’t really understand that kind of weird dynamic, if it was problematic or not and if I was
resisting or not. I’m not sure. I try to bring out masculine qualities in myself. I don’t want to
seem weak or girly.

In some ways the teacher role has become a domesticated one. When my grandma was a
teacher, she lived in the one-room school all year, in the middle of the Prairies and in the winter,
they were snowed in. She’d have her four kids including my mom and she would have to be
very creative to survive, she’d have spam and they’d have no running water, the well would
freeze, they would have to go out and dig snow and boil the snow. So it was a very maternal
role, constant, not only was she mother for her own kids, she was nurturing 25 other kids of all
age levels in one room. She was just so resilient and resourceful, a tough lady and I think all the
ladies in my family are like that, they are pretty tough. Teaching is so challenging. As a
profession it is occupied mostly by women and yet the qualities that women are encouraged to
possess as people are not always welcome in our teachers. This is a problematic contradiction,
one that I haven’t sorted out yet.

I was so invisible

The short practicum wasn’t so good. Actually it was terrible. I walked in the first day
and we got a nice welcome by the vice principal, and a nice tour. There were eight of us, all girls
from all different departments. So we got the tour, everything was nice and then he said, ‘Okay
we’re to drop you off with your teachers.’ So we got to this English room, not an art room, and
he said, ‘This is your student-teacher.’ Classes had been in session for about 20 or 30 minutes,
and the teacher said, ‘Oh what student-teacher?’
I was so invisible and no one was responsible for me and I had nothing, I had no space to be in. I totally knew this was going to happen because on Thursday before we went to school, I did some research on the Internet and looked up my sponsor teacher because I kept getting this information that we’re not supposed to contact our sponsor teachers. And I was like, hm, I mean, my mom’s a teacher and everybody in my family are teachers and they were saying what, we’ve never heard of that. They were saying, ‘I would be really upset if my student-teacher didn’t contact me before they showed up.’ So I’m getting this information from my family, ‘You have to contact them.’ And from the program here, ‘Don’t contact them.’ In the end I didn’t contact him, I just did a little research on my own.

So how come this guy didn’t know anything about me? The vice principal says, ‘Okay here you go, sort it out between the two of you, didn’t you get the memo?’ And leaves me there. I walk in and there’s no extra chair, and I’m standing there, in front of a Grade 11 English class doing silent reading. He didn’t introduce me. And this is totally not his fault, because he didn’t know he was getting a student! So he’s feeling the exact same way I’m feeling! He said, ‘Well I don’t know what you want to do here, but what’s your name and what are you all about.’ ‘I’m training to be in art teacher.’ ‘Oh! I’m not an art teacher.’ ‘Oh, well, what do you teach?’ ‘English and photo.’ ‘Oh yeah?’ ‘I wouldn’t call it artistic because it’s photo, I just picked it up and have been doing it for x-number of years.’ He uses the same handout every single year, he’s never changed it. So, okay, I’ll make the best of the situation. He says, ‘Why don’t you take a walk.’ I thought, ‘Take a walk, what do you mean?’ He said, ‘I don’t know what you’re doing here so why don’t you just go for a walk.’ So I went out, I left, and I’m in the halls, thinking, okay don’t get freaked out, this is fine, it’s going to get better. For three days, he didn’t introduce me. Nobody knew who I was. I kept asking him to introduce me, but he kept forgetting. I had no space. One day he left and didn’t say goodbye and my stuff got locked in
his office. I had to find a custodial worker, explain who I was, and they couldn’t open his office because they’d never met me, so finally I got a substitute to open the door for me. The whole time the substitute is ranting and raving about how the school is a nightmare, he’s been there for four days and there hasn’t been a single lesson plan left for him and he’s just up in arms about the whole thing. This goes on for four days, not being introduced, not being with an art teacher, having one block of photo, and spending the rest of the day in the art room with a substitute because the teacher was on conference leave. So this was really uncomfortable, everyday I went home and cried. And I just felt like I wanted to interact with the kids, but didn’t feel comfortable until they were familiar with why I was there, who I was, and that never got dealt with so I had to deal with it myself.

I kept trying to get acquainted with the staff, so I went to the library to take out a book and the librarian told me I wasn’t allowed, because I would steal it. She said, ‘We have terrible problems with the student-teachers, they’re always stealing the books! So if you want to take out a book, you have to get your sponsor teacher to come up with you and sign out the book for you.’ So I had to go back down to my sponsor teacher, explain this to him, and he replied, ‘That’s crap.’ So he writes out this note on a piece of paper, ‘Let her take out the damn book!!!’ And I have to take this note up there. I was so embarrassed. I just put a note away. I didn’t throw it away, but I didn’t give it to her because I was so embarrassed, I didn’t even go back. It was so ridiculous! That same day at lunch, I went to the cafeteria, and the lunch lady started yelling at me! She thought I was a student and she yelled, ‘Hurry it up, you’re holding up the whole line!’ She was really nasty. She yelled, ‘Hurry up, hurry up, come on girls!’ I did not want to listen to this after the whole week, and I looked at her and said, I probably shouldn’t have done this, ‘You know, we’re not students!’ ‘You’re not?’ ‘No.’ ‘Well I don’t care who you are, hurry it up!’ By the time I got to the till, she was beet red. Then she was all very sweet, you know, ‘The hot
water is over there.’ And I thought, you treat people like crap, you hate your job, and everybody here hates their job. Every teacher I met in that school was so negative.

On the fourth day, I thought, okay, I’m just going to go up to every group, and make my rounds, introduce myself and ask them who they are. And so I did that and I learned every single one of their names, I found out what they were working on, I found that they all hated that class. It was such a negative environment. The fifth day, the Friday, I believe it was, I go to school, thinking, okay, the first week is almost over, it’s been hell, I’m so glad it’s Friday. I go into the art room, and there is this blonde lady standing there and I introduced myself and she turns out to be the lady that has been on conference leave. She is one of the art teachers, there’s another art teacher and so, there’s three teachers in the art room, the English teacher who’s photo part-time, and two other part-time art teachers. So with this setup, there’s no way I could get an 80% class load with those teachers in those circumstances. Anyhow, the addition of this new woman on Friday was like a godsend. She’s French-Canadian, and she just started praising the sky in French, going on about how I’m this gift from heaven. She’s kind of like a renegade in the school.

Out of the three art teachers, one character is all about process, eureka, very excited, embracing everything and very tactile. The second character was very rigid, all about technique. One day the kids were doing a value drawing, and she told them ‘nobody start the eyes, I saw someone draw eyes and they weren’t doing them right, so nobody is to draw eyes until I show you how to draw eyes.’ Two months on one drawing! They all hated it, and nobody wanted to be there. The third character had this attitude, ‘I don’t know about art, I don’t care about art, I just teach photo. And this is how the camera works, here is my worksheet from 35 years ago, come back in a week.’ The kids were all over the place, just mayhem. And the three art teachers were always arguing and talking about one another behind each other’s back. Even in the
lunchroom, the shop teacher complained about the murals somebody put up and how they looked like crap. It seemed as if everybody was so depressed.

There was nothing in the art rooms. Photography was terrible. There was one sink in the whole art room and it was shared by photo and art so there was paint and developer in the same sink. Nothing was labelled. There were open containers with fixer and the kids thought it was soap. It was unbelievable. Because there are three people and nobody is organized and there’s no communication, and they’re fighting over territory, and there’s this health hazard left, right and centre. There wasn’t much in terms of technology either. They had three computers at the back of the room that constantly didn’t work. There was a printer which was only in the office so if the teacher wasn’t there, the students couldn’t work independently, and the printer regularly screwed up. I also found that there was this attitude with the teachers that we don’t have technology so we can’t do anything. This is the excuse. This is why I never show images. We’re in an image-based class and they never show images. How do you teach visual literacy without showing visuals? It was ridiculous! There wasn’t even an overhead projector. Nothing. They didn’t have anything.

Until today, I thought it was going to work, but the Teacher Education Office is pulling me out of there because there’s a lot of problems with the placement. I kept saying no, I don’t want to rock the boat, I’m fine, but I did feel pretty alone. It was traumatic and I’ve had three weeks to process it now. When we went for the debriefing with our cohort, I didn’t really have anything to share, there were these papers where we jotted down ideas and I was using a brown pen, a brown marker, and when they held up the posters, I could just see that brown so clearly. All my comments were so negative and I don’t know if anyone else noticed the connection between the colour of pen and comments that were being made, and not just negative, but also very jaded or cynical.
When I look back, there was a lot of racism from teachers towards students. It was a very diverse school. There were so many inappropriate comments, almost ageism, where the teachers thought that because they’re older or wiser that they can treat everyone below them terribly. For example, during the first class I was standing at the front with this authority figure and the authority figure points to a kid in the front row and says ‘You’re going to know their name by the end of this class because they are going to drive you crazy.’ In front of the entire class, and that kid is just sitting there, wondering, ‘What did I do?’ I just sat down. I thought, I don’t need this. What is the point? I want to know why there isn’t a re-evaluation, how do those people keep their jobs. I just know I paid a lot of money and I worked pretty hard to get that money and I saved it up and I’m in a lot of debt and I didn’t anticipate this kind of disorganization. I was just really disappointed and I feel relieved that I didn’t internalize all the problems as my fault or that I can’t be a teacher.

I’ve been selective in that I don’t think I ever said the teacher’s name. I was really surprised that I wasn’t able to share it in the cohort, and that doesn’t make sense to me, even now, I don’t really get the bureaucracy of it. I understand that we don’t want to get into this spiralling negative discussion but at the same time it was really real. It was real people in the situation at this moment. It’s going to happen to others and how are they going to deal with that if they think that everything is always the way they have had it? So I don’t understand why that isn’t part of the process. Why aren’t we able to talk about this freely? I know, Code 5, this is Code 5, but honestly, this is what happened to me and I’m not allowed to talk about it. Everyone has this fear about Code 5. No one wants to talk. I don’t know what that person thinks so I’m not going to say anything. Sometimes there are moments where you think, Code 5, what? I just need to get this off my chest! It made me feel exactly how I had been feeling, that there’s no support and no one seemed to really think that what I was experiencing was that big of an issue.
And it was so much of a non-issue that I wasn’t even able to talk about it, that’s how I felt. It is dangerous because they want to keep people coming into the program, and once you’re in it, they want you to stay in it. I became very aware of that over the two weeks, that it is an industry. I just felt like it was all about money. The teachers that I was working with on the short practicum were there because of money not because they cared, and then the program itself that I’m in, it’s really costly, it’s supposedly revered, and I felt really proud of myself for getting into the program. When I told people that I was in this program they were like, ‘Wow, I’m so proud of you.’ And then once I’m here, it’s like okay, why was it so hard to get in, what is really happening here? I don’t feel like everyone in our program is becoming a cookie-cutter image of a teacher. I don’t feel like they are because there are so many diverse personalities and opinions, even now, after this long of being in it. During the practicum, one of the girls dropped out because of health issues, and so this is now a fear that people are starting to drop like flies, and she was the third person to drop out.

As I think about it, I’m coming up with the word endurance, I just got to get through it. During the short practicum, I just kept referring to the light at the end of the tunnel, two weeks. I think through the whole experience, conversing with my family and hearing their side of it, I needed some validity. I needed someone to say, ‘You know what, you’re a tough cookie and you can stick it out, but you don’t need to. You don’t need to do this, this isn’t about your survival. This isn’t what you signed up for, this isn’t what anyone else is going through.’

I felt like I was overreacting a little bit

I wasn’t that assertive about the difficulties on practicum because I felt, and maybe this is my character and also just being female, that I didn’t want to show emotion, not wanting to overreact, we get labelled with that, and especially me, I’m a pretty emotional person and that
makes some people uncomfortable. There is a part of me that was really excited to just see all of
my peers again, and getting back to the cohort community and feeling support, being able to talk
and share stories that they had, and hear the good times or hear the crappy times they had. When
we came back to debrief about a practicum, there wasn’t a lot of freedom to talk about the
practicum, so that was kind of hard because they were only encouraging positive stories. We
heard lots of good stuff which in a sense made me feel better. There are other ways of this
happening and I was so glad that not everyone had the kind of experience like I had. This is a
learning experience and I’m learning exactly what I do not want to be in the classroom, if I
decide to follow this through.

Looking back, I felt like I was overreacting a little bit. Sometimes I’m not sure that I
want to become a teacher. I’m happy that I’m having this experience and I know it’s beneficial
to me, but I’m open to other avenues. After seeing a negative environment like the one on my
practicum, I know I could never work in one for very long. The only reason I would stay is for
the students. Even after just two weeks, I got cards from the kids! It felt like I made some
connections with people in those classes whereas two months had gone by in the school year and
the teachers did not know the names of their students. I know I’m not there to be anyone’s
friend, and I hope that that wasn’t my intention when I was talking to those students, but I really
felt like they taught me something.

I had those teaching moments, where I was at the front of the class and something
hilarious would happen. The class was so diverse, some kids had been in Canada for six months
and some have been here for two years and from all over the world, all different kinds of
backgrounds, war-torn countries, and for some, it was their first time ever in a school, and
language levels were pretty low. I was trying to do some activities, group work with people who
don’t speak the same language, and it was so interesting. It could have been frustrating and I
think at times parts of it were, but it just became this wonderful, I don’t know, it sounds airy-fairy, but just a connection between people beyond words. One example of this is I had these two kids playing *Pictionary* with clay. One kid made this clay fork and the Ugandan boy is like, ‘I know what that is, but I don’t know the English words.’ ‘Well say that in your language.’ He did. I turned to the Korean boy and said, ‘What is this in Korean?’ And it was such a nice exchange, I hope it was positive for them.

Now I’m thinking about this one girl who missed the first three days of the first week because she got beat up. She said, ‘Oh, it is because I’m a lesbian and everybody hates me.’ The teacher told me her attendance is a problem, she never shows up anyways. So I tried to remember students like her, and when they would come in, I would say, ‘Hi, how is it going? Nice to see that you came today. What are you going to work on today? If you need any help I’m around. If you have any questions about the darkroom ask me.’ I spent one day working with her one-on-one, where I showed her how to develop film and the next day she was showing someone else how to do it, and with such pride. I thought that was neat. All she needed was one person to take the time out of their day to show her how to do it. You just need to feel like you’re valued in this room, someone who knows her name and sees her. I was just so excited by little things like that, and that’s what made going to that school doable.

I guess we’re all our biggest critics, but I can think of a couple of instances that have stayed with me and they stay for a reason. I hope that I use them in a way not to do it again. Just dealing with some behavioural problem students and how I spoke to them, or what I said to them. We did an activity in groups, and one girl said, ‘Why, why do we have to?’ And instead of me answering because I want you to get to know other people or I’d like you to interact with students you don’t know, maybe you can mix and make connections, I said, ‘Because I asked you to.’ I really wished I hadn’t said that. I wasn’t yelling, I said it like that, and I thought
really, why am I all of a sudden this power figure, why didn’t my rationale come to the end of my tongue? Instead this power message came to the end of my tongue much quicker than my rationale. It really made me think about the authoritative figure at the front of the room, and just how our system is innately flawed. I don’t agree with that kind of classroom but that is sort of how the system is set up. It’s about evaluating grades and not progress, or mistakes, and so if I continue on in this field, I hope that I’m able to get my own class at least and bring some of my values and my idea of evaluation or criteria. I still really don’t think of myself as a teacher but when I’m in that setting, I play the role and it kind of surprises me.

There was another situation where I was going around talking to students, and one kid had his head on the desk. I asked what was going on. He said he didn’t feel well. His stomach hurt and he had a headache. I just kept asking him more questions. ‘Did you have breakfast?’ ‘No.’ ‘Are you sleeping?’ ‘Yeah.’ ‘OK, what did you have for dinner last night?’ ‘Nothing.’ ‘What did you have for lunch?’ ‘Nothing.’ He hadn’t eaten in two days. I know adolescents can be kind of dramatic sometimes but if he says he hasn’t eaten in two days, how is he sitting there? I said, ‘You need to go get some food.’ But he didn’t have any money. I offered to give him money but he said no, he could take care of himself. I said, ‘You know what, if you can then you better start! You need to eat.’ I mentioned it to my sponsor teacher and that’s when he gave me the ‘you are trying to save every student’ crap. I asked, ‘Is there some kind of aid or counsellor that should be alerted?’ The student also mentioned that he spent all day moving by himself, he lives by himself. Just to add another piece of information, he is from Korea, minimal English, so he’s probably a satellite kid, lives here by himself, lives off instant food, and maybe we should get someone to look out for him. I felt like maybe I shouldn’t get so involved or feel so emotional about the situation, maybe it’s not my place, or maybe it is not as bad as it seems...
from my point of view, maybe it’s not, but it seemed bad for him, and I’m honestly worried about him. So I would go home and I would think about all those people, all those kids.

It is just so interesting to see what kids are working on, what they’re interested in, and what I can contribute. I’d bring stuff in, resources for them, and that was rewarding to me. It is just like collaboration, if that’s the way school can be then I want to be there. Well even if there’s just a slight, remote possibility for some children to be in an environment like that, this industry needs me. Education needs people like me because after two weeks the students were so responsive and engaged. My sponsor teacher was a very negative person, and he kind of mocked me a couple of times. He said, ‘Oh yeah, I can tell you got that sparkle in your eye, still trying to learn their names, still trying to touch their souls,’ or something like that and it was really hurtful. That wasn’t my intention. I wasn’t trying to save anyone. I was trying to survive the two weeks there, and in the process, I felt like there were other people needing someone to hang on to. I learned a lot of really great lessons from that even though it was tough.

**I have to be a good role model**

The short practicum was really about my transformation from a student in so many ways. My wardrobe became a teacher wardrobe, even now in my private time, I have different clothing. The private me versus my other identity as a teacher. I don’t feel as comfortable. I feel a lot more formal. I feel like people view me differently. I looked at it as a role model, how when I’m in a classroom, I must be very aware of the eyes on me, and how I am in private, with friends. I’m really conscious of that appearance and I have to be a good role model. We’re so used to seeing teachers just as teacher. When I was a student, and I saw my teachers outside of the school, those specific incidents stuck with me. I remember I had a math teacher named Bruno and he was always very strict. I didn’t really like him, but then I went to swimming
lessons and he was there wearing a lime green Speedo, and ever since that encounter I thought he was just a hilarious guy, like, oh my god he has a lime green Speedo! It changed how I viewed him as a person and as a teacher. He was really strict, but after I saw him in that bathing suit, I thought for sure he has a sense of humour!

When I was on the short practicum, I wondered, how much do I disclose or how much of my personality do I offer to students as a teacher? Because teachers, in my mind, should not divulge a lot about their personal lives or about their personal interests, their opinions, they should be neutral in those things. I feel such an inner passion or excitement when dealing with students, and I think that will lead to fulfillment as a teacher, and that feeling is the reward, a spiritual reward, from personal engagement on so many levels with different people of different backgrounds and different ages. It’s strange how the school can easily be transferred into the private life, but the private life can’t be so easily transferred into the school life.

When I’m in my student role, I’m a lot less sure of myself and a lot more self-centered. I focus on my studies and I’m always worried about how my work is going to be received by the expert, the professor, so I feel very aware of that relationship. But when I’m the teacher, it totally changes. I make a conscious effort to speak with confidence, not to say ‘um,’ even though I want to say ‘um,’ or ‘maybe’ or ‘sometimes.’ When I speak I feel like I’m not that sure of myself or I don’t want to make too huge statements. I think it’s linked to gender. I sometimes preface my knowledge with ‘I don’t really know.’ So when I’m in the role of the teacher, I try to make that disappear because I’m aware that if I start that way, then automatically, how they receive me is going to change. If I go up there very confident, exuding those male qualities, then they will be a lot more receptive. It’s very weird! It’s very odd because the school is a very male environment, patriarchal, and you know, it’s all top down and yet women are the main employees. I definitely feel very interested in female roles and female depictions or traits that
are supposedly female, so I’m constantly looking at my own female identity, and how that relates to my environment. It is just about equal opportunity regardless of gender and so it’s not just something that women can engage in, but that men can engage in, gender equality. I believe in equal chance, equal opportunity, I believe in community and I believe in inclusion.

As an artist, I’m a lot more experimental. I’m more comfortable with things not working out, a lot more comfortable with not finding answers to questions, as opposed to when I’m writing an essay for an academic class. As a student-teacher, I really want to find answers to my questions. As an artist, I feel like all those preliminary projects that are total failures or just crap, they lead you to something good. But the artist is invalid in the academy, in a written scholarly way, those kinds of failures aren’t addressed or valued in the same way. I’ve been negotiating those things for some time now. One of the things that a lot of us have been feeling from this becoming art teachers is taking on the curriculum. It is so foreign, whereas we can write out a lesson pretty easily and feel inspired by it, but then we have to start using this language and categorizing everything and it just rules the life out of you. When I’m in that teacher role, I try to sound confident but I’m always aware that someone in the room might know more than me. And if they do, how am I going to have to change the lesson. From the teacher’s point of view, you have to kind of gauge the way you are going to represent the material and what level you’re going to present it at. For the sake of accessibility, you want to start at a basic level so that everyone is included. If someone raises their hand and lets you know that they are actually at a totally different place, they know more about the topic and have more insight and experience than you do, then on the spot, I have to be able to harness that.

I think it’s really important to be aware of our limitations within ourselves but also with other people. Specifically when you’re talking about certain subjects, we have no idea what’s going on in a person’s head. Some students may have had negative experiences in life, and
traumatic memories may be triggered. For example, my mum is a teacher and she had a refugee from Bosnia and at that time, she was teaching Grade 5 and they were doing biology and she brought out the anatomy manikin that has all the organs that come out. She didn’t even think about how this could affect kids, and he saw this and ran out of the room screaming. Right at that moment, she sat down and said, ‘I need to think about what this little boy has seen. I need to think about him and how he is constantly seeing things in a way that none of us can relate to.’ I feel very close to that topic and I try to be aware of such possibilities with students. I think it is really important from a teacher’s point of view, if you even slightly feel like this is not going over so well, no one is engaged, or this is boring or this is offending someone, then you have to follow that feeling and somehow address it or resolve the problem. Be aware of how we are embodying the role of teacher. Recognizing what we feel is a culturally appropriate way to respond to someone, even if it is just basic conversing, for example, making eye contact, the way we express our listening, that kind of thing, that’s not the same for everybody, especially if they are from a different culture.

I really think because of the position we are studying to become there is the politics of the teacher and the teacher’s relationship between the public and the government and it seems quite political. In the class that I’m in right now we are learning about where the money comes from and who says what goes, how being part of the union is not just your responsibility on the job, it is your responsibility off the job. We talk about all these court cases that they used to illustrate that point, where teachers are prosecuted because of their private life or activity in their private life. How some teachers have been let go because they breached the code of conduct as a teacher. It is interesting, it is a political profession, and you don’t think of it that way as a student. Even right now, we haven’t become teachers yet so really our only knowledge of teachers is from our own experience of being a student. Just thinking that teachers are bound by
their job in that way, they may have to give up some of the liberties that they have in their private life. I guess it makes sense, but in other ways, well, that is a lot of freedom to give up. Teachers have a lot of power and so I think that teachers should use it wisely, to empower others. I think a classroom should be a safe space and a constructive and positive space, and everything is not always going to be easy but hopefully there is a positive outcome or lesson learned from all life experiences.

**It feels good so far**

I’m fairly ready for the long practicum. My new sponsor teacher seems really nice. She’s really relaxed, which is good for me because I haven’t been very relaxed, you know, some anxiety. I think we are going to team-teach for the first week, so I have been kind of working on my lesson plans and units and stuff, but she said don’t worry about it until you get here. So that is perfect. It feels good so far. There is the teacher that I’m going to be working with and she has an artist in residence. Every time I’ve gone there, I leave feeling so excited and so relaxed. It seems like a really neat place to be. Even just from being there two or three times and observing their styles of clothing and hair, they just seem really neat. One of the ladies has bright pink hair! And the teachers at this new school seem to know all the names of students just from walking down the hall. It is a friendly rapport. My sponsor teacher introduced me to every single person, she got me a library card, and this was all on the first day. I was just in shock! At the end of the four-hour visit, I said to her, ‘Thank you so much!’ And I was almost in tears, and I said, ‘Thank you so much for your hospitality, I can’t wait to work with you.’

When I’m at home for a little bit, or talking to other people in the cohort or friends in other cohorts, and they are all stressed out about lesson planning and stuff and I think, oh maybe I should do some. I make my own stress. Sometimes there is an underlying rivalry, as if they
are saying, ‘This is how much I’ve done, and how much have you done?’ We want to show our strengths, what were good at, what we’ve accomplished. I think in the last week I’ve just been trying to relax and just think about how it could be such fun. Being a teacher could really be fun and I want to remember that. It could be such a creative and exciting job.

I think I will feel visible once I’m in a classroom. Right now I’m kind of behind the scenes preparing the stage, the long practicum. My family is aware of the phase that I’m in. I suppose our own experience and identity affects the lens through which we experience everything, including this, so just who I am, my gender, my class, everything really affects me. It determines how I’m interpreting and taking in the information that I’ve got through this program, and how I relate to students on the practicum and students in my program. It affects everything.

**A game of dramatic hats**

I know I have progressed since I joined this program and I know I’ve learned things, but I don’t feel amazingly prepared. I heard my sponsor teacher never signs up for student-teachers because the last three have not passed. Apparently, the students were not good placements, and that can happen but three is a lot. When I sat down to look at everything, I felt totally overwhelmed. I spent two days writing one lesson. I was totally freaking out. I put so much pressure on myself for it to be perfect and I knew I was going to e-mail it the sponsor teacher, and I was worried she was going to think it was bad. In that moment I didn’t think I could cope, it just became such a big, huge obstacle in my mind. I just had a breakdown and I wanted to quit.

I definitely think the long practicum was the hardest thing I ever had to do emotionally and mentally. I was struggling throughout the entire thing. Almost everyday I wanted to quit. I
didn’t enjoy that part of it. Every morning I woke up and felt nauseous. I had lots of health issues and went to the doctor often. I probably went to the doctor at least five times and was constantly getting new prescriptions for sleeping pills, for ulcer preventative type medication. I wasn’t eating and I wasn’t sleeping and was constantly going to the bathroom and it was really uncomfortable. But all day I had to pretend like I was fine. It was just awful. I don’t know if that is the stress of the practicum, the stress of that specific situation with the sponsor teacher I had, or if it is just the profession and my personality. I honestly didn’t feel like I had enough stress coping tools within me. Physically and emotionally I was just a mess.

Every single day I went home and cried. It was good if I could make it to my door. Sometimes I would make it to the bus stop and start crying. It was really really emotional and I think it was a combination of just the type of person I am and how I deal with stress and just that experience. I felt that my relationship with my sponsor teacher and faculty advisor was really superficial. I think that they have really made me question whether this is the right job for me.

The relationship with the sponsor teacher was really destructive. It wasn’t caring and any time there was something positive, it was very odd. It was a very odd relationship. It moved back and forth between comfort and discomfort. At times I would think, oh maybe it’s okay, she doesn’t mind sharing her classroom with me, and then there would always be an incident that made me realize, or reminded me that I’m in her space. Even though she would say things like, ‘This isn’t my room, this is your room now.’ A student would come up and ask her a question and she would play dumb and say, ‘Oh, I’m not your teacher anymore,’ knowing I didn’t know the answer. So even when she had an opportunity to help me in those situations, she wouldn’t.

Because of the nature of being a student-teacher, you are guided to believe you hold a certain amount of authority, that you have a certain amount of responsibility and that this is your classroom when you go on your long practicum. For everyone it is really different, depending on
what your sponsor teacher is like. Some people really facilitate that role and other people make it a goal to deter that from happening. They will publicly rob you of that in front of students, or in front of other colleagues. In my own experience, small comments, like a student asked a question of the homeroom teacher, and my sponsor teacher said, ‘Go ask your real teacher.’

Okay what does real teacher mean? So the student turned to me to ask something and I don’t know the answer, so then I have to ask the sponsor teacher again. It was very superficial, a game of dramatic hats. It was not real. It didn’t make sense. And why can’t that person answer the question of the student? Especially one I wouldn’t know the answer to. It was very theatrical, my sponsor teacher would take off her hat, and no longer be a teacher. It was really bizarre.

There would be times where I would be told in a dramatic sense, ‘This is your room, you create your rules, you organize the room how you want.’ And then a day later, there would be comments about how many pencils were missing, how her supplies were going missing and I needed to track those better, and other comments too.

Finally, after a month, I was left alone. Until that point every single lesson was observed and written up as an observation. Every single one. Finally I asked if I could be left alone, and that day was amazing compared to the rest of the time. Because if I made a mistake, she couldn’t see it. Thank goodness for that! It was between me and the students, and so at the end of the day, she came back to see how I did, or sometimes, she came back when I was out of the room. Once she was there looking at the drawings the Grade 8’s completed, and she said, ‘Boy they’re sure shitty.’ I said, ‘Oh you think so, I thought they were all right. The students tried pretty hard.’ ‘Yeah but look how fuzzy the lines are! Why are they so fuzzy? I was really confused by that and then I saw your demo drawing and realized they just copied the way you did it.’ She got meaner. It got to the point where she asked me, ‘Haven’t you ever taken a drawing class?’ That was the tone of the long practicum.
I felt really abused. When I would get home, everyone would say, ‘You know what, this lady is a bitch. Let it run over you. Don’t let it get to you. If anything this is a great experience on how to work under someone who is difficult.’ Whenever I felt like I had reign over the room, she would remind me that I didn’t and I’d have no confidence again. I had a lot of fear of her. Almost terror. I was terrorized. I really felt like that. I was being pushed in all these directions, all the time. Every day I would have a list two pages long of all the things I had to remember to do. It was the only way I could start falling asleep, to write out everything in my head. Every night I would have nightmares. I wouldn’t sleep, I would toss and turn, I would wake up after four hours of sleep, feel nauseous, I couldn’t eat, and then I’d go to work. It was like that for two months. Even now, two months later, I get that nauseous feeling in my stomach when I drive by the bus stop I got off at to go to my practicum school.

I did six weeks at 80% and it ended so abruptly. On that final day, I remember I gave her a gift and a card. I left the room and came back and she said, ‘Well that card was very nice, thank you for that, okay so you’re done here, you can go.’ I wasn’t done. I had stacks of marking and I wanted to collect my things. This is at 3 o’clock and she told me to leave. I said to her, ‘I can’t go yet, there’s a lot of stuff I need to do, I want to finish the marking.’ It wouldn’t be fair to the kids to have her mark stuff that she didn’t even know about. I almost got kicked out. She just kept saying, ‘No. No. You’re done, don’t worry about it, you did a great job, it’s fabulous, I’m really satisfied. Just go.’ But I didn’t buy it. She wanted me to leave. She had been waiting and waiting and waiting to get her room back. And I still think about that. It is still on my mind.

A number of times I likened the entire experience to being on a reality-TV show. I had these people who gave me challenges and every week or everyday, I had to be in front of them as judges. I felt like I was constantly being picked apart. I knew that all these people were
watching me, and all these expectations are being put on me (that weren’t being modelled).

There was a moment where my sponsor teacher got really frustrated because we weren’t meeting regularly. I would give her my lesson plans sometimes the day before, sometimes three days before, and sometimes she read them and other times she didn’t. I said, ‘Do think we could have a meeting because I really need some guidance.’ We had a meeting and she wanted to point out all the things I wasn’t doing right. At that point I was getting more confident and so I said, ‘Well actually I did do that, or I thought I was doing that, and if you look at this lesson plan…’ And that’s when it started to become evident that we weren’t working as a team. She got very frustrated and it was the first time I saw a weakness in her. And she said something like, ‘Look I really feel like I’m not doing my job, I don’t know how I’m supposed to do this, and I’m really not comfortable with the way things are going.’

If I hadn’t had support, my family and my friends, I probably would have dropped out. Even they had some fears, and a couple of times they said to me, ‘Do you think you’re going to pass this?’ ‘I don’t know. I hope so.’ I just kept saying to them, ‘I’m doing my absolute 100% best, actually maybe even 110%.’ I knew that I committed myself completely. I don’t know how someone with their own family with children could have done this. I couldn’t have. Even if I had been married and my spouse wasn’t in the program, that would’ve been a huge stress.

Most evenings I didn’t get home until 6:30 p.m. and then there’s always work to be done. I got home, I would lay on the couch for an hour, maybe eat something, work till midnight, go to sleep and be back to work at 7:45 a.m. the next morning.

On practicum you are led to believe you have this role of authority, it is slightly given to you and then it is taken away. I didn’t realize to what extent we were so vulnerable. I don’t feel very confident or comfortable in this role. So I still feel quite unsure about myself. In that sense I guess I realized who I was as a student-teacher after the fact, thinking that really it was a bit of
a charade. So it will be interesting to see in the years to come how I feel about my teacher experiences. I just wonder if, to teach art really kills it for me. I think in some ways there are some people who are artists, and some people who can juggle both those roles of teacher and artist, but I found it really hard to do. It was just so emotional in a way that my independent art practice isn’t. As an artist you can be private and I don’t have to be concerned about taking responsibility for other people. So that was something that came up and I’m still wondering if this is the right job for me. I think I will pursue teaching and if I realize after a year or two years it doesn’t suit me then I can pursue other options, like working in galleries.

My challenge was to focus on the positive

I was really glad when the long practicum was done and I also felt it ended on a high note. One of my challenges was not to focus on the negative, and really focus on the positive. When I was in front of those two characters, the sponsor teacher and the faculty advisor, I had to present myself in a strong, confident, ‘I’m in control’ manner. In the end they felt proud of me because I had overcome the challenges that they thought I had, but I really felt that I had overcome different challenges. I know that in the end I learned so much. I think it was successful. I had a successful practicum, and I feel really proud of how hard I worked, and of the relationships that I had with the administration at the school and with the students at the school. This was the biggest thing I’ve ever done.

I felt even with the behavioural issue students, in those relationships, the standards were respectful, the relationships were very respectful. I feel like I did a lot of caring, and that my family and friends did a lot of caring for me. I did a lot of work with some of those students. There were a lot of students with poor home lives, behavioural issues, learning disabilities, chronic attendance problems, and they were never dealt with, they had never been addressed.
Even if the work was causing me extreme amounts of stress and even if the students made me feel angry, I still cared about them as people. I really felt like I was putting so much energy into caring for these students and then I would go home and totally fall apart.

For me, I would tell prospective students not to go into teaching right after an undergraduate degree. Take some time off, if you are a little bit older and you have life experience, you’ll manage much better. If I didn’t have those two things I would’ve dropped out. You should try to build your confidence before you come because you’re going to get it dwindled a little. It’s going to test you. It was testing my organizational skills, my ability to think ahead, to act on my feet, to mask my true emotions. If I could do the long practicum again, I would take more time for myself. I would take better care of myself, eat, exercise, and sleep, and I would learn to meditate. I would try not to take it so personally.

One day the Physics teacher came into the classroom, his class was two down from mine. He was an older guy, maybe late 50’s and you could tell that his job was his life. The kids really liked him. When you met him in the hallway, he would chat away to you. He was single, and he and I had a friendly relationship. He helped me a lot. Just in that minute way of being friendly to me. He was letting me know that he was looking out for me. I wrote him a card before I left because one day he came in and sat down and said, ‘What’s up, Teach?’ And he pulled up a chair and he said, ‘I can tell you are having a bad day, and you don’t look well.’ I just smiled and I knew, I couldn’t say anything. I said, ‘Thanks, thanks for talking the time to say hi.’ It was really meaningful to me. I felt like there were relationships like that, that I created with the staff. It is a big job for a teacher to take on a student-teacher. I tried to be compassionate towards my sponsor teacher. A number of times I thanked her for allowing me to be in her space and for allowing me to use her resources and I really felt for her, especially because she was very unhappy in many aspects of her life, and she talked a lot about that with me.
What was interesting in my case was that at the exact same time as I was in my practicum, my mom had a student-teacher in her classroom, so it was very helpful to hear her feelings about what it is like to share a classroom. My mum said that as a sponsor teacher, you try not to let it get to you, but you wonder if the kids like the student-teacher better, and when you come back to class there is always two weeks where the kids accidentally call you by the student-teacher’s name. She says it is not a big deal but you do notice those things. I feel lucky to have my mother, she has mentored me in teaching. She helped me so much. On the weekends near the end of the practicum, I started going home every weekend and taking all of my school stuff with me, and she would sit down and say, ‘OK, what is your plan?’ And I would go over my lesson plan with her. She would say, ‘OK, why are you doing it this way?’ And that helped me overcome my gaps.

I also learned that I need to focus on limiting work, that personal time is as valuable. I had no personal time. I worked every moment on the practicum. I really had no personal life at all. I think that’s partly what scares me about myself. I will allow myself to be consumed by work. I don’t put boundaries up in the way that other people are really good at doing. I wasn’t able to do that. I am wondering, if I try this for a year or two, will I just overwork myself? I don’t want to totally burn out. I realized I really like smaller classrooms. I had my smallest class with 18 kids in ESL. I loved that class. It was so neat. They come from different countries where education is such a scary thing, there’s physical abuse by teachers, and they had tremendous respect for me that was absent in my other classes. It made us laugh at one point because I was talking to one boy from Sri Lanka, and I asked him, ‘Do you ever miss Sri Lanka?’ He said, ‘Oh I really miss it but I’m so glad I’m in school in Canada. I’m not good at writing and they always used to beat me. I was really afraid to make a mistake.’ And I jokingly said, ‘Oh I’ll never beat you!’ ‘Oh I know!’ And so we were laughing, and just little things like
that. My experiences abroad, knowing what it feels like to be in a different place and speak a
language that isn’t mine, really made me comfortable around them. I felt like we fed off each
other, they understood that I understood. Because we talked about that, we talked about what it
was like to be in a different country, a different culture, with different foods, and all these
changes and how they’re doing and I commended them, ‘You’re doing such a great thing right
now.’ It was really, really fun. That was the class where I was the most myself. I didn’t feel
like there were power struggles, as in some of my other classes. I had those kinds of challenges
with students that were unmotivated. I didn’t know what to do at first, and I’m not sure I have
resolved how deal with it. I still think about some of those kids. It is hard because when you see
students that have been abandoned in some way or form. They’re struggling. They don’t believe
in themselves and think they’re not worth anything. It killed me to see people like that. It
depends on who you are and what chance you’ve been given. I don’t think they can be whipped
into shape, they need help. There is a reason that they are doing what they’re doing. Then there
are times when you see kids that you know are going to be in trouble. I had one girl and she had
no sense of right or wrong, no remorse. She was a big problem. She was asked not to come to
school. She was so disrespectful and dishonest. And I wonder about her, what was her home
life like? Where was she taught that she was a pain in the ass all the time? I was going through
my pictures from the long practicum, I took a lot of pictures, and I saw a picture of her and I
thought, oh that girl is headed in the wrong direction.

I learned too that you can’t please everybody. There was one student in particular, it was
a real struggle with her, every time I would present what we were going to work on, it was like I
was making her do the worst thing in the entire world. I didn’t know how to deal with it. I was
very frustrated. I asked my mom what do I do and she said, ‘Make light of it.’ She said, ‘I have
a kid like that and now whenever I introduce something I say, before we start, let’s all agree that
so-and-so is going to hate this and then they start realizing that they are so negative about everything, and now that kid laughs too.’ I didn’t have enough time with her. One thing I did do was to give her special treatment, a job to do. She wasn’t into the projects and she just whipped through it as she would everything and just did it half-assed. So I said, ‘I really need your help.’ And gave her a job. She was happy to do it and I thanked her so much for her great work. We finally had a positive encounter together. I was tired of having the negative struggle.

There wasn’t a lot of technology in the school that was accessible to me. They had an opaque projector. It’s huge, it is probably double the size of a monitor, and it’s got a little conveyor belt with a crank and you put your piece of paper in, crank it through and it projects your paper onto the wall. Very archaic! The kids didn’t even know what it was. So we used that quite often, for drawing, and it was kind of fun. It took a lot of time though so it wasn’t that practical. The overhead projector was instrumental. I made two PowerPoint presentations and the kids thought that was neat to have a change. At the end of the practicum my sponsor teacher got a laptop, so it was nice to have a computer there because when someone was done they could go in, type up their artist statements and then they could type up other kid’s artist statements. I borrowed a DVD camera for the mural project. One of my challenges was to do a collective project with 30 kids. They all had different needs, and they didn’t want to cooperate, so to make that work, I developed sub-projects, so that two kids were making a DVD of the process, and they got to film and interview other kids and so on. There were a lot of good things that I learned from my sponsor teacher, from observation, what kinds of images she used, how she dealt with different issues, and what she collects from galleries, and she has a box of materials and just pulls out items and away she goes. She spreads them out on the table and has everyone come over to look. So that was good. I wouldn’t have thought of that.
There were so many unknowns before I went on the practicum. I wasn’t aware of how many roles there were, how much energy it took and how I would adapt myself to those roles. It is interesting because there are a lot of roles that they don’t even talk about before you go. We have a class now about these things. I wasn’t even familiar with what techniques were out there, or how I would adapt myself into the disciplinary role, I hadn’t thought about any of that. What do you do when the kid says, ‘I’m not doing it.’ Or just walks out? I had to confiscate a knife from one kid. I wasn’t prepared for that. I didn’t feel I had been trained for those incidents.

**Becoming a good teacher**

For a while I was quite negative, but recently I had to write a reflection for a class about what I think makes a good teacher, and if the university prepared me to become that teacher. It was a seven to eight page paper, and it felt good to lay out my positives and negatives a little bit more. I think I was pretty jaded, or just feeling bitter or something, and in the end I thought, maybe I’m asking too much. I’ve outlined the things I think a good teacher embodies, and I also concluded that maybe it’s not the role of university, maybe the university does not make you a good teacher, they just give you some development, that they probably hope you are already at a certain point before you come to them. So that was a nice realization because I put less on the university and more on me. I felt a lot more responsible, rather than they didn’t do this, they didn’t do that, and I feel I’ve done a lot of that this year. I feel pretty good taking ownership of my experiences.

I know I have a foundation as a good teacher. I came up with five things that I would like to work on as a teacher and I think I will keep building on them. A good teacher is someone who is caring, and caring I think is one of the most important ones. Someone who is reflective and someone who, and this one was kind of tricky, has awareness of school dynamics. I think it
is so important, just being aware of the students’ lives on a daily basis, body language, comments, silences. All these things, we have to be aware of because sometimes no one else is looking for it. I found that a lot in the school I was in, these kids were burning the candle at both ends and no one seemed to care and they just got whisked away at the end of the hour, to a new room and no one noticed them. No one said hello to them.

I’ve been thinking about adding to the qualities of a good teacher. This is maybe controversial, but somehow creating a spiritual classroom. When I say spiritual I don’t mean religious at all, but modeling with awareness and respect and empathy to others, not just other people, but life forms. I don’t know how to do that, maybe it is a very odd thing, but incorporating gardening for example. I think plants have a huge potential for power. I read this article recently that suggested if you can create a spiritual classroom then it deters students from being negative or harmful, or violent to others and to themselves, and it boosts that community, it creates a positive citizen. So that is the starting point, the beginnings of me being able to talk about it, and I think with time and thought and reflection, I will be able to articulate this better. It will change. Writing the reflection has been a good opportunity to think about that. Family members and friends are just so excited for me, a lot more than I feel for myself. Because they saw me go through that process and they were a support network for me in the down times, they are exhaling as much as I am exhaling, which is kind of interesting. There were a lot of times where I wanted to quit, and there were people who wouldn’t let me, and I’m really grateful that they didn’t. It’s been an opportunity to discover myself and to make connections with others in ways I didn’t expect.

I think I’m a little more sure that I would like to try it as a profession. Just because I’m in the program, I haven’t accepted that this is going to be my choice of career. I think I should try to TOC, get a contract for a least two years and see how that goes and if it still doesn’t feel quite
right then maybe I will pursue something else. I think that from what I saw there seemed to be a lack of something in the schools and I would really like to try and fill that void a little bit if I can. It might take too much out of me, I don’t know. It’s strange, I don’t feel like this process of becoming is done. There is a whole other thing now that I have to prepare for, that I actually don’t feel prepared for: TOC’ing.

On Thursday, the very last day of school, it was sad. I didn’t want to leave. The class finished at noon and I went into the old cohort room and there were seven people in there, just hanging out. We just sat and chatted, it was pretty telling. No one wanted to go. We stayed until about 3:30-4 p.m., and so it was sad. I mean, I wasn’t overly emotional but something inside was kind of sad. That night everyone went out. It was just strange leaving the classroom and later that night, going out to a bar and having great fun, people taking pictures and acting like fools and dancing and letting it all out. People hugged and said, ‘If I don’t see you again, goodbye,’ that kind of thing. It was quite sad. There are a lot of connections that you don’t realize until that last day, what a huge thing you have shared with those people. Even with people I didn’t necessarily like. People who drove me crazy all year, on the last day it was like, ‘Well take care!’ ‘Good luck.’ ‘It was great.’ So that was nice.

Coming back into university, I got a new community, a new network, in the art teacher cohort I found great allies, and inspiration, and friends and mentors, and all kinds of great people that really helped me feel good about myself and validated my work. They really made me feel good and we do that for each other, so that was a great place for me to be. It wasn’t just about wanting to be an art teacher, for me it was a lot bigger than that. It really helped me feel comfortable with myself as an artist and as a teacher. It really did reinforce those roles on me in a new way. For a long time before the teaching program, I didn’t think I was an artist. I was very embarrassed when friends or family would say, ‘Oh she’s an artist.’ And I would think, oh
no I’m not, I haven’t done anything or I’m not good at producing work for myself. Going from art student to artist was really difficult for me. I was comfortable being an art student and once school ended then I became an artist supposedly, but what makes you an artist? So I was really uncomfortable with that. And now I feel much more comfortable with myself and a lot more confident in what I do, based on my knowledge and my practice. If I do something at home, doodling or some kind of small collage, or sewing or whatever, that’s valid and I think I really undervalued it before taking this program. Now that I’m done, I feel contentment with myself, just satisfied. Regardless of how up-and-down it was, I’m going to get that piece of paper that is going to give me access to the profession.

You know, I just acquired some photos that are very interesting to me. I think that they will really help me inform that role of teacher because it is two albums. The first album is of my grandmother’s history of being a teacher. It is her class photos from her career, and her staff photos. She wrote all the names of kids on them and it is so interesting, they were going to be thrown away. No one wanted them. I couldn’t believe it because my mother has these same kind of class photos, my grandmother had them, and now I will eventually have them. And what about mine, how will mine add to the collection? And how can I use this collection, how can I reform it or recreate it or build on it? The second album is her retirement party. It took place in a gymnasium in the 1970’s. This is a story. I’ve got this build up, then this conclusion and it’s all in photo. I think there may be a few letters from my grandfather to my grandmother, because they lived in different places, and a lot of the time it is about teaching or logging. It is really exciting. I just got them yesterday, almost to the day that I finished the teacher education program.
III

UNCERTAINTY: RESEARCH PRODUCTS
Interpreting Narratives of Becoming

Nathalie
In the third panel of this triptych installation, the uncertainty of research products involves an ongoing and often ambiguous search for alternate meanings, emerging in interpretations of creative non-fictions and artful expressions of becoming, shifting this conversation to rendering arts research as a means to better understand becoming-teacher. Such inquiry is uncertain because research partners are always in movement, always becoming, as Deleuze (2004) suggests, continually generating new ways of thinking, feeling and perceiving.

**An encounter with geophysics**

Interpreting narratives of becoming is an encounter with Deleuze’s philosophical methods, in particular geophysics, a way of “thinking” that “takes place in the relationship of territory and the earth” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 85). Geophysics is a dynamic assemblage where rhizomatic relationships involve connections, multiplicity and ruptures between plateaus, manifest in multiple disciplines across time and place, drawing attention to pluralism of thought (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005; Deleuze, 1994). The suppleness of geophysics offers many openings to understand narratives of becoming by exploring the “same complex of notions differently articulated in completely different contexts” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 30). The resulting interpretations bring another dimension to the ever-expanding connections that are possible within arts inquiry (Deleuze, 1995, p. 25).

Applying geophysics to the lived and learning experiences of research partners involved adopting a perspective that geography is always “passing present” through the constructs of history and place, not progressing nor regressing, but “involuting,” or folding in upon itself (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 113; Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p. 29). Involuting is a creative, ambient space with qualities of speed and movement, a space of nomadic transversing
between “deterritorialization” and “reterritorialization,” translating in this case to movements of students of art becoming art teachers (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 10; Deleuze, 1994).

Movement is understood as lines of articulation, or territories, and lines of flight, which form assemblages and create multiplicity (Olkowski, 1997). Movement is composed of different kinds of relational lines within geography, making lines the “basic components of all things and events,” even people (Deleuze, 1995, p. 33). In this way, lines shape narratives of becoming:

A becoming is neither one nor two, nor the relation of the two; it is the in-between, the border or line of flight or descent running perpendicular to both .... a no-man’s-land, a nonlocalizable relation sweeping up the two distant or contiguous points, carrying one into the proximity of the other.

(Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 293)

Becoming is situated in the middle, not at the points that connect the experiences of research partners, instead, the “orientations, directions, entries and exits” evident in narratives form the basis of interpretations (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p. 2). As much as research partners changed in the process, the concept of becoming changed too, suggesting becoming is always an act of doubling (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002). As Deleuze & Guattari (1994) state, “the actual is not what we are, but, rather, what we become, what we are in the process of becoming,” in transformation to “our becoming other” (p. 112). For research partners, becoming-other was becoming-teacher.

**Creative non-fiction, Bildungsroman, and contemporary feminist Erziehungsroman**

To unfold narratives of becoming with a lens of geophilosophy, I applied the arts method of creative non-fiction, employing narrative constructs of themes, plots and characters to imaginatively open spaces between facts. My alternate approach echoes critical storytelling (Barone, 2000), and narrative experiments (Gough, 2003), both innovative modes of inquiry that bring creative writing to curriculum issues and educational studies. Creative non-fiction incorporates standard research processes and practices, including fictional elements of
pseudonyms created under confidentiality, as well as renamed places and altered events (Gough, 2004). Applying the arts method of creative non-fiction, I introduce each research partner in their own words, copied verbatim from transcripts and rendered into narratives that are textual performances of becoming-teacher informed by interrelated sources of information, including artful expression created over the course of the teacher education program.

In creating textual narratives, I follow a process consistent with visual narrating, selecting a series of visual elements in particular ways that generates understandings of the power of the moment. By extending my visual practices to language, I contextualize and illustrate lived and learning experiences with words as I do on other occasions with photographs. Yet through creative non-fiction I entered the process of arts research differently than if I had entered as a photographer, attending to verbal and textual nuances, bringing my reflective sensitivities and observations to the selection of experiences I then composed into each creative non-fiction. At the same time, the creative non-fictions in this study were written as much from visual expressions of research partners as from conversations, and the movements between realms of artful expressions provide an opportunity to illuminate in alternate ways the struggles within art teacher education, as well as question perspectives and angles of understandings from which interpretations are generated. Entering the process of artful expression from a perspective that stories are effective teaching tools, I regard creative non-fiction as an artful way of knowing, a relational understanding with others, and as a means of interpreting becoming-teacher, moving understandings from identifying research partners objectively, as student, to more intimate, caring and subjective identification as individuals experiencing a momentous, life changing transformative process (Witherell & Noddings, 1991).

According to Leggo (2007), through the “principal dynamics” of storying (what happened), discourse (the form and construction of the story) and interpretation (how the story is
understood) “fragments of experience” are shaped in ways that “remind us that there is significance in the moment, in the particular, in the mundane” (pp. 3,7). In this case, the narrative development for some research partners was, as Britzman (2007) suggests, “uneven” and at times, “out of joint,” which is “made stranger by the postmodern university where teacher education occurs” (p.1). Creative non-fiction is more than reflection, drawing attention to layers within the social geography of the educational landscape and exploring “moral” dimensions of teaching that make becoming more “visible” (Estola, 2003, p. 182).

The narratives of becoming were generated in response to the juxtaposition of research partners to the teaching profession through unexpected shifts in identity and place. In this way, creative non-fiction functions as a short-story derivative of the literary form Erziehungsroman, a sub-genre of the Bildungsroman, in which a biographically-based novel about learning is situated in an educational setting and the main character experiences a maturing in intellectual understandings (Erixon, 2002). Definitions of this literary tradition are wide-ranging from broadly interpreted contemporary approaches to “a specific type of novel written in a specific nation at a specific point in time (Germany in the late eighteenth century)” (Karafilis, 1998, p. 63). Although debate continues concerning the legitimacy of this literary form in postmodern contexts, for the purposes of this research, I adopt a revised feminist form of Erziehungsroman. As a revised literary style, the Erziehungsroman “can be lifted out of its initial context and applied productively across different historical periods, cultures and classes” and shaped to address questions of identity in “fragmented and alienated contemporary societies” (Karafilis, 1998, pp. 63, 64). McIlvanney (1997) suggests this form of storytelling is an “appropriate medium for feminist narrative,” focusing on women’s relational experiences as active agents developing personal and social knowledge in society (p. 60). Unlike traditional Bildungsromane, the relational, interdependent and communal nature of women’s experiences and the role of women
in the public sphere are central. Such stories make meaning from “disjointed parts and fragments” that are constructed into “a life, an experience, a narrative” (Karafilis, 1998, p. 67). Self-definition rather than autonomy defines the journey, which may not conclude with a progressive or positive ending, in fact, the story may only develop as far as making a decision to enter the public sphere where a woman, as the main character experiences an awakening and pursues a social quest (McIlvanney, 1997; Braendlin, 1979).

As contemporary feminist *Erziehungsromane*, the stories of research partners offer a space for critical discussion, rhizomatically connecting individual development within the complexities of teaching culture and granting insight to the social context of identity construction in ways that reflect Deleuze’s geophilosophy. According to Tilden (2004), creative non-fiction is “grounded in the profusion of ordinary life” and is “always written against loss,” and in the case of becoming art teachers, loss is reconciled in the in-between spaces of art students becoming art teachers (p. 708). Bringing forward interpretations of pre-service teacher stories also draws attention to the practices of becoming-teacher and aspects of teacher education that may require reconsideration, or reform, answering in part, the repeated calls within the field of art education for inquiry into all dimensions of teacher preparation (Beudert, 2006; Galbraith & Grauer, 2004; Grauer, 1998; Zimmerman, 2004).

Atkinson (2004) offers a method of analysing teaching stories based on the notion of “a transcendent individual,” in which a teacher functions as a reflective, reflexive or critical practitioner, objectively assessing experience from a “neutral position in order to make a rational analysis of practice, self, other or social processes so as to improve practice” (p. 381). Although this framework provides a means to understand how subjectivity may unfold, the emotions that define experiences are, in my view, diminished. Zembylas (2003) explores teachers’ emotions with a poststructuralist lens that addresses issues of power relations and agency, and emotions as
sites of resistance and transformation, suggesting teacher identity is, as Deleuze’s cartographic approach suggests, always in a process of becoming.

Although existing research contributes to interpreting the narratives of research partners, understandings are still partial, and to theorize about becoming a teacher I believe requires a more holistic approach consistent with creative non-fiction, attending to facts and events embedded in sources of information. Consequently, I do not judge the narratives of research partners strictly in terms of accuracy or truth, but as subjective expressions of experience and as expressions of teaching culture, open to wide-ranging interpretations. Subjectivity as a process of becoming is both rational and emotional, discursively shaped in-between purposeful acts and embodied knowing, and it is in this context that Deleuze’s concept of becoming provides the theoretical framework for interpreting narratives (Semetsky, 2006).

The content of each narrative reveals the complex experiences of pre-service teachers who are students and teachers, yet neither, in the same time and space. The unexpected student-teacher shift is a source of much deliberation by research partners. In-between spaces are pivotal, sometimes inverted, volatile and unpredictable. From the perspective of becoming, I interpret the narratives as exemplars of liminal spaces and as openings to the dynamics of teaching culture. In this case, becoming a teacher includes Ruth’s grand narrative, Ann’s borderland narrative and Nathalie’s counter narrative, each a metaphoric semblance that articulates the values of teaching, teacher culture, socialization into the profession and the processes of change required to meet the parameters of becoming-teacher. Although all research partners expressed elements of grand to counter narratives of teaching, individual narratives were dominantly one form within the genre of creative non-fiction.
Liminality, artography and slash narratives

To bring forth in-depth understandings of how pre-service teachers negotiate spaces of becoming, artography, which has emerged as an arts approach concerned with renderings of in-betweenness, offered a suitable methodological fit. Artographic approaches to interpreting narratives reflect geophilosophical tenets, predicated on open systems of interactions, where “concepts relate to circumstances rather than essences” making the flows of movement connective with, in and through time and place (Deleuze, 1995, p. 32; Deleuze & Guattari, 1994). It is by mapping the “various interacting lines” through an artographic lens that the narratives generated “collective creations rather than representations” within educational institutions (Deleuze, 1995, pp. 33, 169). In artography, practitioners are continually opening discussions by connecting concepts in the geophilosophical milieu, zigzagging with degrees of uncertainty in research. Therein lies the essence of artographic inquiry as always becoming, always relational, and always considering the “speed of one movement” from the “point of view of another” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p. 31).

With a central premise of in-betweenness, artographical concepts serve as a means for understanding the liminality of becoming-teacher from an alternate perspective, in particular, living-inquiry. Because I am interested in the fluid, ambiguous and evolving nature of becoming, what Cook-Sather (2001) refers to as re-renderings of self, and artographically, Irwin (2004) describes as re-imagining, I do not apply the slashes to artography, which denotes the embodiment of distinct identities of artist, researcher and teacher. This decision was two-fold, informed by slash narratives and past teaching experiences.

I am reminded of Weinstein’s (2006) discussion of slash narratives as part of the multiliteracies of science education, and by extending this conversation to the convention of using the slash in a/r/tography, I explore artography with and without slashes in different
circumstances. Weinstein (2006) states “slash writers” are “liminal figures” who “renarrate” the
discourses of science fiction television programs against “carefully censored storylines” (pp.
607, 608). The slash is a means to create counter narratives that honour “pleasure, the body and
sensitivity” (Weinstein, 2006, p. 615). The slash is used, in Weinstein’s example of science
fiction, to indicate romantic connections between characters, as in Star Trek’s Kirk/Spock, or
K/S, hence these authors became known as slash writers. In a/r/tography, artists, researchers and
teachers generating expressive interpretations of lived experiences in contrast to known stories
within the field of education may also be deemed a/r/t slash writers, revealing with intimacy
aspects of each identity. Yet the symbolic slash holds a dual meaning in light of renderings of
living-inquiry, continuity, openings, metaphor/metonym, excess and reverberations, all
emotional entry points to in-depth explorations of aesthetic experience. Designating identities of
artist, researcher and teacher can result in a more fixed approach, and access to the very spaces
the slash inherently constructs in the middle of these identities may be obscured.

My troubling of the slash was further necessitated after introducing a/r/tography to pre-
service and in-service teachers as a method of inquiry in summer session photography courses.
A/r/tography was a means for students to engage in reflective practice, to think through
understandings of self as artist, research and teacher, and to explore features of these roles that
might be new or previously not considered part of everyday practice in the classroom. The role
of researcher often proved more difficult for students to express than artist or teacher, despite
broad interpretation of the term researcher and encouragement to recognize aspects of past art
and teaching practice involving research. For some students the researcher identity was
conditional, their first entry into preliminary acts of researching. The role of researcher held an
important distinction that was unlike more readily embraced identities of artist and teacher. This
suggests that specific a/r/t identities do not always resonate for all students in all cases.
Based on written reflections and visual expressions in these courses, it came to my attention that students in beginning and intermediate learning journeys frequently did not feel they had the emotional reference points from which to contemplate the role of researcher, although students did demonstrate more global understandings of self by engaging in a/r/tographic practice and a great deal of enthusiasm to continue their artful inquiries. Although the slash serves as a means of entry to identity, in such cases, it may be more fitting to substitute ‘researcher’ with ‘student’ or other important roles in the professional and private lives of students. In contrast, graduate students and students returning to learning mid-career were most comfortable exploring each identity with reflectivity and aesthetic vigour, and a/r/tography provided an ideal lens through which to articulate cumulative a/r/t understandings and experiences. Experiential dimensions may prove a condition of a/r/tography, in which a/r/t identities require experiences in practical contexts prior to reflective inquiry. For example, learners may need to be able to relate researcher understandings to classroom experiences before the researcher role will fully resonate.

Although slashing roles of artist, researcher and teacher is intended to shift attention to in-betweenness and becoming, if students have only experienced one or two of the three identities, the absence of experiential knowing can result in students projecting into a role in ways that brings the letters ‘a’ ‘r’ ‘t’ to the forefront rather than the spaces created by the slashes. In this way, the slash makes for identity representations rather than collective creations because the slash is symbolically divisive, an ‘either/or.’ The tensions between identities as whole forms, and the slashes that attend to the disruption of unity is central to artographic inquiry, but as Deleuze & Parnet (2002) note, “purely actual objects do not exist,” instead “every actual surrounds itself with a cloud of virtual images” (p. 148). The virtual in this case is the slash, which conceptually intersects with Weinstein’s (2006) suggestion that slash writers explore
issues of science more “at the level of myth … than facts and concepts” (p. 615). By ‘re-rendering’ and ‘re-imagining,’ artography has the potential to ‘renarrate’ cultural myths concerning education that are rooted within the facts and events of lived experiences, potentially revealing research that has yet to be conceived.

By applying artography (without slashes) to the narratives of research partners, I mediated interpretations that took into account ‘relational complexities’ of becoming art teachers without having an a/r/t identity as a prerequisite for inquiry (Latta & Field, 2005). Artography as a variant of the original approach is “experimentation,” a means of “creating new elements and new relations,” which appreciates there are innumerable possibilities for artography still to be considered within arts inquiry (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p. 29; Deleuze, 1995).

Given the situatedness of research partners, focusing on a/r/t identities could potentially shift the discussion away from their subjective experiences of becoming-teacher. Instead of a slash, I adopted a dash in-between the term ‘living-inquiry,’ which I believe is more congruent with the nature of becoming art teachers, making the dash a sign to signify the continual branching out of concepts. A dash applied in this way indicates a pause, a conjunctive space before an explanation of understandings in-between living and the processes of inquiry. To couple living and inquiry with a dash conveys an interlinking of realms and makes a recognizable rhizomatic formation.

It is important to identify both the slash and the dash are among the critical zigzagging lines of articulation and flight in Deleuzian geophilosophy, for if lines are the basis of all things, differing referential line configurations all contribute to drawing attention to levels of complexity within artography. Deleuze uses the dash to signify relationality, an expansion of connections, within the dynamics of becoming, such as becoming-animal and becoming-world, implying for me, as Semetsky (2006) suggests, a condition of “both-and” in the flow of movement (p. 2). The
slashes in a/r/tography suggest a fold, where artists fold into researchers who fold into teachers (Deleuze, 2004). According to Semetsky (2006), when a line folds in, it becomes a spiral, the result of deferment of “conscious decision-making for a moment because the state of mind is as yet pre-reflective” (p. 40). When lines spiral, a “more refined inference” then emerges that reflects new levels of awareness, and as I suggest, greater degrees of emotional and subjective intensity consistent with inquiry into identities of artist, researcher and teacher demonstrated by advanced students in the field of education (Semetsky, 2006, p. 40). A/r/tography, in which slashes indicate spaces between artist, research and teacher identities are always present, may be more suitable for specific and mature inquiry or situations in which other facets of experience are still to be articulated.

Artography (without slashes) and conceptual renderings like living-inquiry (with dashes) may serve to broaden applications in differing levels of education and interdisciplinary learning landscapes. The potential of exploring a host of meaningful roles beyond artist, researcher and teacher within the framework of artography shifts the research conversation toward geophilosophy and the rhizomatic conditions that layer degrees of experience.

I contemplate too how I embody living-inquiry as a researcher and research partner, continually immersed in the act of layering narratives of becoming in research processes and practices with creativity and elasticity to derive a research product in an effort “to liberate thinking … from the sedentary points of view and judgemental positions that function as nodal points” (Gough, 2006b, p. 628). In this way, my arts approach is also nomadic, rendering experiences without a presumption of outcomes, but problematising inquiry while engaging in expressive practices.

Reading the experiences of research partners as aesthetic practices of living-inquiry underscores the messiness and tensions at the core of negotiating shifts between students of art
and becoming art teachers. According to Irwin (2004), living-inquiry is an embodied encounter understood as living in thirdness, a space of convergence that is both between and among art making and making self. Living-inquiry is a rendering of complex phenomena through practices that continually interrogate understandings of creating, searching and learning, in an ever-present convergence and divergence of explorations, perspectives and knowledge, which lead to more questions and deeper reflection. Dimensions of liminality evident in the creative non-fictions of research partners came to the forefront because living-inquiry is concerned with living “a life of awareness, a life that permits openness to the complexity around us, a life that intentionally sets out to perceive things differently” (Irwin, 2004, p. 33). Through living-inquiry, I seek to understand the contextual factors that shaped the practicum experience for research partners in ways which are appropriate and consistent with an aesthetic perspective.

Liminal spaces are thresholds, transitions from one state to another, a space of ambiguity, a rite of passage, in which ‘becoming’ is a cultural shift where understood norms are disrupted, and new cultural understandings and new social realities restructure identity and place (Head, 1992; Cook-Sather, 2006). This concept originated in anthropology nearly a century ago, in ethnographic research about the socio-cultural transitions of tribal societies involving ceremonies, rites and rituals where an individual passed from a fixed point in the preliminal, to the suspended state of liminality, to arrive at a postliminal stage (Carlyle & Woods, 2002; McNamara, Roberts, Basit & Brown, 2002). Lugones (2006) suggests, “spatialities and times of liminality are particular,” and “our journeys to the limen are different, often at odds, often in great tension” (p. 77). McNamara et al. (2002) describe liminality as a “complex process of extended and ambiguous ‘in-betweenness’ that involves play, performance and ordeal,” where pre-service teachers shift between roles of student and teacher in ways that institutionalize students in the organizational structure of university, school and government (pp. 863, 864).
Embedded in the liminal spaces of narratives are elements reflective of teaching culture which shaped and reshaped experiences of research partners. Yet Sumara & Luce-Kapler (1996) suggest characterizing identity formation for pre-service teachers as “something that hangs, suspended, between teaching and non-teaching experiences” reinforces a process of “transposition rather than transformation,” in which case, learning to teach is an experience of “unbecoming” (pp. 67, 81). Despite the debates concerning liminality in teacher education, pre-service teachers experience uniquely dual scenarios during the teacher education program where they must enact the role of teacher without any of the formal authority, support or protection of certified teachers. On the first field visit early in the program, Ruth described in-betweenness as a complex interchange between role identity and age:

I really felt between worlds almost. I wasn’t quite a teacher, so I wasn’t in charge and I certainly wasn’t the student, but at the same time, I was young enough still that a lot of things they are interested in are interesting to me too … It was a very out of body experience because I was so many things at once.

According to Carnes (2004), the “academic world has abandoned liminality,” but I would suggest that liminality is evident in several areas of professional programming where field experience is part of a degree requirement, such as nursing, medicine, social work, law, architecture, engineering and teacher education (p. B7). Teacher education differs from other fields in terms of the compressed nature of field experiences. In this case, the one-year teacher education program, with a total of fifteen weeks for field assignments in which pre-service teachers must demonstrate the required qualifications to teach in a secondary classroom, makes the preparation and performance of teaching a more physically and emotionally intensive experience than programs in which delivery involves professional programs over longer periods of time.
In art education, students are both students and teachers, and artists and art teachers, never only one role but performing multiple roles simultaneously, making teacher education the epitome of a liminal setting, a site of “uncertainty and emotional intensity, by the inversion of status and social hierarchies, and by imaginative expressiveness” (Carnes, 2004, p. B7). I believe the liminality of becoming-teacher, a nomadic, geophilosophical experience of movements between fixed points, was an unexpected shift for research partners, and a tension that remained unresolved throughout the teacher education program.

**Shifting between apprenticeship and inquiry in teacher education**

Teacher education is often portrayed as dichotomous, fixed at points, rather than concerned with the space between, and this geophilosophical tension offers an entry point to interpreting the lived and learning experiences of research partners. With the duality of student-teacher, research partners realized once in the field that in many ways the teaching profession remains embedded in modernist notions, yet in the university classroom, pre-service teachers learn to become teachers from a postmodern perspective. Joram (2007) presents a similar argument, although Joram’s focus is on how students and teachers come into conflict with the expectations of university researchers, and my interest resides in how research partners negotiated liminal space during their processes of becoming in the field.

Mechanisms in the background of becoming-teacher shaped how research partners perceived learning and their stance within teaching culture. I explore shifts in protocols and practices between field experiences in schools and studying about teacher education at university to investigate possibilities that may inform why students perceive these environments as ‘other’ and out of context, rather than as connective, cohesive and part of their continuous movement within their program of study. According to Pinar et al. (2000), teacher education programs
generally blend aspects of four traditions: academic, social efficiency, developmentalist and reconstructionist (p. 755). Although elements of these four traditions are embedded in the narratives of becoming, research partners were critically focused on the tensions between the broadly conceived realms of traditional teacher training as demonstrated in the modernist apprenticeship model, and postmodern teacher education praxis. With artful wandering and wondering, I explore in-between spaces “as an attitude,” to borrow from Foucault (1997), “a mode of relating to reality … a way of thinking and feeling … acting and behaving” within teaching culture (p. 309).

Modernist methods in teacher education are based on what is commonly referred to as the apprenticeship model of teacher training in the field. The apprenticeship model is a competency-based approach in which the pre-service teachers observe sponsors (expert teachers willing to provide hands-on training in a classroom), model sponsor’s actions, conform to sponsor expectations and under their tutelage, progressively master practice. The field experience is also overseen by a representative of the institution, a faculty advisor (FA), who is assigned as a liaison between the university and the school. The FA performs site visits to the classroom to observe the student-teacher, consulting with both the student and sponsor about concerns that emerge in the student-teacher’s practice. The student-teacher, sponsor teacher and faculty advisor are expected to form a triad relationship in efforts to support the student and bridge the gap between university and field experiences. Both the sponsor teacher and faculty advisor complete progress reports. In this case, research partners spoke little of their relationships with faculty advisors. Their perceptions of becoming-teacher were primarily shaped through relationships with sponsor teachers.

The structure of the field experience positions teacher training as a vocation (Pinar et al., 2000). As Ruth described, “I know that theory doesn’t help after a certain period. You have to
practice using it.” With a technical orientation, key apprenticeship skills for pre-service teachers include control in a classroom, authority over students, teaching subjects according to the governing body and economic use of classroom resources. For Ann, this method of delivery was “very sequential”:

I also struggled in dealing with the sponsor teacher always being there, sticking out like a sore thumb, constantly jumping into situations and taking over as she pleased. It was hard trying to satisfy her standards. There was a need for space and distance from the sponsor teacher that I was unable to maintain under the circumstances.

Within this hierarchical structure of power and authority, pre-service teachers are taught about teaching “by being positioned as a pupil,” a role in which they learn what skills, actions and behaviours are required to be a proficient, effective teacher (McNamara et al., 2002, p. 871). Failure to conform to this model can have a significant impact on the pre-service teacher’s experience and future opportunities. Sponsor teachers have authority over all aspects of student-teacher practice, and along with the assigned faculty advisor, act as gatekeepers to the profession, allowing or denying access based on ongoing monitoring of the pre-service teacher’s decisions, lessons and classroom management skills for the duration of the practicum. Regardless of student success in the university classroom, the sponsor teacher and faculty advisor ultimately determine a student’s entry into the profession.

The apprenticeship model of intensive training emphasizes positivist notions of efficiency and effectiveness in which perceived weaknesses are identified as shortcomings in teaching ability. This has been the historical practice in teacher education. Student-teachers are expected to “do as I do” rather than “do with me” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 23). In this way, the apprenticeship model arguably creates a “culture of sameness” where pre-service teachers are required to conform to the standards and codes of practice already existing in the school environment, and the school environment is defined externally by professional and governmental regulations.
which reinforce the norms of schooling in Canadian society (Phelan et al., 2006, p. 176). Pre-service teachers quickly learn through the apprenticeship model how the profession maintains the status quo. For some students, the practicum is the definitive moment of becoming, as Ruth stated, “because it was such a different way of learning than in the university classroom, we were all learning to be teachers.”

Postmodern notions of teacher education are often defined in an inquiry model, an approach to delivery which emphasizes interdisciplinary perspectives, collaborative approaches to knowledge construction and reflexivity as entry to conceptualising practice as theory. The postmodern paradigm broadens ways of knowing in teacher education through responsiveness to shifting requirements in classrooms and in curriculum that fosters creativity and adopts life-long learning as the basis of becoming-teacher (Freese, 2006; Leggo, 2005). According to Farr Darling (2007), the qualities of “curiosity, humility, initiative and empathy,” should be developed in such learning environments, and as students of teaching, pre-service teachers should be encouraged to explore “open inquiry, responsible deliberation and constructive engagement between colleagues” (p. 9).

A postmodern approach is predicated on dialoguing around lived experiences to inform professional practice and to integrate lived experiences into an evolving pedagogic identity. Ann described postmodern notions of teaching as a way of thinking differently about entrenched roles: “I feel that a teacher is sometimes too strong of a word for how I would like to run the classroom. I would prefer to be more in a coordinator or in a participant-type role.” As a contemporary model of teacher education, becoming-teachers are members of a community of inquiry within their subject-area cohorts, participating in collaborative activities that encourage sharing information and resources, cooperating in knowledge construction, and learning in innovative ways (Farr Darling, 2001). Nathalie extended this understanding to her perception of
self as teacher, “I want to be a teacher who is open, available, involved, a good listener, can
laugh at oneself, who is fun, open to change, someone who can learn from others, who takes
risks, who experiments, explores and evolves.” In communities of inquiry, pre-service teachers
develop multiple dimensions of good teaching practices and communication skills, making their
experience of becoming more “transformational” than “transactional” (Head, 1992, p. 101). In
Nathalie’s prior experience as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, she already
embodied a postmodern teacher identity, engaging with her students in collaboration:

When I was teaching in the classroom and responsible for curriculum and all that
stuff, I didn’t feel that it was my room, even though I often refer to them as my
kids, it was our room. So I come to this program from that perspective.

Farr Darling (2007) describes this as the form and content of a structurally “cohesive program”
where there is a commitment to help “students develop habits of mind, sensitivities and ethical
understandings” conceptually and practically by “building a framework of courses and practica
with three interlocking parts: the foundations core, the curricular core and the professional
experience core” which inform one another while retaining core focuses (p. 13).

The social reconstructivist approach reported by research partners emphasized
democratic decision-making, the development of creative pedagogy and curriculum, and
engagement in social and political issues of equality and social justice. Through the inquiry
approach, research partners raised their awareness of issues ranging from power relations to
technology, while deconstructing and reconstructing discourses and media in terms of
representation. Ann shared an interdisciplinary perspective:

I see the potential of the art classroom in including and educating students in all
areas of life from history to science, architecture, design, human studies, and the
list goes on. I see the art class as a great place for students to find themselves and
their place in this world.
In the university classroom, research partners were encouraged to pursue roles as change agents in schools, to become active participants in their classroom and in their school. Research partners spoke of the desire to be social and political leaders, to promote diversity, inclusion and social responsibility in their learners, and to be actively investigating their own teaching practice as a means to improve and enhance curricular decisions. For example, Nathalie stated, “I think that from what I saw there seemed to be a lack of something in the schools and I would really like to try and fill that void a little bit if I can.”

The university program stressed proactive strategies to enhance the learning experiences of students, to make art education a transformative and interactive forum of critical thinking, instilling in learners the analytic skills to develop alternate perspectives through themes including multiculturalism and social justice, and most importantly, creativity. Much of the day-to-day curriculum embraced diversity, situated knowledges in classrooms and strategies for generating multiple readings of a given topic. By raising awareness that all knowledge is partial and continually shifting, becoming-teachers in the university classroom develop new understandings of historical, social, political, economic and cultural contexts, and with a broad range of knowledge informing teaching, a new appreciation for the complexities of good practices in the field emerges. In this way, becoming-teachers develop the capacity to “view themselves in relation to the world and consider how they might communicate this relationality to their students” (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 765). By adopting an open and flexible learning approach, postmodern teachers can best prepare their students for the future.

Although the institutions of post-secondary teacher education may anticipate in the field students will experience a blended apprenticeship and inquiry approach where “social relationships mediate learning through collaborative meaningful activity,” this is not the case for all students (Rueda & Monzo, 2002, p. 503). For example, Ann articulated the imposition of
modernist notions over her postmodern understandings of self at various points during the teacher education program. She described her sponsor as a “very strict, old school, my way or no way type person,” reflecting in part why Ann felt she had to hide her pregnancy, for “fear of judgment or jeopardizing chances at obtaining a job.” In Ann’s case, the “hierarchy of politics within the school” further reinforced the apprenticeship approach to teacher education in the field.

The postmodern inquiry approach was troubled by research partners in relation to modernist notions, highlighting points of intersection which were problematic and left research partners feeling disoriented, and at times dislocated, particularly when expectations of postmodern perspectives were not fulfilled in the field. The contrast of modern/postmodern teacher education was further reflected in the actions of becoming-teachers during difficult moments in the program when they often turned to the art education cohort as a refuge, a community of inquiry and social network of peer support, a social context not part of modernist, individualistic strategies.

**Interpreting stories of becoming**

With a wealth of research concerning pre-service teachers and practicum experiences available in the field of education, many lenses have already been used to interpret the shift from student to teacher, including studies that employ a range of conceptual and metaphorical descriptors: a rite of passage (Head, 1992) contested space (Larson & Phillips, 2005); translation (Cook-Sather, 2001); loss of vision (Shkedi & Laron, 2004) and more. A significantly fewer number of studies share narratives of struggle, with some notable exceptions (Britzman, 1991; Hermann-Wilmarth, 2005; Phelan et al., 2006; Siebert, Clark, Kilbridge & Peterson, 2006;
Sumsion, 2002). In-depth narratives of pre-service teachers, integrated with arts inquiry and informed by geophilosophy, offers a different perspective to consider becoming-teacher.

My interpretations focus on practicum experiences as critical events that define the liminality of becoming. From an artographic perspective, the dichotomy of field and university experiences suggests becoming-teacher is also an experience of contiguity, a doubling of identity, and a cycle of actively transforming self through educational experiences. The challenge for research partners emerged in shifting within such openings, residing between and performing both roles of postmodern student and modernist teacher-in-training, at times simultaneously, in efforts to fulfill the expectations of practitioners of the university and the field. In this case, parts of narratives involving emotions of fear, anger, disillusion and stress form the excess of becoming, a rupture and perceived loss of self within teaching culture (Tilden, 2004). Research partners frequently employed metaphors to articulate divisiveness between being encouraged to practice critical thinking and collaboration in the university classroom, and then encountering a procedural model in the field. As pre-service teachers, research partners emerged in the liminality, “caught between the demands of the normative (what they believe they ought to be and value) and normalisation (what professional others tell them that they should be and value)” (Phelan et al., 2006, p. 161). The concepts of artography support an interpretive process that interweaves theory and practice to create deeper understandings of “the vitality of living in an in-between space” (Irwin, 2004, p. 33). Through creative non-fiction, I profile understandings and renderings of events and perceptions of becoming-teacher based on the most salient features expressed by each research partner over the course of our year together. Each story is deeply personal, and each partner identified aesthetic qualities in their experiences reflective of differing circumstances, dynamic relationships and developing standpoints. As contemporary feminist Erziehungsromane, these narratives are predicated on aesthetic
movements reflective of Deleuzian concepts, as Cook-Sather (2001) suggests, “a mode of interpretation and engagement that is more fully embodied” (pp. 179, 180).

**Congruency: Ruth’s experience as a grand narrative of becoming**

In terms of geophilosophy, Ruth’s narrative is less concerned with in-between spaces and more focused on nodal points. Rather than movement and lines of flight, Ruth spoke to the achievement of the goal, of reaching the end of her journey successfully. In this way, Ruth’s narrative reflects what Britzman (2007) refers to as “the front door discourses of teacher education” (p. 2). A grand narrative, this story of becoming is shaped by the controls that define teaching in a societal context, confirming understood roles of teachers which conform to the dominant paradigm. As an *Erziehungsroman*, Ruth’s story of becoming is congruent with teaching culture. Her story follows a progressive maturing and successful completion of her studies:

I really do feel like a seed, being opened up and putting roots down and waiting to find the sun, and just grow up. I’m really excited about everything. Everything in my life is teaching, teaching, teaching, but the fear of failing is always there, like when you do something for the first time that other people do professionally.

Ruth held complete faith in the teacher education program, in her sponsor teachers, and in herself to develop mainstream conceptions as a “good teacher”:

I can feel comfortable knowing I will be taught how to deal with everything that comes along, and how to deal with changes. So even if there is something I’m not sure of now, I will know how to do it by the end of this program.

Ruth’s understanding of a good teacher at the outset of the program remained consistent during her practicum experiences and university education. In her narrative of becoming there are the traces of nostalgic stories of teaching that have shaped generations of women entering the profession, such as the “near-archetypal portrayals” of Lucy Maud Montgomery and Laura
Ingalls Wilder (Gates, 1989, p. 167). Like the characters of ‘Anne’ and ‘Laura,’ Ruth comes to teaching with idealistic goals:

I will help students come down the same path that I did, in whatever way they are going. I’ll have a lot of to offer them, a lot of energy to impart to them, to give them the reins and say, ‘Let’s go, let’s just have fun!’

As a teacher of art I hope to inspire creativity and a love of learning during my lessons. I will encourage student participation as much as possible and set reachable objectives that hopefully will be interesting to my students. I feel very passionate about what I teach.

The novels of Montgomery and Wilder are reflective of the modernist teaching paradigm, and characterize teaching as a rite of passage (Gates, 1989), a sentiment also evident in Ruth’s perception of teaching as a noble profession:

I’ve always seen teaching as a category that takes a long time to obtain. The ‘teacher’ was a huge heading and the teachers who do teach, they are so noble, they do such great things and they inspire kids, they encourage kids, they are monuments in kids lives really.

Ruth too is close in age to her students (Gates, 1989). In the course of teacher training, she worried about her ability to establish authority because of her age:

I’m quite young still, so that is one concern of mine about teaching high school. I don’t want to fit in too well with the high school kids. I will be teaching kids that are only five years younger … How am I going to be able to keep the peace, have the classroom management and just be able to teach them what they need to know about art, and why art is relevant these days?

Ruth drew on her lived experiences and memories of good teachers from her youth to conceptualise what kind of teacher she would like to be, and these understandings, according Shkedi & Laron (2004) will likely continue to shape her perception of art teachers:

I thought back to my high school years and the way my teachers taught me, and do I want to be that kind of teacher? What would I want to change? … I might teach things differently than how I was taught in school. It isn’t about the process necessarily. It can be about context and personal issues, and it can be anything you want it to be. I want to further that goal. I want be able to make art about
anything that the students want to do. I want to help them get where they want to
go because whatever they have in their mind to do is art to them.

Entry to an apprenticeship model presented Ruth with a familiar structure: “I’m
experiencing it from a low-end up, so I’m in an awkward position where I have to learn just like
in any job.” She did not report prolonged periods of uncertainty, instead Ruth described her field
experiences with enthusiasm, “I would have to argue that my practicum was probably one of the
best experiences I’ve had. I had a fantastic time.” Her success in the field was bolstered by
positive interactions between Ruth, her sponsor teacher, faculty advisor and the school
environment, helping her develop an increasing sense of responsibility over the course of the
practicum and in so doing, helping to define Ruth’s becoming-teacher identity (McNamara et al.,
2002). Although Ruth notes her experience involved cooperation and collaboration with sponsor
teachers, it is also evident her experience was contingent on her willingness to conform to the
expectations inherent in an apprenticeship model:

I had great sponsor teachers, a wonderful, helpful faculty advisor and great kids,
not to mention a supportive husband, family and God! Of course, I tried very
hard to make this atmosphere work as well. I tried to be as flexible as possible. I
asked opinions and advice of my teachers rather than going on my own opinions,
and part of my final evaluation took this into account. I participated a great deal
in the life of the school, in clubs, attending meetings and more. I got along well
with the school staff and I thoroughly enjoyed the kids and my classes.

The continuity of her memories of schooling, university and then entry into the teaching
profession reinforced her views of teaching and did not result in reports of self-doubt. This self-
assurance sustained Ruth and contributed to her success in developing a strong presence in her
classroom. At no time did she challenge the advice of sponsors, nor did she have any misgivings
about their decision-making. In her relationships with sponsors, their authority was upheld in
Ruth’s willingness to modify and adopt their ways of being as teachers, including how to
perform the role of teacher through specific management strategies:
One of my sponsor teachers said, ‘Even if you don’t feel confident, you need to give off the impression of being so, because the kids pick up on it and don’t behave.’ Boy is that true! The next lesson I was much stricter, and ended up having a wonderful discussion with my kids about colours and emotions.

Sponsor teachers reciprocated Ruth’s compliance to their authority, in turn providing her the needed support to facilitate mastery of her teaching practice:

My practicum was a very caring experience. My sponsor teachers were there to help me and encouragement was given far more often than criticism, and we were often in collaboration. I wasn’t kept sitting on a problem.

For Ruth, the practicum was a sacred space, signifying her initiation into the profession, in part, subsuming her identity with that of sponsor teachers and by extension, teaching culture. She entered field experiences with acceptance of the protocols of the apprenticeship model as the requirement of successful progression:

I often stayed until six o’clock like some of the teachers at the school. I didn’t really want to stay late all the time, but I felt I had to. My teacher helps with a number of clubs, but I’ve never been big on dancing, so staying for the salsa club, I’m doing it because she does it. I didn’t want to make any tensions or any uncomfortableness at the school.

She strove to align herself within teaching culture by manifesting the attributes considered hallmarks of good teaching in an apprenticeship model. For example, she made efforts to replicate the teaching style of her sponsor:

I want to be in the back of that classroom to document everything that happens and every single thing the teacher does, I want to model them action for action, word for word.

In time, Ruth came to emphasize the importance of pragmatic practices in the classroom, especially management techniques, lesson planning, organization and assessment of students:

With my faculty advisor, we often talk about classroom management, since that is one area I’m having trouble with. In one class, I barely had control of the students the whole time, but it was a GREAT learning experience for me. It gave
me the opportunity to talk over classroom management with all three of my
sponsor teachers, and think about it myself. The next lesson I implemented their
suggestions and the results were amazing. It felt good to be in control, not like a
dictator, but authoritatively, and have the students listen when I talked, and vice
versa. The tone and the atmosphere of the class changed for the better.

Her sense of etiquette and propriety, and her conscious separation of the public and private
realms further facilitated her successful progression:

When I’m in a public role I always try to watch what I say, I try to be very PC,
which is hard. I’m nervous to put out my opinions because I’m a harmonious
person so when I’m in public, I’m the most people pleasing I possibly can be, and
that really showed during the practicum.

Ruth strove to remain politically neutral during her program, mindful of the public persona
required of teachers. Throughout the year she cultivated and projected herself as positive, and
most importantly, in agreement with her authority figures. She readily moulded herself to fit the
teaching environment, both in the field and in the university classroom:

I’m a real people pleaser so I don’t want to ruffle any feathers. I don’t like to give
my own opinions a lot of the time, especially that differ from somebody else’s. I
usually change my opinions, and say, ‘Well that makes sense too, maybe I’m
wrong.’

Cavanagh (2005) observes that teaching culture continues to be influenced by idealized
images that emerged in the postwar era of heterosexual and married women teachers. Ruth
cultivated her image as a married woman, and for the most part, Ruth’s public and private realms
were reconciled in ways that supported her choice of profession, although she did trouble the
extension of teaching into the domestic sphere (Grumet, 1988):

It is hard to make sure that I’m the wife and have all the qualities, how do I say
this, the ten most important things that a wife and husband need. I always want to
make sure that I’m loving him, taking care of him and he would do the same with
me. I’m very preoccupied because I’m a new wife too. I want to make sure I’m
doing things for us, and making time for each other. I really feel it is important
because I’m busy and he’s busy. During my two-week practicum it was really
difficult.
Ruth’s private beliefs as a practicing Christian also intersected with the practicum experience. Symbolic love for students reflected both her religious beliefs and more traditional teaching values of maternal love by a teacher for students:

As a spiritual person I want to imitate Christ in my life and the way I’m living my life, so I want my spirit to embody Jesus, which means I’m humble, very humble, very wanting to learn along with students, being a learner with them. The biggest thing I want is to love the kids. I want to make sure that I’m someone they feel comfortable with.

Her beliefs were a source of strength during the most challenging moments of the practicum, emerging in constructive ways in her classroom practice, further contributing to identity construction as a teacher:

I also had an experience that fortified the idea that I can just be who I am as a teacher. I saw some students in the library doing a project on war and peace, and one student was drawing a picture of an apple and a sword, and I saw the apple and I thought, oh, I wonder if that’s what I think it is, and I went and asked her … She said, ‘I was thinking about the original sin and how that’s the idea of war and peace.’ For me, to hear that from a student, because she obviously holds the same beliefs as I do, that really encouraged me that kids will, what’s the word, they will allow themselves to express that in art … I would really encourage that if students want to try. It was really cool for me.

In this context, I believe the structure of organized religion contributed to Ruth’s willingness to integrate understandings of self within an institutional doctrine of teaching that requires acceptance of authority within a hierarchical model.

Over the course of our year together, much of Ruth’s story was steeped in metaphors and her enduring image of a bridge represented becoming-teacher. Read artographically, or in terms of Deleuze’s becoming-teacher, Ruth positions herself at either point of the bridge, but rarely in-between, for within the middle space Ruth feels discomfort. She does not feel safe. In this way, Ruth reveals through metaphor, modernist notions of teaching that continue to prevail in an apprenticeship model:
As a teacher, I am building my own bridge of student and personal success. Every student cannot be reached, but it is my responsibility as a teacher to try. My experiences on practicum have already started this bridge. I am often frightened by bridges, and this one I am about to build is no different. I believe though that I will build self-confidence with each experience.

Her references to artographic excess, moments of tension, uncertainty or even negative emotions were, in my reading, seldom spontaneous or specific, but carefully measured responses that were safely within the parameters of behaviours and actions acceptable under an apprenticeship model of becoming a teacher:

There are a lot of words I would like to use, such as frustrated, stressful, but I figured in the spirit of being positive, there was just so much happening and it was just such a whirlwind, it is hard to explain it all. There were moments when really inspiring things happened, and moments of real encouragement, there were moments of tension, and fear.

The most candid expression of becoming-teacher emerged during a key symbolic event that reaffirmed her progressive movement to becoming a teacher: The creation of her teacher wardrobe. As an assignment in her university classroom, Ruth felt licensed within the realm of teaching culture to change her appearance. She embraced an opportunity to visually and physically express her new look, revealing her willingness to modify behaviour and language in accordance with expectations explicitly and implicitly made under the guise of the profession (McNamara et al., 2002). Ruth did not report questioning the wider messages of conformity that the activity encouraged:

In our cohort, we are practicing dressing as an artist or art teacher at the moment, and it is amazing how some people look so much like art teachers. Totally teacherish! I just love it. What should I wear? What’s artsy? What does an art teacher look like? … I’m really concerned about how to dress. You are an art teacher but an art teacher dresses differently than a regular teacher … I’ve got to look young and fun, but I have to look professional, and there’s a difference between old professional and stylish young professional. This is as important as lesson plans.
In contrast, she expressed views about art that reverberated with her disposition for the apprenticeship model:

I discovered even further that I hate conceptual art. It is so academic and it is so exclusive. No one can understand it. I really don’t like it. And if I wanted to make an art piece during one of my courses, it had to be conceptual, and that was a second frustration for me. I can’t make art and I’m in the art program! Conceptual ideas do not come easily to me. I like a painting because it looks nice! When I think about art, my motto should come from that movie, *You’ve Got Mail*. It has to start by being personal. I make art for myself but if I want to make it for a viewer or an audience, I will make it for a viewer or an audience. It also creates a conflict for me because it’s one thing to teach identity and whatever you like in high school but how does that prepare students for university art? I find that really frustrating.

At the end of the program, Ruth’s becoming was already defined as a more static form of being, with the realization that she possessed the qualities required in teaching, resulting in a *Erziehungsroman* that reflects a more classical ending with maturation of the main character on completion of the journey and story:

I feel as though I have grown significantly in this moment of being student, versus now being teacher. It is a very new feeling. This reminds me of my friend who has been a teacher for about five years now. I have talked to her and it was so funny, she said, ‘Doesn’t it feel great when you know you’re supposed to be a teacher? It’s exactly where you want to be and everyday is a great day.’ I mean, obviously there are mistakes, but you learn, but it’s exactly where you’re supposed to be. It is just fantastic!

Although postmodernism rejects grand narratives, grand narratives of teaching continue to dictate understandings of the profession in the field, and in this way, Ruth was more concerned with being a teacher than becoming-teacher. Elements of grand narratives correspond with modernist notions in art training and teacher training inherent in the apprenticeship model. Ruth’s preference for modernist perspectives was affirmed at the end of her program when she stated, “If I were to do a Master’s, I would do it in art evaluation.” Current art education programs do not have specializations in evaluation, such program orientations are reminiscent of
past modernist, skill-based training in art. Yet in so many ways, Ruth represents the quintessential pre-service teacher, well on her way to becoming a “good teacher,” with the traits desired in school environments. She is agreeable, willing, accommodating, and as Ruth says, eager to “retain everything I can,” with little attention during the teacher education program to power discourses that shape teaching and professional identity. The disposition expressed in her narrative is a form of storying that continues to propagate dominant myths in teaching culture.

**Borderlands: Ann’s experience as an in-between narrative of becoming**

Ann’s experience of becoming-teacher, in a Deleuzian context of geophilosophy, is concerned with nomadic in-betweenness. In continual movement, with lines of flight in every direction, Ann rhizomatically negotiated borderlands within teaching culture, in the university classroom, in the field, outside of teaching culture, across cultures and through differing social contexts.

Ann’s story reflects a number of complex issues involving post-colonialism, cross-cultural research and the potentially problematic space of collaborating as research partners (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). Even though we developed a strong rapport, ongoing consultation and shared decision-making, I continually questioned if my positionality as an arts researcher limited my ability to render and interpret Ann’s narrative. Given I am a cultural outsider, I deliberate on whether I can address the complexities of Ann’s experience without overlooking or overemphasizing aspects that shift her story in particular directions. Perhaps an interpretation of Ann’s narrative serves as an entry point to a much larger discussion extending beyond the parameters of this research concerning decolonization in the academy (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). At the same time, it is important to recognize Ann’s narrative contributes to the emerging
cultural archive of a generation of First Nations learners who are remapping the educational landscape.

In my interpretation, her story is neither a grand nor counter narrative, but a third space, a borderland, where the in-betweenness of becoming a teacher is rendered with a political worldview reflective of First Nations’ self-determination:

When I thought about getting into the teaching program, one of my main reasons was that the only First Nations people employed in the education system were always in counselling or First Nations studies, never in an administrative position, and that bothered me. I thought, you know, we can do more than that and we are needed in more places than that. We need First Nations people teaching history because history is not told properly and we need them to teach everything else, so that we can prove that we can do it, and to influence First Nations students who want to do those things. We can teach things in different ways that make things connect. It’s one of my main goals. I want to try and inspire people to expand their horizons.

Her story of becoming is also a story of geography, of spatiality, as Deleuze suggests, demarked by her movements through multiple landscapes that define her borderlands as urban-rural, home-work-school, and self-community. In becoming-teacher, Ann crossed over and through these landscapes, positioning herself not at the points of physical destinations, but in the middle, metaphorically, and literally, for she frequently travelled thousands of kilometres during the year to connect with her places of home, returning when required to the educational institution.

Ann’s experience of becoming-teacher may be characterized as a transitory passage that demonstrated the “assurance of self-location” (Rogoff, 2000, p. 77):

My life contrasted greatly from many of the students’ lives as well as the sponsor teachers’ lives. My life has many complexities and difficulties that many of the students and teachers could never really understand. This made it hard at times for the students and teachers to understand me and for me to accept their lives and attitudes without being judgmental.
As a contemporary *Erziehungsroman*, Ann’s cycle of physical movement served as emotional interruptions in the process of becoming, providing a space to reconsider, reaffirm and reassert her position in relation to teaching culture both in the university classroom and in the field:

I just find it amazing how people’s mindsets here are so different from mine. Sometimes there’s no way, even when I’ve tried in several different ways to explain things, for them to get it. In my courses, I see how people are marking my stuff, or not marking it, and they don’t really understand what I’m saying. It’s kind of difficult dealing with that sort of situation.

Residing in the borderlands, where “the border is also a site of erasures,” brought forward a series of intercultural tensions (Rogoff, 2000, p. 118). Ann often deliberated on her understandings as a woman who is First Nations and of European ancestry, sharing vignettes of her lived experiences from childhood and adolescence. Ann recounted ways of being that were at times at odds with her understandings as a member of the Lheidli T’enneh band:

I grew up in an all white family; my sisters and I are the only Natives or persons of non-European decent. We didn’t know any of our Native half, only the French-Italian half, and they are all really high academics and we always felt like they looked at us differently, with lower expectations. My mom’s half, the Native half, all grew up in really small communities and most of them got into the drugs and alcohol and just can’t seem to come out of it. So I’m actually kind of grateful that I wasn’t in contact with them all the time. I have a feeling it would’ve been a bad influence. But also now, I’m starting to feel my place in the world more. There was a moment when I realized I’m different and that’s why the family treated me so, and once I realized how different I was, it made me really insecure for a long time. So I just try to stick to myself and try to do my best to prove everyone wrong about what they thought about me, and little things that happened which probably had nothing to do with the fact that I am Native.

In this way, Ann’s narrative is living-inquiry, a story of métissage, where she sought to create new “cross-cultural relationships” and locations (Karafilis, 1998, p. 64). By situating the self in similarity and difference (Irwin, 2004), Ann creates spaces of métissage in the course of her teacher education program by negotiating conflicting value systems and by reformulating “different relationships amongst people and ideas” in ways that were meaningful to her (Irwin,
An artographic lens reveals Ann’s narrative reverberates in the collective and historical memory of First Nations peoples, where relational understandings influence her experience of becoming-teacher:

When I went on my practicum, I took a weekend to get back to my roots, to unwind. I found myself in a place I visited often in the past. It brought me back to a very calm place, into a spiritual dialogue with the world and myself. The environment spoke to me, not so much spoke, but showed me what I had been missing. The season was late autumn, calm, still, crisp and fresh. My body needed to remember and feel that space so it could find its way back. I often know in my mind and body that I needed to be there. So now, it remembers. I go there daily, hourly even, because I have to.

Her initial impression of the university classroom as a postmodern teaching environment was hopeful for change and renewal of past teaching practices:

I thought I was going to have to jump through the hoops here. I thought I’d have to conform to the traditional teaching methods, but those are sort of starting to go out the window. I was hoping to get rid of them in my own fashion, as I teach. I thought I would have to just get through this school and pretend to do what they want me to do, and then I do my own thing, but it seems it is starting in the right direction. The constructivist methods of teaching are totally in line with what I am thinking. I thought I was going to have to hide that part of me, so it’s great.

Ann’s interest in establishing herself as a social and political leader within schools was strengthened during specific “classes on multiculturalism or antiracism, or gender roles and stuff like that really [which] sparked my thinking,” but cross-cultural differences emerged in both the university classroom and in the field which presented significant challenges. Rogoff (2000) refers to this as “unbelonging,” which begins with “critical refusal” of cultural influences while “working within those parameters … and examining their constitutive components” (p. 5). Of the university classroom, Ann stated, “I sometimes try to keep my distance from the other students so they don’t influence my decisions and assignments too much or so that they don’t take too much of mine.” In the field, Ann reported a growing disjuncture, which began with a field visit to a regional high school:
We had another field visit, and at that school, everybody, the teachers, the principal, the students, they were all in black, gray or white. I just felt like I was going to a residential school or something. I don’t think it’s a very good example of what we’ll experience as teachers … I felt there weren’t very many minorities, there weren’t that many lower-class people in either school on our field visits … I’ve been thinking, maybe I should actually write them a letter and say that next year, I’d suggest a presentation by members from three different schools. What about the troubled students, what do they have to say?

This suggests moments in becoming-teacher held deeply embedded protocols and practices unseen within the organizational structure of the university, but which Ann experienced as traces of historical traditions reminiscent of the culture of modernity that had a lasting impact on First Nations peoples and understandings of institutional learning (Harper, 2004). To draw a parallel with residential schools in the field today indicts educative practices, and suggests a contiguous rupture alongside Ann’s contemporary understandings and expectations.

For Ann, the issue of dress extends to broader post-colonial concerns, making dress a doubling of the political agenda of society within schools, reiterated again after a lecture involving high school students and teachers:

They focused too much on appearance. How is that going to affect our teaching? Is our teaching going to be more effective if we dress properly? Or if we look proper? I don’t think so. You know, they’re saying we should wear business attire. We thought it was very Eurocentric. They were all whites and most of them are all, well I guess, they came from upper-class families.

Ann resisted notions she perceived to be laden with discriminatory values while struggling to negotiate a space within practice for her identity formation:

Can’t you just be yourself? No, they’re looking for drone teachers. I’m in transition I guess. I’m trying to be myself but it’s hard to mix the two. I’m realizing how public we are in a teaching position. I have to go get some new clothes and there’s nothing wrong with that, but I’ll get clothes that I can wear, and that are not promoting a certain kind of person, but clothes that reflect me.
In negotiating borderlands, Maguire (2005) suggests women may “play with their identities,” to “inhabit a hybrid position where they can move between class-cultural contexts,” just as Ann, according to her narrative, utilized dress to discover levels of social judgement (p. 8). Maguire (2005) suggests markers of class are embedded in feeling “other,” reinforced in “not belonging,” and “feelings of subordination” which may provoke anger and frustration, and I would add, responses of withdrawal and silence (p. 9). Ann stated:

As I am part of the lower class, I have totally different views about many things. I notice middle and high class people take their financial stability for granted and they assume that anyone can afford the little things. I find I don’t have the luxury of buying new clothes, wonderful school supplies or going out for lunch, dinners, drinks or other extracurricular experiences. I noticed that in my social issues class everyone seemed to assume that the people in the class were middle class or better, and heterosexual. They often saw people of different races as representatives of that race and they had a hard time commenting on issues of race when that person was present.

In this way, traditional practices reinforce cultural and class issues, and continue to emerge in the university classroom, despite efforts to formulate teacher education with a postmodern perspective. Ann’s moments of disjuncture with teaching culture correlate to Britzman’s description of teacher education as a “conditioned field” (2007, p. 10). For me, absence also is a striking feature in Ann’s story, the absence of awareness of peers, faculty, her faculty advisor and sponsor teacher concerning different ways of being, and the absence for Ann feeling she belonged to teaching culture as a result.

In retrospect, the practicum brought Ann full circle, returning her to the community and to a school she knew intimately in her youth. This created a safe space where she could deliberate on the issues that defined her entry into the teaching profession. The interplay of physical and social geography in Ann’s practicum experience resulted in a series of openings in the construction and reconstruction of becoming-teacher:
Being back there brought back many of the feelings I experienced in that space. It was quite an embodying experience that really shook me actually. I can’t explain exactly how it felt or what it did to me, but it really did affect me. I guess it brought me back to the level of understanding the youth in the class, understanding the things that they value and struggle with in their position, in their personal lives.

Ann’s field experience was not without periods of ambivalence, anxiety, frustration and anger. She commented, “I mostly fear how my sponsor teacher will receive me and my teaching methods and strategies on the long practicum. She is very strict, old school, my way or no way type person.” Similar moments of excess occur in Ann’s narrative when she encounters the structure of the apprenticeship model, for example:

The first day of practicum was overwhelming. This was my experience: As soon as I walked in the door the teachers were like, ‘You are going to be doing this, and this is what you are going to do, to find this you go here and blah, blah, blah, blah.’ In the end I just felt like it all went over my head.

Her discomfort arose partly from assumptions and practices in the field which continue to subjugate First Nations learners (Harper, 2004). According to Harper (2004), developing a teacher identity in the north is difficult because teachers are trained in the south, where the “history of colonialism and neo-colonialism” continues to reinforce values that set educational institutions and practitioners in opposition to aboriginal communities (p. 211). In Ann’s case, she embodies both roles, yet within the parameters of the apprenticeship model, Ann found ways to integrate issues and learning experiences that reflected her personal convictions and postmodern notions of teaching:

On practicum, I tried to be neutral, but I tried to influence things once in a while. I think the practicum is kind of like a long-term interview to find out what kind of person I really am and if I’m the kind of person they really want there. Because if they want people who will do things differently, I can do that, but I didn’t want to do something and then be kicked out of there for it. I have strong beliefs about the world, about a lot of things, and I’m the kind of person who usually gets up and starts saying something, to say what I think. I’ll take whatever consequences
even if I have to lose my job sometimes. I just can’t do it now, it is too important to get through this program and also not to gain too many enemies.

In terms of First Nations’ self-determination, Ann stated, “I also felt quite positive about having a guest speaker and artist come in to diffuse stereotypes with knowledge and lived experiences for the students to learn from.” Her activist stance extended to issues of classism, access to learning experiences and power over students in the classroom. Ann adopted a role of student advocate:

It was really hard in one of the art classes to hear that the students were not going to be able to do a project if they didn’t pay their fee, which was an extra fee the school was not supposed to have, but the teacher decided to put it in place. I was really concerned about it. I mentioned it a few times and I think that really affected the teacher, who decided in the end to drop the fee. Only five of thirty students paid. I said, ‘How are they going to be motivated to do the project if it’s just going to be destroyed in the end and what do you guys do for students who can’t afford to pay this extra fee?’

The tensions of modernist notions in teacher education clearly emerged when Ann became pregnant. Although motherhood and marriage became acceptable for women in teaching in the postwar era, Ann was single, and this deviation from the traditional values of the teacher profession created a rupture for her, and in artographic excess, she shared a most disturbing revelation, Ann felt she had to hide her pregnancy from the gaze of institutional authority:

Later in the practicum, I struggled with morning sickness throughout the day. When I became pregnant, I did not feel comfortable telling my sponsor teacher or the school district for fear of judgment or jeopardizing chances at obtaining a job. It was difficult hiding the fact and dealing with its effects on my teaching. I would have liked to be more honest in order to have their support and understanding along the way. The care in my own classroom, especially from my sponsor teacher, seemed limited and superficial but it did exist.

Even though métissage is “the language of borderlands” that “strategically erase the borders and barriers once sustained between the colonizer and the colonized,” Ann’s experience demonstrates how underlying modernist notions continue to define teaching in the field, and how cultural
norms of white middle class values resonate in her experience becoming-teacher (Irwin, 2004, p. 29; Maguire, 2005). She recognized the potential ostracization from teaching culture for not obeying unwritten rules that define the expected role of young, single women entering the profession. The pressure to conform was further reinforced in Ann’s worry for her economic well-being as a beginning teacher should she be stigmatized within the teaching community. In my interpretation, this is a profound moment, an unveiling of ingrained values and beliefs about women teachers which remain remarkably tied to traditionally conservative, modernist notions. Although Ann needed to conceal this defining moment in her life, she described feeling like a caregiver to those who were her oppressors (Freire, 2000):

My sponsor teacher regularly delved into her private matters, using me as a support system and friend, asking for advice and thoughts about situations I personally did not feel I should venture into. My faculty advisor also had many personal matters and health issues throughout the practicum to which I had to be sensitive to, work around and deal with. I was previously under the impression that our relationships were supposed to be strictly professional but they ended up becoming quite personal and in so doing, it was hard to tell where I might cross lines in our relationships. I felt like I had to be a root of care to the tree of unhappiness that lived in the classroom.

In the course of her field experience, Ann consciously did not internalize the institutional structure, but performed the required tasks to achieve her successful completion, making the practicum experience an inauthentic space on some levels, a space Ann characterized as “hoop jumping.” Head (1992) concurs, in some instances the practicum is regarded by students as “just one more requirement to be met” in teacher education (p. 95). Ann attributes her successful completion to her self-determination and the support of her community:

The practicum was tough, and so it should be, but I had to focus on the fact that it would get easier and there is light at the end of the tunnel. I had many reasons for choosing this path, and to jump off it because it got a little rocky would surely prove to be a mistake. Other things that helped keep me on track were the Grade 8 students’ passion, energy and creativity. I also had my family and friends supporting and encouraging me, but not pressuring me.
Still she questioned if teaching was in her future, “When I’m done, I’m going to take a year. I’m hoping not to get a full-time job now. I would like to be TOC’ing. I want to deinstitutionalize myself!”

Ann’s narrative of becoming reveals how she felt distanced as a First Nations student from the university classroom, and how in the field, practices of teaching culture can colonize students with modernist, and predominately, western values. As Ann states, “there are a lot of inequalities that need to be addressed and rectified in the world, much of it is hidden beneath the surface, in cracks and corners.” For Ann, the teacher education program was an intermediary stage. As a feminist *Erziehungsroman*, her story emerges as a pedagogic device in teacher education, with the flexibility and inclusiveness Karafilis (1998) suggests is “so fitting to narrate the development of ethnic or post-colonial subjectivities – people who are often displaced, occupying a site between cultures and who must strive to find a cultural space in which they can develop” (p. 71). As Ann stated:

I feel, know and internalize the struggle. To undo what has been done, the conditioning of the students, and myself in my K-12 education and in my post secondary and teacher education, and in society as a whole, is going to be the biggest struggle ever. I feel like I work alone, like I am trying to put out a grass fire in the field with the wind working against me in every direction.

In light of her reluctance to perform within a modernist model, Ann emerged as an advocate for change during her practicum, situating herself along the “moving borders” where “shifting identities play a consistently central role” (Rogoff, 2000, p. 99):

I think that my desire to create change and willingness to challenge the system when needed could make or break me throughout my career. I figure I will try to use good judgment as to when and where to exercise my freedom of speech and power, when to push and when to flow. As long as I stay true to what I believe I will be OK with the results of my actions, whatever they may be.
Resistance: Nathalie’s experience as a counter narrative of becoming

Nathalie’s narrative of becoming is a “backdoor” discourse concerning teacher education, a story that challenges the grand narrative, and ultimately, understandings and theories of teaching and learning (Britzman, 2007, p. 2). Counter narratives serve to deconstruct cultural myths about teaching, to question and critically assess authority and privilege, resulting in the presentation of alternate understandings in educational research, as in this case, by questioning notions of good practice and experiential learning (Stanley, 2007). As a contemporary feminist Erziehungsroman, Nathalie’s narrative is the antithesis of a progressive practicum experience, highlighting interruptions and instances of regress. Her narrative documents how she internalised the apprenticeship model of teacher training and the consequences of this process to her understanding of self as teacher. In terms of geophilosophy, Nathalie lingered in the liminality of in-betweenness, with nodal points of modernist and postmodernist models of teacher education, she resided in nomadic spaces. At the same time, she was unable to make rhizomatic links, instead her lines of flight were erratic but disconnected. Becoming-teacher proved problematic, indeed a space of conflicting tensions and divergence Nathalie could not resolve during her field experiences, despite her embodiment of living-inquiry as a practicing contemporary artist striving to make meaning through aesthetic experience as a “life-creating” process (Irwin, 2004, p. 34).

Nathalie grew up within teaching culture. The maternal legacy of teaching across several generations grants Nathalie a viewpoint that is uniquely informed by genealogy, and the collective stories that shaped women’s lives in her immediate family:

I was really reluctant to go towards teaching because everyone in my family is a teacher – grandma, mom, auntie. My grandma was a one-room schoolteacher on the Prairies, teaching Grade 1 to 12. I wasn’t sure about teaching. The weight of the whole commitment scared me. Do I want to sign up for a thirty-year plan? Because that’s what everyone in my family has done.
Nathalie’s familial history of teaching was evident in her evolving professional identity as she invested her energies in individual students and engaged students with empathy and compassion in ways that suggest teaching is a life mission:

I feel such an inner passion or excitement when dealing with students, and I think that will lead to fulfillment as a teacher, and that feeling is the reward, a spiritual reward, from personal engagement on so many levels with different people of different backgrounds and different ages. It’s strange how the school can easily be transferred into the private life, but the private life can’t be so easily transferred into the school life.

Although reluctant to join the profession based on her intimate knowledge of teaching culture, this same knowledge is the basis from which Nathalie judged her experience and developed a more critical perspective on teacher education. Nathalie entered the program with an insider’s knowledge about teaching and the day-to-day activities of a teacher (Reinharz, 1992):

I don’t want to be like the memories I have of the authority figure at the front, that memory put me off teaching for a while. Seeing as I grew up in a house full of teachers, I’m very familiar with the strict, stern voice. My mom totally has a teacher voice and when it comes out, you know you’re in trouble.

The postmodern inquiry model of teacher education was consistent with the expectations, values and interests Nathalie expressed at the outset of her teacher education program. The extension of issues important to her as a contemporary artist, from social, political, cultural and personal concerns, to pedagogic activities, suggested a good fit with the program structure. Belonging to the art cohort provided Nathalie with a sense of community and personal support in which she thrived. She was delighted her program in teacher education involved art making: “We’re training to be art teachers and it’s really great that the professors are emphasizing the fact that we need to be continually working on our art while we are in the program.” Yet initial exposure to the field in day-trips and in guest presentations mapped emerging tensions. For example, the activity of creating a teaching wardrobe was incongruous with the premise of
postmodern notions of identity construction in light of critical theory. Contradictions like this created a paradox in learning for Nathalie:

Recently we had been talking about wardrobe and presenting the teacher image as a cohort. There were a couple of exercises where we had to come to school dressed like an art teacher and then had pictures taken of us. I wanted to make a paper doll, just give myself some different options for costume and see two-dimensionally what is really going on with that kind of peer pressure as the teacher to fit in. It was just bizarre … It seemed a lot about income and displaying your income through your dress and that is how you are going to get respect, and I thought that doesn’t make any sense.

Modernist notions of conservative dress and concealment of the body reinforced Nathalie’s understanding of how she was allowed to present herself as a teacher:

Obviously you can’t show midriff at all and you can’t show chest, even a bare arm is kind of bad. No jewellery, no hair accessories, unless you are very modest, like a black elastic or white elastic for your hair, or something that blends in and no nail polish and stuff. It’s very laid out as to what is acceptable.

Such protocols are reminiscent of the “spinster-like demeanour” and denial of the sexual body that defined women teachers in the past (Cavanagh, 2005, p. 248). The dress code continues to reflect modernist values of women teachers as “prim and proper … very well dressed and covered up … to be clean of person,” suggesting that moral conduct came under close examination in Nathalie’s experience by members of the university, fellow students and then in the field (Cavanagh, 2005, p. 250). At the risk of becoming a social outcast among peers, Nathalie resisted conventional perspectives of beauty and the “glamour girl” persona, which first began to reshape the image of women teachers in the 1960’s (Cavanagh, 2005, p. 272):

There are things coming up in other classes as well, discussing gender roles, the pressure of being a girl and you have to look put together. Even today in my cohort, one of the girls said to me, ‘Is that your natural hair color?’ And I said, ‘Yeah.’ She said, ‘It’s beautiful but you never style your hair, you should really try.’ I come from a place where my mum doesn’t do anything with her looks. She doesn’t do up her hair, she’s very natural, she doesn’t wear makeup, and I only have brothers, so how am I supposed to learn how to style my hair?
Nathalie reported feeling an increasing pressure within teacher education to conform:

I overheard this girl in one of my classes talking about how she wants to be the ‘cool teacher’ and I thought ‘oh.’ She just kept going on about this pressure to be the cool teacher. I don’t know. I don’t really care if they think I’m cool. At the same time, I guess I do have some pressure.

In time she did integrate aspects of teaching culture she initially resisted in an attempt to assimilate and develop a sense of belonging:

The short practicum was really about my transformation from a student in so many ways. My wardrobe became a teacher wardrobe, even now in my private time, I have different clothing. The private me versus my other identity as a teacher. I don’t feel as comfortable. I feel a lot more formal. I feel like people view me differently. I looked at it as a role model, how when I’m in a classroom, I must be very aware of the eyes on me, and how I am in private, with friends, I’m really conscious of that appearance and I have to be a good role model.

During the first months of the program, Nathalie noted inconsistencies between theory and practice, particularly in regard to the social construction of gender identity and the role of women in education:

My gender is a major issue for me during this process, being very aware of being female and I don’t know if that is something I’m always kind of dealing with or because all of the teachers in my family are women. I’m aware of the percentage of women in the program versus men. Yet it seemed to me, the qualities I have, sensitivity, things like this, aren’t being valued. It seemed like the program is very male oriented yet almost all of the members, the majority are female and so I didn’t really understand that kind of weird dynamic, if it was problematic or not and if I was resisting or not. I’m not sure. I try to bring out masculine qualities in myself. I don’t want to seem weak or girly … This is a problematic contradiction, one that I haven’t sorted out yet.

Her progress was interrupted and in some instances set back once she entered the field. In an artographic context, Nathalie’s relational understandings and expectations contributed to her growing isolation on practicum. In the absence of cultural openings, Nathalie’s self-assurance began to weaken, resulting in a growing sense of displacement:
My sponsor teacher was a very negative person, and he kind of mocked me a couple of times, he said, ‘Oh yeah, I can tell you got that sparkle in your eye, still trying to learn their names, still trying to touch their souls,’ or something like that and it was really hurtful.

She described the short practicum as an experience of survival, what Head (1992) characterizes as a “sink or swim situation” (p. 95). As Nathalie stated, “I was so invisible and no one was responsible for me and I had nothing, I had no space to be in.” Her initial placement in the field was unworkable for multiple reasons beyond Nathalie’s control, but she was reluctant to assert herself to make any changes, aware of the potential consequences of being a ‘trouble maker’ within teaching culture:

The university is pulling me out of there because there’s a lot of problems with the placement. I kept saying no, I don’t want to rock the boat, I’m fine, but I did feel pretty alone. It was traumatic and I’ve had three weeks to process it now … This is a learning experience and I’m learning exactly what I do not want to be in the classroom, if I decide to follow this through.

Even though her progress under the inquiry model was satisfactory, the long practicum was an arduous process: “It was the hardest thing I ever had to do emotionally and mentally. I struggled throughout the entire thing. Almost everyday I wanted to quit. I didn’t enjoy that part of it.” In the day-to-day activities of the long practicum, Nathalie felt an increasing resistance to the apprenticeship model, and to the tone set by her sponsor teacher. The uncertainty of their relationship was a fundamental problem in Nathalie’s ability to function effectively in the field:

It was a very odd relationship. It moved back and forth between comfort and discomfort. At times I would think, oh maybe it’s okay, she doesn’t mind sharing her classroom with me, and then there would always be an incident that made me realize, or reminded me that I’m in her space. Even though she would say things like, ‘This isn’t my room, this is your room now.’ A student would come up and ask her a question and she would play dumb and say, ‘Oh I’m not your teacher anymore’ knowing I didn’t know the answer. So even when she had an opportunity to help me in those situations, she wouldn’t.
Carlyle & Woods (2002) state, “good teaching requires emotional bonding,” but Nathalie reported she was marginalized from teaching culture through working relationships in the field (p. 148):

I felt that my relationships with my sponsor teacher and faculty advisor were really superficial … The relationship with the sponsor teacher was really destructive. It wasn’t caring and any time there was something positive, it was very odd.

The liminal spaces between inquiry and apprenticeship models resulted in Nathalie’s feelings of prolonged uncertainty. Tensions emerged in terms of Nathalie’s teaching skills, and in terms of her artistic abilities as a result of the sponsor teacher questioning her past training. For Nathalie, this implied her artistic skills were suspect and she may not possess adequate expertise to teach art:

Once she was there looking at the drawings the Grade 8’s completed, and she said, ‘Boy they’re sure shitty.’ I said, ‘Oh you think so, I thought they were all right. The students tried pretty hard.’ ‘Yeah but look how fuzzy the lines are! Why are they so fuzzy? I was really confused by that and then I saw your demo drawing and realized they just copied the way you did it.’ She got meaner. It got to the point where she asked me, ‘Haven’t you ever taken a drawing class?’ That was the tone of the long practicum.

The sponsor teacher’s questioning of training is layered with modernist assumptions that as an art teacher, technical skills are required above all. For Nathalie, this ‘old school’ approach reinforced the apprenticeship model and conflicted with her learning to become a teacher and prior learning as a contemporary artist. Her sponsor teacher became a “locus of repression,” making the field experience a source of ongoing conflict that had a lasting effect on her health and well-being (Karafilis, 1998, p. 74):

I felt really abused … whenever I felt like I had reign over the room, she would remind me that I didn’t and I’d have no confidence again. I had a lot of fear of her. Almost terror. I was terrorized. I really felt like that. I was being pushed in all these directions, all the time … I wouldn’t sleep, I would toss and turn, I would wake up after four hours of sleep, feel nauseous, I couldn’t eat and then I’d
go to work. It was like that for two months. Even now, two months later, I get that nauseous feeling in my stomach when I drive by the bus stop I got off at to go to my practicum school.

In artographic excess, her anxiety revealed how stress compounded to have a decisive impact on Nathalie’s experience of becoming-teacher, elements suggestive of what Phelan et al. (2006) refer to as a form of violence that operates to maintain uniformity within the profession of teaching. The stress of the long practicum overwhelmed all realms of her life and ultimately brought on physical illness. Consistent with findings by Carlyle & Woods (2002), Nathalie reported insomnia, exhaustion, stomach problems, headaches and more:

Every morning I woke up and felt nauseous. I had lots of health issues and went to the doctor often. I probably went to the doctor at least five times and was constantly getting new prescriptions for sleeping pills, for ulcer preventative type medication. I wasn’t eating and I wasn’t sleeping and was constantly going to the bathroom and it was really uncomfortable. But all day I had to pretend like I was fine. It was just awful. I don’t know if that is the stress of the practicum, the stress of that specific situation with the sponsor teacher I had, or if it is just the profession and my personality. I honestly didn’t feel like I had enough stress coping tools within me. Physically and emotionally I was just a mess. Every single day I went home and cried. It was good if I could make it to my door.

Further extending the research of teacher stress by Carlyle & Woods (2002) to Nathalie’s experiences as a pre-service teacher, there are “relational and organizational processes surrounding these emotions” (p. xv). The depth of emotional stress expressed by Nathalie and the degree to which she reported stress experiences indicate becoming-teacher was traumatic, but at the same time, the practicum was a site of resistance (Zembylas, 2003).

Feeling undervalued by her sponsor teacher, Nathalie frequently spoke of the field experience as a space laden with negative emotions (Carlyle & Woods, 2002). As a result of the long practicum Nathalie came to question her value system, understandings of fairness and most significantly, her trust in others. She often spoke of the “contrived collegiality” that left her feeling humiliated (Hargreaves, 1994 in Carlyle & Woods, 2002, p. 5):
It was very theatrical, my sponsor teacher would take off her hat, and no longer be a teacher. It was really bizarre. There would be times where I would be told in a dramatic sense, this is your room, you create your rules, you organize the room how you want, and then a day later, there would be comments about how many pencils were missing, how her supplies were going missing and I needed to track those better and other comments too.

Nathalie’s description harkens back to historical accounts of the apprenticeship model of teacher training in the early twentieth century in which the student-teacher was regarded “at best an irritant and, at worst, a profoundly destabilising presence” (Cunningham & Gardner, 2004, p. 43). Despite challenges to Nathalie’s “emotional security,” she did not compromise her empathy and caring for students (Carlyle & Woods, 2002, p. 59; Nodding, 1991):

I feel like I did a lot of caring, and that my family and friends did a lot of caring for me. I did a lot of work with some of those students. There were a lot of students with poor home lives, behavioural issues, learning disabilities, chronic attendance problems, and they were never dealt with, they had never been addressed. Even if the work was causing me extreme amounts of stress and even if the students made me feel angry, I still cared about them as people. I really felt like I was putting so much energy into caring for these students and then I would go home and totally fall apart.

Under the apprenticeship model, Nathalie’s emerging teaching identity was constructed in relation to the existing school environment (Brown, 2006). Her narrative frequently highlights the dynamics of the power relationship in schools and how, as Foucault (1987) suggests, “games of truth” shaped Nathalie in relation to those who exercised power over her (p. 16). In such games of truth, “an ensemble of rules for the production of the truth” were in play, “legitimizing and normalizing processes over the individual” (Brown, 2006, p. 680; Peters, 2004). The “panopticism” of the practicum experience, the hierarchical gaze from which the sponsor teacher observed Nathalie created in her an increasing consciousness of “constant oversight,” which is integral to the “pedagogic machine” (Foucault, 1997 p. 35; 1984; p. 190). Adopting Foucault’s (1984) discussion to the experiences of pre-service teachers suggests those under surveillance on
The practicum will modify behaviour, making surveillance in the classroom an effective method of ensuring control and compliance, even if surveillance is framed as mentorship. In Nathalie’s narrative, her examination within the teaching profession was based on both the normalization of such “coercion in teaching” and surveillance as discipline, which allowed the sponsor to establish over her “a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them” (Foucault, 1984, pp. 196, 197). Nathalie was both a subject and object of examination in teaching culture, a culture defined by “its rituals, its methods, its characters and their roles, its play of questions and answers, its system of marking and classification” (Foucault, 1984, p. 197). Nathalie felt she was continually under the gaze of her sponsor teacher, and only when she asked to be left alone in the classroom did Nathalie finally formulate an expression of resistance to authority:

That day was amazing compared to the rest of the time. Because if I made a mistake, she couldn’t see it. Thank goodness for that! It was between me and the students, and so at the end of the day, she came back to see how I did, or sometimes, she came back when I was out of the room … You have this role of authority, it is slightly given to you and then it is taken away. I didn’t realize to what extent we were so vulnerable.

Such resistance, Foucault (1997) states, “relies upon the situation against which it struggles” and “remains superior to the forces of the process; power relations are obliged to change with the resistance” (p. 167). In all power relations, there must be “a certain degree of freedom on both sides,” and Nathalie was able to invoke her freedom despite the overwhelming sense of oppression she felt during the course of the practicum (Foucault, 1997, p. 292). Nathalie explicitly expressed how the power relations evident in teacher training were defined in terms of teaching “capacities,” and as Kelly suggests, this creates “a metonymic link between notions of difference and being unprofessional” (Kelly, 2003 in Brown, 2006, p. 680):

Because of the nature of being a student-teacher, you are guided to believe you hold a certain amount of authority, that you have a certain amount of
responsibility and that this is your classroom when you go onto your long practicum. For everyone it is really different, depending on what your sponsor teacher is like. Some people really facilitate that role and other people make it a goal to deter that from happening. They will publicly rob you of that in front of students, or in front of other colleagues. In my own experience, small comments, like a student asked a question to the homeroom teacher, and my sponsor teacher said, ‘Go ask your real teacher.’ Okay what does real teacher mean? So the student turned to me to ask something and I don’t know the answer, so then I have to ask the sponsor teacher again. It was very superficial, a game of dramatic hats. It is not real. It doesn’t make sense.

When Nathalie did not readily acquiesce to the sponsor’s expectations, her evolving “professional identity” collided with the “unreality of rehearsal” during the practicum (McNamara et al., 2002, p. 873):

A number of times I likened the entire experience to being on a reality TV show. I had these people who gave me challenges and every week or everyday, I had to be in front of them as judges. I felt like I was constantly being picked apart. I knew that all these people were watching me, and all these expectations are being put on me (that weren’t being modelled).

McNamara et al. (2002) suggest the paradox of pre-service teachers having to “present an image of themselves as already having the appropriate knowledge and skills in order to gain that experience,” places pre-service teachers in-between the real and ideal (p. 874). The contiguous doubling of identity as a student who is also a teacher was especially difficult to negotiate, as Nathalie suggests, because the roles subvert one another, which left Nathalie questioning the ethics of the practicum experience:

When I was in front of those two characters, the sponsor teacher and the faculty advisor, I had to present myself in a strong, confident, ‘I’m in control’ manner. In the end they felt proud of me because I had overcome the challenges that they thought I had, but I really felt that I had overcome different challenges.

From a Deleuzian perspective, there are numerous lines connecting and intersecting Nathalie’s story of becoming. A contemporary film rendering of the teaching profession by Maren Ade (2003), *Der Wald vor lauter Bäumen, (The Forest for the Trees)*, explores the liminal
space between teacher education (postmodern perspectives) and field experiences (modernist practice). Melanie, the main character, enters the teaching profession with idealistic wonder and a belief that the new methods of teaching learned at university will reform the profession. In practice, Melanie discovers she cannot rupture the entrenched structure of schooling, and over the course of her first year of teaching, a schism erupts between her beliefs and reality, resulting in a slow but progressive downward spiral of stress and isolation, until eventually Melanie can no longer cope. She reconciles loss through suicide. Suicide serves as a symbolic representation of how the entrenched traditions of teaching absorb the individual. The film is a visual expression of the complexity of the social culture of teaching, poignantly bringing into question organizational practices, as well as the gaps between university teacher education programs and the reality of classrooms. Like Nathalie’s counter narrative, the film represents a discourse of teaching that is seldom found in the field of education, a taboo story.

Nathalie’s familial history of teaching and her intimate understanding of teaching culture provided a framework beyond the practicum against which to judge her experience, but the cumulative effect of negative emotions in Nathalie’s experience also changed her commitment to teaching:

I think through the whole experience, conversing with my family and hearing their side of it, I needed some validity. I needed someone to say, ‘You know what, you’re a tough cookie and you can stick it out, but you don’t need to. This isn’t what you signed up for, this isn’t what anyone else is going through’ … I’m still wondering if this is the right job for me. I think I will pursue teaching and if I realize after a year or two years it doesn’t suit me then I can pursue other options, like working in galleries.

Upon completion of the program, Nathalie came to assume responsibility for her own learning, while during the program, as Britzman (2007) suggests, dependency may have contributed to conflict with the institutional delivery of the program. It may be too that through struggle,
greater emotional literacy developed, but perhaps as Letherby (2003) states, “the oppressed see more” (p. 45):

I think I was pretty jaded, or just feeling bitter or something, and in the end I thought, maybe I’m asking too much … I also concluded that maybe it’s not the role of the university, maybe the university does not make you a good teacher, they just give you some development, that they probably hope you are already at a certain point before you come to them. So that was a nice realization because I put less on the university and more on me. I felt a lot more responsible, rather than ‘they didn’t do this, they didn’t do that,’ and I feel I’ve done a lot of that this year. I feel pretty good to take ownership of my experiences.

As a contemporary feminist Erziehungsroman, Nathalie reveals in deeply personal ways how the existing practices of teacher education leave some pre-service teachers vulnerable to exploitation (Phelan et al., 2006). The scope of her emotional experience raises critical concerns about the apprenticeship model, the value of the field experience, and if the existing method of delivery is the most productive means to prepare new teachers for the classroom. Whether situated in the inquiry or apprenticeship model, Nathalie wanted to belong to teaching culture, in effect, to utilize Deleuze’s metaphor, she continually shifted between the points and the middle, seeking relational connections that did not form. She perceived relationships as liminal, as Nathalie described, moving “back and forth between comfort and discomfort.” Her narrative demonstrates that “if teacher education is to matter, we are obligated to create conditions for learning to live in this time that is out of joint, in discontinuous time and the disjuncture of self/other relations” (Britzman, 2007, p. 11).

Nathalie’s deeply personal account of becoming reveals her inner emotional landscape, resulting in a story that is heart-wrenchingly difficult to read. As a counter narrative, she offers a seminal text that draws attention to the impact actions and reactions may have on pre-service teachers in the field, and the potentially lasting and painful scars that reshape identity. In some ways, we are all Nathalie, and we are all responsible as educators for Nathalie’s experience.
Reading her narrative, I wonder, did her sponsor teacher and faculty advisor realize she was struggling? Was this process indicative of how teaching was modelled to them, and so in turn, they then modelled what they knew, further perpetuating and entrenching traditional practices?

**Ruminating on narratives of becoming**

I do not attempt to resolve the complexity of teacher education, nor do I suggest that an arts approach to interpreting teacher education results in final answers (Britzman, 1991; Greene, 1997). Each narrative of becoming-teacher operates as a pedagogic tool, and a source of information from which to theorize and reconceptualise teacher education (Weber, 1993). As an artistic process, lingering in doing arts research with a geophilosophical orientation explores the quality and construction of knowledge where the substance and context of research practices change, creating new lines of flight in a reterritorialization of students of art becoming art teachers.

Rendering narratives as creative non-fiction suggest there are multiple positions and multiple experiences defining becoming-teacher, each offering differing standpoints on teaching, and different experiences of “discomfort” (Pillow, 2003, p. 175). Narratives of becoming characterize the practicum as a space of heightened emotion, a complex blend of positive and negative events, and an array of personal and professional successes and failures. In the continual doubling of experience, pre-service teachers find themselves in-between layer upon layer of binaries rooted in modern and postmodern models of teacher education, and as Edmond (2003) states, “the skill with which student teachers learn to adjust to the prevailing school culture plays a significant part in their success” (p. 116). Ruth represented an idyllic view of teaching, a grand narrative. Ann focused on the construction of identity as a First Nations woman within the teaching profession in a narrative of borderlands. Nathalie subverted
traditional constructs of teaching in a counter narrative that challenges institutional practices which potentially marginalize women becoming-teachers.

Although each research partner may have had a different experience if assigned to another site, it is the magnitude with which each partner responded to the shifting social and cultural environments of becoming-teacher which is significant in this inquiry, granting insights to broader institutional practices that shape teacher education and intensify the experience, resulting in new understandings of teaching culture for a generation of teachers who will reshape the profession. Narratives of becoming-teachers, as Phelan (2007) states, “invite us to explore how teacher education narrates reform and how different narrations frame what can be said and what remains to be said about teacher education” (p. 53).

Practicum experiences are definitive, shaping the kind of teacher a student will become, and often solidifying the kind of teacher they do not want to be (Flores & Day, 2006). These narratives of becoming further discussion of teacher preparation by focusing attention on the shortcomings of the apprenticeship model and the need to revisit the methods of teacher education to meet the needs of both pre-service teachers entering the field of education and the profession. Extending Semetsky’s (2006) thesis to pre-service teacher education, experiences of perceived failure or conflicting situations can also serve as a means to “enrich the system with variations,” and through the “tension” of “seemingly contradictory choices,” a pre-service teacher may find a method of “self-organization by acting from within as the quasi-necessary and immanent condition for growth” (p. 99). As Semetsky (2006) states, “teachers themselves are always already part of the whole of the education system and depend on its vitality for their own survival: as partaking of the rhizome, they will have to de- and reterritorialize” (p. 104). Becoming-teacher involves “new ways of thinking, feeling and perceiving,” and for research
partners, this was a subjective process of relational uncertainty (Semetsky, 2004, p. 321; Deleuze, 2004).

Moving from interpretations of narratives of becoming through geophilosophy and artography, I turn to artful expressions as the next part of the third triptych, and consider becoming-teacher from an alternate perspective to bring greater dimensionality to arts research and in the course of doing, shift this conversation in new directions.
Interpreting Artful Expressions of Becoming
An expansive collection of artful expressions created by research partners brings another dimension to the third panel of this triptych installation, moving the conversation of arts research in new directions by offering a different perspective on the lived and learning experiences of partners (see Appendix 1). Extending Benjamin’s (1999) discussion of architecture, I adopt the conceptual approach of Bildraum to interpret the value, essence and aesthetic aspects of art making during the experience of becoming-teacher. Bildraum literally translated is a picture room, or “image sphere,” a “regime of vision” in which the creator, the maker of art, is at the core, generating insights from lived experiences and creating knowledge through the act of doing (Comay, 1997, p. 340). I invoke this theoretical construct to make sense of artful expressions as a doubling of seeing, where the “difference between tradition and originality” in art emerges, and “aesthetic Bildung” is a location for the materiality of art (Comay, 1997, pp. 356, 360). Applying Bildraum as a pictorial method in a contemporary context is a means to develop the “stream of becoming” within arts inquiry, unfolding Benjamin’s mosaic principle by blending quotations, concepts and intuitive responses with artworks (Comay, 1997, p. 356). The presence of research partners is traced in artful expressions as events in the image sphere, the starting points that illuminate areas of research, in this case, becoming-teacher in art education.

**Bildraum and artful inquiry**

Although visuals and narratives are complementary data sets, visual expressions authenticate becoming-teacher in ways narratives alone cannot by attending to visual content, reflection, translation and interpretation of images in relation to teaching culture. The artful expressions created by research partners constitute a collection, an album of images that are appealing, redemptive, distressing, even suppressive, demonstrating visual expressions operate
as data sources of specific kinds of information. Slattery & Langerock (2002) describe the movement between concepts and artworks as “resemblances” that “define thinking and knowledge” as creative possibilities in artistry and in teaching (p. 354).

In this study, Bildraum is seeing as a system of thought where visual expressions of research partners are understood as representing the materiality of teaching culture, yet as Levin (1997) suggests, “the contextual openness” of such visual representation “cannot ultimately in fact be mastered and controlled” (p. 403). Such artful expressions, in a Deleuzian context, are interpreted as “organic,” and for artful expressions to be in movement and nomadic requires, Olkowski (1997) argues, “superimposing and mixing” perspectives within a “plurality of centres,” which result in assemblages of experience and representation that reveal insights to practice and theory (p. 481). According to Deleuze & Guattari (2005), assemblages, as complexes of curved lines and varied speeds mapped on a horizontal axis of content and expression and a vertical axis of reterritorialization and deterritorialization, create understandings shaped by social formations. The multiplicity of assemblages evident in the imaginative judgements and autobiographical reflections of research partners depict shifts in social, cultural, economic and political understandings (Korsmeyer, 2004). In the case of research partners, territorialization was underway through the learning experiences of becoming-teacher, where artful expressions emerged with the rhythms of day-to-day events.

Even though geophilosophy informs thinking about becoming-teacher, the application of Deleuze & Guattari to all artworks in this collection requires a cautionary note. Despite the contemporary artworld frequently invoking the language of nomadic, rhizomatic, movement, deterritorialization and more, Zepke (2006) argues that Deleuze & Guattari, echoing philosophers like Danto, “categorically reject conceptual art” because such works “dematerialize
sensation by banalising it,” making art into information, a “linguistic act,” rooted in a perspective that “allows anything to be art” (pp. 157, 158). According to Deleuze (1994):

There is no other aesthetic problem than that of the insertion of art into everyday life. The more our daily life appears standardised, stereotyped and subject to an accelerated reproduction of objects of consumption, the more art must be injected into it in order to extract from it that little difference which plays simultaneously between other levels of repetition.

(p. 293)

Zepke (2006) suggests the everydayness of art and the detachment of contemporary expressions demonstrates conceptual art conforms rather than resists “the logic of late capitalism” (p. 161). Similar concerns have been expressed for some time, for example, MacDonald (1998) described the shift of the “post-medium age” to “post-it culture” in art education (p. 227). Deleuze & Guattari (1994) critique contemporary art with a rationale that “art preserves, and it is the only thing in the world that is preserved,” making the “artist’s greatest difficulty” to produce art that “stands up on its own” (pp. 163, 164). Artists are regarded as seers, as becomers, who create works of art with a “vibration” of harmony in colour and style, not opinions or language (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 168). For Deleuze & Guattari (1994), art is aesthetic, not rhetorical, defined by composition, making composition the “sole definition of art,” for “what is not composed is not a work of art” (pp. 191, 194). Deleuze & Guattari (1994) identify abstract art and conceptual art as methods that attempt to bring art and philosophy together, but abstract art only offers a dematerialized sensation of “the concept of sea or concept of tree,” and conceptual art dematerializes art “through generalization” (p. 198). By making compositions neutral, art takes on a “value of sensation reproducible to infinity” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 198). It is unclear if sensation or concept will emerge in contemporary forms of art because “the plan of composition tends to become ‘informative,’ and the sensation depends upon the simple ‘opinion’ of a spectator who determines whether or not to materialize the sensation, that is to say,
decides whether or not it is art” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 198). At the same time, Deleuze & Guattari (1994) state that for art to inform “those of us who are not artists” and “awaken us and teach us to feel,” art must be in relationship with “the No,” in effect, “art needs nonart” to be comprehended, situating contemporary practices as a foil, as nonart, to forms and styles of Art (p. 218).

Deleuze & Guattari’s position is problematic when interpreting artful expressions by Nathalie and in part, Ann, both of whom demonstrate conceptual contemporary art practices in their collections. Working from a position that artful expressions are created with sensations, I return to Genette to develop a methodological approach suitable for all research partners. According to Genette (1997), the aesthetic quality of art is not “always bound up with” the product, but instead involves the act of making, an understanding of art-like involving aesthetic character through which an expression becomes a work of art, a perspective Deleuze and Guattari do not extend to contemporary practice despite their emphasis on ‘and’ and ‘in-between’ (p. 138). Genette (1997) suggests the aesthetic character of contemporary art “consists in the gesture of proposing something to the artworld,” and it is in this way I enter the visual practice of research partners, where artful expressions are gestures of becoming-teacher and teaching culture (p. 143).

By “crisscrossing” many ways of seeing, “questions of centrality and marginality, foreground and background, presence and absence, visibility and invisibility” shape how I understand visual expressions in relation with textual narratives of research partners (Levin, 1997, p. 434). Although visuals were seldom literal translations of narrative passages, the genealogy of visual expression in the collection implies a parallel movement with narratives, what Levin (1997) describes as seeing “into the process of thinking behind the vision” (p. 11). For example, dramatic visual expressions by Nathalie coincided with moments of stress and
trauma in the program according to her narrative. Conversely, Ruth’s pleasing expressions emerged in periods of calm and steadiness, making visuals rhetorical responses to actual experiences. In this way, the construction of visual expressions signal deeply understood experiences that are often invisible without correlating data.

Pluralism in arts inquiry requires the same research be viewed from multiple perspectives in an effort to create a more holistic understanding of lived and learning experiences. I engage in visuals from a perspective of what mattered in the world of research partners, in that time and place, making the collection a purposeful, intentional desire to create knowledge through visual expression, through the nature of seeing and expressing. To proceed into the philosophy of seeing, into the Bildraum, draws attention to what is seen and what is chosen to be seen in everyday life (Benjamin, 1999). As an arts researcher, I seek to question becoming with a lens that has a different refraction of experiences to broaden the scope of interpretation in the products of doing arts research.

**Visual art practice as research methodology**

Sullivan (2006) positions visual artists as “cultural theorists and practitioners,” making studio practice the primary site of inquiry for knowing, where “the artist-theorist” is “the locus for action” (pp. 27, xvii). Recognizing the need for arts researchers to continue to develop theories and models not solely “aligned with formalist aesthetics” or “modernist conceptions of art,” Sullivan (2004) outlines a postmodern methodological framework to “understand how those who make images … and those who interpret images… construct their meanings as they present them in visual form” (p. 809). Sullivan (2005) argues practitioner-researchers are “agents of change” who remake the research task “to reveal how it helps us understand the transformative power of knowledge” (Sullivan, 2004, p. 810). Visual arts practice as a “site for sustained
research” provides a means of making and interpreting art as the basis for constructing theories of artistic knowing where “artwork carries its own status as a form of knowledge” and researching art “communicates new insights” into how art practices can be conceptualized (Sullivan, 2004, p. 803). Sullivan (2005) opens a critical space for art education, contributing to the growing breadth of arts methodologies in which “visual research methods can be grounded within the practices of the studio and that these are robust enough to satisfy rigorous institutional demands” (p. xiii).

Sullivan (2006) defines the visual arts as a series of acts of art practice: theoretical acts of ideas and actions; forming acts derived through art mediums and self-reflection on processes; interpretive acts that open spaces between artists, artworks and viewers; and critical acts that reflect changing “circumstances and contexts” which are both personal and public (p. 32). The acts of art practice involve structure, agency and action in four primary frameworks: visual arts research; visual arts knowing; visual arts practice; and visual arts projects (Sullivan, 2005).

In the application of frameworks, Sullivan makes a distinction between artist-based and artist-centred. For example, researchers are outsiders who engage in research “of visual arts practice as research, not an inquiry in visual arts practice as research” (Sullivan, 2005, p. 131). I disagree with this distinction. In the case of research partners, Ruth, Ann and Nathalie are artist-based and artist-centred, making visual practice an in-between condition, an auto- and biographical telling of becoming from a research perspective. Furthermore, given the structure of the four visual arts models, there is no means to integrate my studio practice and studio experience as it relates to the act of researching artists in the act of researching their art making, a doubling of roles not readily accounted for within the four frameworks.

Although Sullivan (2005) rejects “binary thinking as a conceptual strategy,” and states these frameworks resist any fixed notions, absent from the frameworks is the layering and
fluidity needed to achieve this claim (p. 124). These frameworks are drawn as inverted triangle diagrams reminiscent of more linear approaches to research, and there are no visual features in Sullivan’s diagrams to suggest crossing boundaries. Sullivan (2005) offers an explanation for this discrepancy:

To this end the boxed boundaries shown in the diagrams are presented in the spirit of bridges rather than barriers. Rather than borders and boundaries, the edges in the diagram should be seen to more closely resemble the “folds” of postmodernism … What is difficult to portray is the idea that although conceptual borders help to define areas of interest, they are permeable barriers that allow ideas to flow back and forth … Practitioners move eclectically across boundaries in their intellectual and imaginative quests. (p. 94)

In this statement Sullivan acknowledges the diagrams are visually incongruent with the metaphoric descriptions of bridges, folds, permeable barriers and flows. The frameworks inevitably create a set of visual assumptions about this methodology that cannot be easily resolved through textual explanations. In effect, theory is placed at the centre, emphasizing descriptions about art rather than art making. In reviewing the diagrams, I question if all research partners demonstrate attributes of all frameworks during the course of becoming-teacher, and if so, how frameworks operate as discrete practices. Sullivan provides few case examples to demonstrate the function of frameworks in research scenarios, or how the complex set of alternative strategies Sullivan states are possible with each framework actually take shape. The exclusion of examples is problematic for arts researchers interested in adopting visual arts frameworks as research methodologies, making the frameworks proposed for the visual arts difficult to navigate. Given these challenges, the frameworks may best be viewed as providing foundations upon which to customize approaches concerned with visual arts practice.

Visual art practice is also a broadly based approach that appears to overlap in part with grounded theory, as Sullivan (2005) states, “there is no intention to try and prescribe any theory, model or method,” instead “the quest for theory as it is currently understood in research can
restrict rather than release the potential for carrying out inquiry” (p. 94). Because feminist grounded theory already frames this research, I adopt the essence of Sullivan’s (2005) approach in which art making is “a means of creating and constructing images that forms an evidential base that reveals new knowledge,” and opt to customize Sullivan’s framework of visual arts practice with a feminist perspective in this educational context (p. 180).

Hickman (2007) argues the “arts provide a particular way of knowing” which can be applied in educational research as a vehicle to collect and report data that is complex and multi-layered (p. 314). By situating visual arts expression as epistemologically “valid and valuable,” Hickman (2007) extends Sullivan’s position that studio art practice is a form of research in which art making is communication and “linked to disclosure,” a means to record and interpret events “in a way which exposes a greater number of realities” (pp. 315, 316). Expanding on Hickman’s (2007) example of drawing as a method to facilitate thinking, I suggest all genres of the arts “enhance perception” as demonstrated by research partners, making artful expressions an “exploratory and explanatory tool” (p. 316). This reflects Pink’s (2003) position that “in any project a researcher should attend not only to the internal meanings of an image, but also to how the image was produced and how it is made meaningful by its viewers,” because “visual meaning … will often lie at the intersection of different areas of interpretation, rather than being revealed by just one approach” (pp. 186, 187).

**Anamorphic interpretations and feminist prismatics**

Drawing on Sullivan’s (2005) framework, I embrace reflexive inquiry by research partners and myself as an anamorphic construct in visual art practice, paralleling Gough’s (2003) argument concerning a Renaissance painting, *Jean de Dinteville and Georges de Selve, The Ambassadors*, by Hans Holbein the Younger, in which reality shifts due to the inclusion of an
anamorphic image of a distorted skull. In this painting, a “lateral perspective” becomes a source of critical information emerging from “an element of a picture that when viewed straightforwardly may seem to be meaningless” (p. 36). Gough (2003) argues the painting presents “a very different interpretation of this ‘reality’ from its imagined alternative,” which then invites “a specific intertextual reading of the picture” (p. 38). Atkinson (2002) also invokes Holbein’s painting as a metaphor of inquiry, noting “this idea of lack at the centre of a field of meaning … this apparent void in the midst of recognisable form,” is an example of how “we may gain more insight” by moving towards “a new discursive position” to effect “a realignment of discourse and image” (pp. 121, 124).

Anamorphic perspectives are alternate ways of knowing, the crux of arts research. Building on both Gough’s and Atkinson’s position, I suggest an anamorphic interpretation of visual art practice as research serves to bring forward unconventional understandings of visual data in which differing yet relational positions emerge. An anamorphic perspective informed by feminist aesthetics results in what Goldman (2001) refers to as feminist prisms. Feminist prisms is a methodological construct that when applied to visual arts practice allows artful expressions and the context of making art to be viewed simultaneously through physical depictions, artist reflections, researcher perspectives and broader philosophical and conceptual understandings intersecting in time and place, in this case, within teaching culture. In this way, feminist prisms suggest meaning is derived intertextuality from an image in relation to the meaning of other images in the collection, and in so doing, collectively pushes “towards a de-standardization of method” (Eisner, 2006, p. 16).

Prismatic qualities which shape ‘inter-artistic’ conversations move visual art practice toward feminism, aesthetics and anamorphic interpretations (Goldman, 2001). Goldman’s (2001) examination of the feminist aesthetics of Virginia Woolf may be interpreted as a form of
arts research in which sources of information about everyday events in Woolf’s life are interpreted in relation to her literary works to generate greater understandings of what perspectives informed those works. In this way, Goldman (2001) attends to the “intimate interrelations” of “moments of significance” in an analysis of the “materialist and feminist” qualities of Woolf (p. 1). Invoking Goldman’s feminist aesthetics approach, I consider the artful expressions of research partners to show “both the fluid and the fragmentary nature of experience, in the flow of time and one instant” (p. 3). Prismatics bring a theoretical perspective to visual art practice that facilitates investigating visual expressions and the events between visual expressions. Thinking through art in this way is analogous to Goldman’s (2001) interpretation of Woolf, and brings to the study of artworks a view that art-like practices unfold as “a series of moments and explores the moment itself as a site of many other moments, of intersecting narratives, of physical sensations, of imaginative realizations, individually and collectively experienced” (p. 2). Adopting feminist aesthetics as a methodological framework articulates the emergence of artful expressions as impressionistic and expressionistic, where “multiple threads” of prismatics shape the “web of representational devices” and generate different understandings than the prescribed framework of visual arts practice alone (Sanders-Bustle, 2003, p. 2).

Duran (2003) extends the conversation of feminist aesthetics to analytic aesthetics, in this study articulated by Genette’s framework, highlighting both potential openings and problematic theoretical foundations. Duran (2003) notes that when divergent theories like analytic aesthetics and feminism are brought together, entry points emerge to facilitate an exploration of “nascent theorizing,” for in research there are seldom pure cases, in most situations, cases are mixed (p. 36). Although analytic aesthetics is “strikingly androcentric in structure,” the “feminist emphasis on particularity” is key to opening philosophies of art that tend to universalize experience and
conditions (Duran, 2003, p. 34). For example, analytic aesthetics is concerned with “metaphors of seeing,” which intersects with the feminist gaze, creating a potentially dynamic space of new knowledges. As Duran (2003) suggests, if analytic aesthetics signals a “return to the naturalistic and the contextually bound,” feminist aesthetics “invites us to see things in a different way” (p. 24). Given more information is required to fully articulate such a methodological perspective, Duran (2003) encourages approaching questions of aesthetics with a “feminist spirit” (p. 37). From this standpoint, I build on Sullivan’s visual art practice, informed by Genette, and feminist prismatics defined by Goldman, in an attempt to demonstrate and inform ways of seeing in the Bildraum.

In the “space surrounding the art experience,” I engage in artful expressions and reflections as “an act of negotiation” where understandings are mediated between the imagination, emotions and subjectivities of research partners (Bresler, 2006, p. 52). Artful expressions are manifestations in relation to teaching culture, to the classrooms, students, advisors, supervisors and peers. The spectrum of meanings represented in the Bildraum include implicit and explicit renderings that were “deeply felt,” to playful expressions and even scribbles, which generate “the qualities of the sensation of learning” through the arts (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 7). Similar to Gough’s and Atkinson’s analogy of the anamorphic image in Hogarth’s painting, Ellsworth encourages a standpoint that engages in educational discourses and practices from lateral positions rather than from the centre. A perspective from the margins can unveil innovative and “unprecedented ways” of teaching and learning, and it is with this aesthetic that I engage in the visual expressions of research partners (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 9).
Research partners and curricular experiences

Although the curricular orientation of the art education program defined art making as a site to explore subjectivities of self as artist and teacher, the perspectives of research partners concerning art were also strongly influenced by learning experiences in undergraduate fine art programs focusing on contemporary art and conceptual art practices. Mindful that “art programs reinforce conformity as much as any other curriculum area,” visual expressions were explored to assess how research partners saw the world of becoming-teacher and how they interpret the value of their expressions (Desai & Chalmers, 2007, p. 7).

Richmond (2004b) describes art as “a range of visual, creative, expressive and critical practices involving a variety of media, tools, and skills, resulting in forms, artefacts, arrangements, and installations that can be viewed, interpreted and at times appreciated (valued) aesthetically” (p. 111). Yet when asked to identify their position in the art world, none of the research partners felt they belonged to the Art paradigm despite formal training. In fact, partners seldom demonstrated conventions of Art practice, such as naming works or signing artful expressions they created during the program, which may suggest a level of resistance to the traditional expectations of the Art world. As art teachers, they did not regard their art making as professional, instead such work appeared to operate on a personal level, meant for limited viewing within the post-secondary or high school classroom environments. At the same time, research partners were concerned with making art that was pleasing, suggesting research partners existed in-between artist and teacher identities in ways that often positioned art as secondary in their public identities in teaching culture. In some cases, partners reported “jumping hoops” when making visual expressions to conform to the expectations of faculty and teachers in the field, reminiscent of Richmond’s (1998) discussion of ‘repackaging’ art in many ways for different forms of consumption (p. 11). Richmond (1998) also cites the privileging of theory
over practice in the postmodern era as a “negative influence on student understandings and artistic capability” (p. 12). Absent from the experiences of research partners both in the university classroom and the field was what Richmond (2004b) described as “finding ways to respond to and nurture the student’s particular creative and aesthetic bent,” which frequently left research partners feeling dislocated in their learning experiences (p. 116). Ironically, this process and practice of art making is exactly what pre-service teachers are instructed to provide to their future students.

The curricular design and development of the art teacher education program reflects a postmodernist perspective rooted in the interconnections of art, identity and place. For Ruth, visual expressions were reflective of emotions and subjective experiences in relation to teaching. Ann troubled the borderlands of identity and place in artful expressions by sharing deeply felt private-public tensions. Nathalie articulated her struggle by deconstructing and reconstructing the past as present in her adaptation of found objects. Perceptual diversity is evident in art making by Ruth, Ann and Nathalie, despite sharing common experiences through their cohort membership which socialized them into teaching culture. Though materials and methods of making were shared among all research partners, the viewpoints that emerged during the course of the teacher education program were indeed unique.

**Visuals of becoming**

Visual information in this study was derived from three core sources: visual journals, personal images provided by research partners and a self-directed research project. Visual journals were part of formal classroom assignments assessed by instructors. The self-directed research project for this study also employed journaling, inviting partners to visually and textually express experiences. Both Ann and Ruth incorporated their self-directed, informal
journals into elective courses outside of the cohort, but these journals originated in this study and did not follow the guidelines of formal journals.

Visual journals are ubiquitous in art education programs and form a cornerstone of reflective practice in the field. Predicated on a theoretical perspective invoking Marshall McLuhan, the medium – the visual journal – is the message (K. Grauer, personal communication, September 26, 2007). Grauer described the application of visual journals in art education as a way to move toward pedagogical thoughtfulness, “to honour the artist part of their role,” and to “capture thinking over time” (K. Grauer, personal communication, September 26, 2007). A key pedagogic goal in using visual journals is to encourage pre-service teachers to “find their own voice and image” through “reflections and assignments meant to help them look at their beliefs and knowledge in a variety of forms” (Grauer, 1999, p. 146). In this way, visual journals reveal a “semiotic understanding” of personal and professional development in which pre-service teachers create “personalized systems and codes, evidence of play and scribble, and written reflections” (Grauer, 1999, pp. 149, 150).

Artful expressions in visual journals emerge from “a complex set of social practices” that dictate the status of works of art, and provide context and insight to the “notions and views that accompany them” (Genette, 1997, p. 55). Formal and informal visual journals may be read as curricular statements, reflective of how pre-service teachers were introduced to teaching and thinking about art. This positions visual journals as “pedagogical encounters” in teaching culture that blend aspects of art making, field experiences and new teaching and learning strategies during the teacher education program (Beudert, 2006, p. 73). In the case of research partners, formal visual journals were regularly reviewed by instructors who provided marks and feedback. During the year, research partners reported making art in ways that would satisfy instructor expectations, which suggests some artful expressions were performative (Sheridan, 2002).
perception of research partners that they could not be authentic at all times in their expressions implies formal visual journals can possess a hidden curriculum under specific circumstances. The format of visual journals also reflects artistic and curricular preferences. Because visual journals facilitate two-dimensional artworks, as curricular learning tools, journals are best suited to artists primarily working in this mode of expression. Nathalie described herself as a three-dimensional artist working in mediums such as concrete, which may indicate why the visual journal was a more difficult medium for Nathalie, and in part why she opted not to undertake the self-directed research project. Her deconstruction of a discarded textbook as her formal visual journal may represent an effort to incorporate three-dimensional elements in a two-dimensional format.

The absence of self-portraits in visual journals raises questions concerning perceptions of visibility as women becoming art teachers. With the exception of Ann’s sketch during the self-directed project (see Appendix 1, Plate 123), research partners were not inclusive of self in their art making. It is significant to note that none of the partners explored nudity or sexuality, themes typically expressed in contemporary art programs. This suggests visual journals may have performed an unintentional censorship role by providing a way to monitor visual and textual expressions of pre-service teachers, shifting subjective expression to an objective state in which research partners were aware they were under scrutiny, and “between a gaze of resistance and a gaze of reciprocity there is in a sense an abyss” (Levin, 1997, p. 449). By acknowledging the abyss, visual expressions as research provide a mechanism to trace curricular movements in teacher education, for as Desai & Chalmers (2007) state, “the discipline of art education through the discourse on self-expression and formalist aesthetics is controlled and structured, selected and redistributed, in lesson plans, curricula, art education magazines, and journals, etc.” (p. 6).
Visual expressions represent singular works in this collection. There is no duplication, no drafting or refining evident, although many of the images suggest ideas are in the ébauche, making visual expressions notations of observations or records of emotional moments. Rather than adopting a reductionist approach by breaking down images by component parts, I explore the collection in relation to lived and learning experiences shaped by and within the teacher education program. Individual reflections on artworks serve as member checks and ensure I avoid making the artful expressions of research partners fit into theory, instead, theoretical implications emerge from the artworks of research partners.

The rhetoric of seeing in this collection provokes critical questions of power, marginalization, institutionalization and gender identity. Underlying socio-political dimensions of teaching worlds inhabited by research partners during the course of this study are imprinted in visual journals, making artful expressions “bodily metaphors,” a pedagogic way of coming to know in the everyday material world through the interrelationships of image and conceptual thought (Luft, 1997, p. 179).

**Embeddedness: Ruth’s artful expressions as connectivity in becoming**

An anamorphic perspective of Ruth’s artworks suggest her expressions may be read as scaffolding, a means of visually creating the supports and temporary cultural platform between art student and teacher of art. In this way, Ruth’s position of embeddedness in teaching culture emerged within “dominant educational discourses and practices” (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 5). In her collection, Ruth renders an aesthetically pleasing and non-confrontational worldview that reflects ideals of goodness. Her expressions have much appeal, conveying positive visual messages consistent with Ruth’s enthusiasm for teaching and the degree of identity construction she increasingly came to experience during the program.
To contextualize Ruth’s collection, it is important to ‘unframe’ her past learning experiences in art, as Desai & Chambers (2007) suggest, to assess how such programs “emphasize conformity and obedience” in students (p. 7). Ruth recalled her social positioning in high school as marginalized through the arts:

We were always in the ‘A’ hall which is the art hall. We were always there and that’s not where the cool people hung out. That was just where, well, I was a band student too so I was a ‘bandie,’ and an art student so I was two in one … That was a very excluded place.

In her undergraduate fine arts program, Ruth was required to conform to a specific genre of art making that left her feeling dislocated in the artworld. In her narrative, Ruth describes how a critique of a series of deeply personal paintings affected her artist identity. It is not surprising Ruth did not regard her work as gallery quality or for public viewing when she entered art education. Art education was Ruth’s vehicle to change practices within the arts, as she stated, “I want be able to make art about anything that the students want to do… it doesn’t have to be open to critics, so I think that’s my biggest goal for this year.” She also considered her teacher education program as an opportunity to change how she viewed art making by broadening her definition of art and her use of art mediums.

Although most of Ruth’s works are definitive, Plate 43 differs as she posed the question, “Are you a real teacher yet?” It is also noteworthy that this page is unfinished, in the ébauche.
Plate 43 is a pivotal visual articulation, an example of scaffolding, where her teacher identity was not fully formulated, which may account for why Ruth offered no reflection on this image. For Ruth, moments of uncertainty emerged in the art education classroom as compared to the field: “Maybe I can just use ideas and pictures in the visual journal … but to see other people’s visual journals, they’re also different. I think well, maybe I should try that, maybe I should try, is mine boring?” She expressed concerns about whether the journal would “get more creative” or if it would “peter out in terms of ideas and imagination.” Recalling her undergraduate fine arts experience of sketchbooks, “they put rules on it such as, you have to do two a day, use pencil, draw your room etcetera, but now what I’m doing is so much different so I’m hoping that that will continue.” Ruth’s desire for a different experience in art education is evident, yet her efforts to satisfy the expectations of instructors were met with measured disappointment. She stated, “I had tried really hard, I wrote a lot of stuff, but I tried to make it very colourful and artistic and [the instructor] said you know what, actually it’s all about the writing and the notes that you take.” Her desires to please instructors were consistent with past learning experiences.

When asked to position her collection as a research partner, Ruth did not offer any comments. In my view, her collection functions with a linear movement, where the level of reception of her works created during the program suggests expressions are art-like, with exemplars of artistry emerging during the self-directed project. For example, Plates 47, 61, 64-66 suggest a transformation to more advanced expressions in her practice was underway near the end of the program. The conversation Ruth’s artful expressions generates for me involves artistic and aesthetic traits, and in Genette’s context, her works are object-works, graphic forms of expression, a way of proceeding into inquiry about becoming-teacher through varied methods of the arts that are autographic and singular expressions. Her works dominantly involve design imagery with themes of architecture, landscapes and objects. Many of her expressions explore
forms as geometric shapes and line work. Plate 41 demonstrates dominant and secondary lines in contrast, exploring positive and negative spaces of black and white. In other examples, there are letters, buildings and shapes interwoven in doodling, the expressions of distracted moments in learning activities. Line work is most intricate in Plate 51, where attention to detail and the precise rendering of her work demonstrates the same care Ruth invested into identity construction as a becoming-teacher. The emergence of her teaching identity is further articulated in Plate 53, a bird in flight. The inclusion of a cut-up credit card, beads, store receipts and warranty limitations, arranged in a way to suggest a bird in flight with a nest below, parallels Ruth’s developing sense of self as a teacher.

Plate 50 renders text as a visual shape, reminiscent of early visual poetry, known as concrete poetry, which calls attention to the shape laid upon a page, making the visual construct a significant part of understanding the text. Extending form to content, Ruth actively incorporates note taking in a number of her visuals, with mind-mapping recurring throughout the program, making her journal both pleasing and functional (see Plates 11, 12, 16, 33 and 54). For example, in Plate 54, I am interested in how Ruth combined mind-mapping as construction with the deconstruction of a photograph, and the reconstruction of an intertextual expression of becoming-teacher. Ruth’s visual journal includes many mind-maps as a means to visually represent “the relationship between art content, pedagogical strategies, student learning, and other factors that influence teaching” (Kowalchuk, 1999, p. 69). Her mind-maps served as the basis for thinking through questions of becoming-teacher in relation to identity construction (see Plate 11, 54), issues of classroom management (see Plate 33) and multiculturalism (see Plate 12). Incorporating descriptive and interpretive information, Ruth felt this method worked “very well” as an idea loop to visually record and recall information. The degree to which Ruth structured
the experience of becoming within the act of mapping is significant, offering insights to how Ruth thought about instruction and the art education curriculum from a visual perspective.

The experience Ruth’s art induc
tes for me is a strong sense of fun, playfulness and enjoyment in the act of making, as exemplified in Plate 64, which is notable for the colourful comic book quality in composition and perspective. Ellsworth (2005) identifies the capacity to play as “integral to the developmental process” because play is intrinsically creative (p. 73). Ruth’s embrace of pleasure in art making and her sense of wonder was sustained throughout her program of study. As a body of artwork, Ruth’s expressions are not negative or sublime, instead she consciously adopted a positive position during the program as her grand narrative suggests.

I am careful not to appropriate Ruth’s work as feminist, but it is important to note the social influence of feminism in themes within her collection and the undercurrents of gendered aspect in her artworks. According to Korsmeyer (2004), feminism has created unparalleled access to the art world for women artists practicing in all art mediums than at any time in history. Feminist art investigates gender in relation to social position, foregrounding artists and art in questions of identity and place, and renewing art as new forms of expression arise.

In Plate 15, I am interested that Ruth identifies with the female child. The construction of her identity is further reflected in the caption extending from the child’s mouth reading, ‘I am a wife.’ This image is symbolic of a new chapter in Ruth’s maturation, yet provides an essential insight into her identity as a woman. In Plate 17, Ruth created a depiction of a female teacher in a chic model pose. In her view, this represents the antithesis of the kind of teacher she wants to be, suggesting female teacher identity remains steeped in conservative values. Both images may be read differently, but I believe Ruth’s depictions were intended to solicit approval within the program as these images are reflective of the conversations that dominated the art education classroom at the time concerning teacher conduct and teacher dress. In effect, these images are
politicised to satisfy what Ruth perceived as teaching culture. Although Ruth distanced her works from feminism, slippage between Ruth’s art and feminist perspectives is more overt in Plate 55, one of the few moments that Ruth troubles gender identity by challenging renderings of beauty defined in popular culture (Rogoff, 2000). Reflecting on Plate 55, Ruth commented, “I remember being disgusted with advertisements and how women are expected to look.” She described her visual expression as “my small rebellion in my journal,” suggesting when Ruth undertook the self-directed project, she felt freer to critique social and cultural values in relation to teaching culture.

Ruth was the only research partner to include visual records of her teacher dress, suggesting her emphasis on the uniform of teaching signalled a right of passage. Elements of feminism emerged in Ruth’s selection of clothes for her practicum assignments. As Weber & Mitchell (2004) state:

"Clothing as objects of material culture can act both as entry points for personal and private autobiography in relation to questions of identity, as well as entry points for understanding the social components of identity as read through individual and collective responses to a particular clothing artefact." (p. 5)

Blazers, iconographic clothing in teaching culture, dominate Ruth’s professional wardrobe, a fashion consistent in limited bright colours and bodily concealment, a necessary material condition for becoming-teacher. Her reflections concerning dress often involve comments about feeling like a teacher (see Plates 22 to 29). Weber & Mitchell (2004) confirm, “clothing is not only a means of identifying oneself as teacher, but it is also a pedagogical strategy in itself, a means of commanding respect and order, of establishing a serious working atmosphere and of exerting control” (p. 252). Photographs of Ruth’s teacher clothing juxtaposed to Plate 55, a visual expression created from fashion advertisements that questions the sexualisation of the female body, serve to trace “women’s complex relations to the body, desire and representation”
(Chadwick, 1996, p. 405). Ruth utilized these media images to reinforce how women’s bodies become narrowly defined in society, and how women then function as a social object in teaching (Ellsworth, 2005):

Plate 22

All of the outfits really spoke to my insecurity of looking young. One of my good friends often says that when she puts on a suit, she becomes the suit. It gives her confidence. One could say the same about my tireless search for the ‘teacher outfit.’ I needed to become the teacher. It’s funny to think this way, but what I wore really helped me put forth a confidence that I did not have in the beginning. Because of that confidence I was able to put forth the knowledge that I wanted to share with the students. I would say that outfits with blazers are still the most ‘teacherlike.’ At the time, dressing was not an example to me of making art. Looking back, I don’t know!

In turn, Ruth’s fibre and fabric artworks, Plates 1 to 8, operate as part of a broader cultural discourse built upon feminist theory. Historically, fibre arts were aligned with crafts and separate from fine art. As Ruth expressed, she relished in breaking those boundaries by making art with fibre and applying fibre as a form of social and political expression. Incorporating methods of weaving and felting into her understanding as an artist also broadening her skills and modes of artistic expression. Such activities are generally associated with functional utility and comfort, with fibre and fabric products made for domestic life. In Canada, the rich history of crafts is connected with Women’s Institutes and agricultural programs, where social reformers like Adelaide Hoodless advocated women’s engagement in crafts (Flood, 2001). Belonging to
“Canadian home culture” meant “embracing a universal, participatory community,” in which Canadian women held strong representation, in particular, in North American knitting culture (Flood, 2001, pp. 31, 56). Crafts became increasingly important after the Second World War, and while “knitting has attracted remarkably little research until very recently,” knitting and crocheting, as exemplified in Plate 2, replaced embroidery in popularity in the 1960’s (Flood, 2001, p. 83).

As Korsmeyer (2004) states, the feminist movement “deliberately breached” distinctions between art and craft (p. 108). Recognizing the artistry of fibre and fabric, Ruth remarked in Plate 4:

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<td>What I was really trying to do was to pretend this was a jungle and I was going to do another photo transfer of me but I haven’t done that yet. It was really cool, oh I love this class! It is just so great! And because of the Pass/Fail deal I feel so free to try whatever I want. I just love it! If they were going to give out A, B, or C’s, it would definitely change it. I didn’t realize that this is a different way of being an artist. I think that even showing boys, it could get them to have fun and also show them that it is hard, it’s not just women sitting by the fire doing it.</td>
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By employing art mediums defined as decorative and feminine, Ruth is arguably undertaking a feminist project, in which “the very materials employed subvert the fine-art tradition”
She described her experience of participating in a textiles assignment that involved art making as a form of political activism:

> In my textiles class we’ve come up with a collaborative project - we’re calling this a knit-in! This Sunday, at 12:38, I’m meeting two other people at the number four bus stop on campus and we’re all going to meet and take the same bus, and we’re going to be knitting at a bus stop and then we’ll get on one at a time and we’re to go to the art gallery and knit inside the art gallery to make it an actual art piece and then we’ll probably knit outside for a while but it’ll be like the old times with women in their knitting circles and I’m so excited because I’ve never done anything like a collaborative project before!

Although Ruth participated in the knit-in on the steps of a well-known museum, she did not express awareness of the underlying feminist dimensions in the activity. Chadwick (1996) cites a series of social and community-based feminist strategies, including how women artists “turned to artworld politics” in the 1980’s by protesting “the museum as sites for ongoing investigations into the ways that culture is collected, institutionalized and displayed” (pp. 420-421). Such activism has roots in groups like the anonymous Guerrilla Girls and many individual women artists, as well as the historic suffragette movements worldwide. In the context of an elective course, Ruth inscribed meaning within her fibre and fabric works, yet she did not pursue such expression in other artful expressions during the teacher education program. This begs the question, will Ruth feel free to express such qualities in her art once certified?

I speculate that through craft-based art practices, Ruth found a means to explore forms of resistance within contemporary art practices without compromising her public identity within teaching culture or her private Christian beliefs. Deleuze (1995) notes an existence rooted in “Christian morality” is also an identity of “Christian ethics/aesthetics, and all sorts of conflicts and compromises between the two” (p. 114). In Plate 37, Ruth described how her sketch emerged during church service, and how she wished to speak to the congregation about the moment, but felt fearful and as a result experienced a sense of great loss. This rendering
represents a turning point, made when Ruth shifted her position in the program by affirming her spiritual beliefs in light of the curricular content she felt prescribed beliefs she could not reconcile with understandings of Christianity. As a result, Ruth felt apprehensive and unable to fulfill course requirements adequately:

As you can read my visual journal, I discovered even further that I hate conceptual art … it is so academic and it is so exclusive. No one can understand it! And if I wanted to make an art piece during one of my courses, it had to be conceptual. That was the second frustration. And I ranted about that! It was so frustrating … I lost it at one point, I said, I can’t make art and I’m in the art program! And I realized that is why I like Western art history so much. I know the stories, I understand them and so I like the art … And it was interesting because that week, I finally realized Western art history is very Christian, morally based too, so I can relate to that. But Asian art history is about Hinduism and Buddhism and Taoism, and because I don’t understand that, I can’t relate to it and therefore the art doesn’t resonate with me at all.

Genette (1997) suggests that upbringing instils a given preference for art styles and eras, and as Ruth explained, she is situated in dominant Western stylistic traditions, reflective of her historical social, cultural and spiritual contexts. Despite Ruth’s Christian perspectives, there are no explicit Christian symbols in her artworks and only limited reference to spirituality (see Plates 10 and 37), but the intersection of her private spiritual self and public teaching self resulted in uncertainty within teaching culture. For example, Ruth did not adhere to a multicultural art education approach that required her engagement with cultural artefacts symbolic of religions other than Christianity. When challenged in the university classroom setting to explain her perspective, Ruth restated her resistance to contemporary art approaches to mediate the disjuncture. Only when her spirituality comes to the foreground does Ruth experience the “regulatory process” of teaching culture, suggesting “discursive practice” in art education can position teachers in particular ways, creating “pedagogised identities” that are specific to those normalized practices and understandings (Atkinson, 2002, p. 42). In Ruth’s experience, her pedagogised identity extended to spiritual considerations.
It is disconcerting Ruth did not feel free to explore the parameters of her beliefs or the implications of her position in the context of multicultural art education. The scenario resulted in what Freedman & Stuhr (2004) refer to as “reproducing narrow constructs of knowledge” which “should not be the purpose of contemporary art education” (p. 823). Yet presumptions within the art education curriculum that multicultural approaches will be readily accepted by becoming-teachers and replicated in the school classroom are also short-sighted. Ruth was not encouraged to problematise questions laden with political, social and religious significance. This rupture resulted in Ruth finishing the program with a number of unresolved issues that may potentially confine her curricular decisions in her future classrooms rather than open Ruth to exploring where her tensions reside and how she can reconcile the complexity of issues concerning spirituality and difference. By not conforming to the expectations of the art education program in that moment, Ruth felt dismissed by her instructors and fearful she would be regarded as unwilling or incapable of grasping the intellectual scope of multicultural art education. Positioning students in this way perpetuates expectations of compliance in the arts and in teaching.

Among research partners, the self-directed research project was most readily embraced by Ruth, with her journals serving as visual diaries, a critical space in the development of her artful collection and her teacher identity. More than half of all images emerged in the final weeks of the program under the auspices of the self-directed project. Many of her works reveal deeper engagement in the act of making than at previous points in the program. Ruth’s art matured considerably, with particularly outstanding acrylics, collage, and ink and pencil renderings filling two journals. Ruth completed a series of paintings that explored the effect of contrasting and complementary colours which she referred to as “my Monet phase.” She sought to study Monet’s methods of rendering light in her practice (see Plates 47, 49, 61, 62 and 65).
Monet’s “luminous technique” and the “intensification of the autonomous effect of art” shaped Ruth’s art making in the self-directed project as she too “reproduced certain aspects of nature” (Harrison & Wood, 2005, pp. 11, 78). The Monet phase involved several renderings of school-like environments, including Plates 61 and 62. I read these paintings as suggestive of belonging to the institutional world of education, a view of becoming-teacher. In the composition of Plate 61, Ruth blends her roles as artist-teacher in an architectural expression of the idealized world of teaching. Plate 62 is suggestive of the perspective of children looking up to the teacher, a viewpoint from a school window. Rather than conforming to the styles of the art education program, or the expectations of her fine art training, Ruth demonstrates the emergence of her personal vision of artful expression in ways that also parallel Monet’s relationality to the avant-garde movement. Howard (1989) suggests Monet “always considered himself as an independent artist” who was not as closely aligned with the Impressionists as is often suggested (p.20).

Her comments concerning Plate 60 reveal she is beginning to revise and redefine her artist identity. Like the Impressionists, Ruth sought to render “one moment of existence,” the durée, a “fleeting impression” (Harrison & Wood, 2005, p. 71). As a researcher, I am interested in how Ruth juxtaposed the suggestion of exhibiting her artwork (public self) with the social cues of a cup of tea (private self). Inherent in Ruth’s movement as an artist was the shift in her personal boundaries from the beginning of the program when Ruth described the apprehension of crossing bridges and thus, not taking the first step, and her growing self-confidence as she succeeded in the public sphere at the end of the program. Given her embeddedness, it is ironic her emerging artist identity was facilitated by external validation for her artworks and her willingness to move beyond the parameters of formal learning.
Mediation: Ann’s artful expressions as transitivity in becoming

Entering Ann’s collection begins with a question posed by Rogoff (2000): “Can we read bodies as geographically marked?” (p. 144). Ann’s artful expressions extend this question to an anamorphic view of visual art practice that suggests Ann mediated landscapes of meaning with emphasis on passages, markers of change and the transitive dimensions of becoming-teacher to reveal her “sensing new and previously unthought or unfelt sense of self” (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 16). Ellsworth (2005) describes such “encounters” with the inner self and outer world as both “interrelated and separate,” creating “profound shifts in how we think of pedagogical intent or volition” (pp. 27, 30). Ann’s artful expressions are non-sequential renderings between a “phenomenon that is the duration of action and participation,” making works “ambiguous and paradoxical,” within the “learning self” (Ellsworth, 2005, pp. 67, 57). In this way, Ann’s artful expressions are transitional expressions, “a simultaneous convergence of multiple events, sensations, actions and experiences” (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 60).

Ann’s expressions primarily involves mediums of sketching, photography and collage. As a collection, Ann’s artful expressions represent her continual repositioning within teaching culture, with clusters of works emerging as meditative movements in changing landscapes, especially geographies of post-secondary learning and field experiences of teaching. Ann’s visual movements are suggestive of reterritorialization (Rogoff, 2000). Reflecting upon visual expressions created during the teacher education program, Ann described her art making:

I always find it funny when people try to categorize art ... more specifically my art. I guess the categories have solidarity each in their own and I have done work within each. The reason I find it odd is because nearly any given artwork can transcend these boundaries unintentionally and sometimes unknowingly, unwarranted and unwanted by its creator ... As for my art making during the B.Ed., I would categorize it between art-like and contemporary. I often consider contemporary works to be more art-like than actual fine art depending on the piece and artist. I did not feel I did much fine art at all. It was all just research and notes really. It was a very forced form of artwork to get the grades and although there was a lot of ‘me’ in it and a lot of ‘making’ involved, I didn’t feel
much like an artist as I could have or should have with it. I felt like a scrap-booker taking notes in a visual way. Of course I could take some of the work I did out of context and conceptualize it into contemporary art and in some cases maybe try to push it into a fine art but what would be the point. I’m just glad I’m done with it. I use the artwork I did to look back as a reference for my teaching. Thank goodness it’s not just notes though, those are boring. This form of ‘visual note taking’ makes studying it more enjoyable and inviting.

Consistent with Ann’s borderland narrative of becoming-teacher, she does not define her artful expressions as belonging to a specific school, but to many discourses within art. Bhabha describes in-between spaces as “moments produced in the articulation of cultural differences,” the expression of selfhood that comes from “posing questions of solidarity and community from the interstitial perspective” (Bhabha in Harrison & Wood, 2005, pp. 1111, 1112). Ann positions her works as provisional, as in Plate 71, with some works having the potential to develop into more advanced artful expressions, confirming her works are under revision visually and conceptually, in the ébauche of artistic and aesthetic development. Situating the works as largely art-like with contemporary influences, Ann describes the continuous process of moving between art styles, and shifting within her artist identity as personal and professional depending upon the circumstances. In this way, Ann validates her art and the art of her future students as consistent with Genette’s thesis of embracing artworks representative of all levels of making.

Ann’s works include original autographic visual and textual expressions like poetry, and allographic works, such as photography, in which her graphic object-works suggest she invokes borderlands throughout her visual expressions. For example, in Plate 90 her pseudonym ‘Ann’ represents an active borderland given Ann is a derivative of her middle name, and the name of a fictional character, Anne Shirley, a young woman becoming-teacher in Lucy Maud Montgomery’s *Anne of Green Gables*, one of the first books Ann read. She described how this borderland of identity “helped me get in touch with my inner self and my feminine side.” Borderlands are also emphasized through a number of formalistic techniques, in particular,
shifting perspectives between intimate nature scenes, such as Plate 111, and vista views, Plate 128. In Plate 111, Ann reinforces her comfort with nature as a preferred location and reads such expressions as reflective of critical learning experiences. As Ann reflects on her doodles in Plate 106, “I’d rather meditate, roaming free with nature than be in a contained dead-end concrete path.” This organic quality emerges in many artful expressions, recording Ann’s movement over large geographic distances. In Plate 128, Ann accentuates her invisibility in landscapes which surround her during the teacher education program, where urbanization coupled with the absence of familial connections in unknown spaces characterized her lived and learning experiences as uncertain. This is reinforced in Plate 102, a poem lingering in the performance of public self as teacher while her private self was alone and apart. Identity is further explored as borderlands of artist-observer-maker and artist-model in expressions such as Plate 123, a remarkable self-portrait that weaves together questions of geographies of self as a First Nations woman with the imprint of culture like a tattoo on her hands, representing her lifeblood. As Bhabha states, in such art “the borderline work of culture demands an encounter with ‘newness’ through a renewal of the past, making the “past-present,” a “necessity not [of] nostalgia, [but] of living” (Bhabha in Harrison & Wood, 2005, p. 1114).

References to First Nations art and culture recur in Ann’s visual expressions, emerging in allographic documents, such as classroom lesson plans (see Plates 89), and as original autographic artworks of her making (see Plates 80, 84 and 121). In her autographic works involving First Nations imagery, Ann explores her cultural identity through visual metaphors. In Plate 80, she employs an indigenous design to play on multiple meaning of fish in her lived and learning experiences. Students are like a school of fish, but the stench of fish equates to negative experiences within schooling that scar learners, symbolic of the rejection Ann felt within high school because of fishing:
Well I used to fish so the smell would never go away. It was a big net and it was a big memory for me because I work all weekend and then went to school, and I would stink like fish for months. I’d stink like fish and everyone would say, ‘My God you stink of fish!’ But they sure liked the smoked salmon!

Ann initially created Plate 84, a variation of the Medicine Wheel motif, as a submission for an urban aboriginal housing society logo contest, but Ann felt this image equally articulated her standpoint on teaching as a First Nations woman, and indeed, these themes recur in her works throughout her program of study. This masterful visual expression blends Ann’s goals as an educator with issues of First Nations’ self-determination and political expression. In this work of art, Ann demonstrates advanced conceptual sophistication through métissage, where borderlands are evoked in Ann’s understanding of self-in-the-world through the essence of community values that are multicultural and global in orientation. Ann layers meaning within this work, embedding her environmental consciousness in the life cycle of nature, and interweaving cross-cultural symbols of the peace, unity and balance to highlight the interconnectedness of all elements that sustain life. Circularity embodies energy and spirituality as the sustenance of knowledge creation in this artwork.

During the self-directed project, Ann designed an outstanding three-dimensional work of art, Plate 121, which, as the page of the journal unfolds, takes a three-dimensional beak-shape similar to Kwakiutl sun masks. This work is entitled “Strength,” and the naming of this work is unique in the collections of research partners signifying Ann regards this expression as an artwork of importance. It is critical to note this image served as a source of inspiration for Ann during the most difficult moments she experienced in her public role becoming-teacher, and in her private role becoming-mother. During the heightened stress and activity of the final phase of the program, Ann experienced problems in her pregnancy and required hospitalization, an unexpected shift resulting in a sustained liminal state. On the brink of losing her pregnancy
during this time, Ann was confined to bed in an effort to bring her pregnancy to term. She faced numerous difficult decisions which had potential lifelong consequences to her health and well-being. With her final courses incomplete, she was unsure if she would complete the program and achieve teacher certification. Under the circumstances, it is not surprising Ann commented, “I really don’t think that the education program is extremely beneficial, it is just a lot of hoop jumping.” Despite the gravity of these challenges, Ann found hope through this work of art, which I believe is emblematic of her strength of character and absolute resolve, the qualities which sustained her through to the birth of twins several months later and which facilitated her completion of outstanding coursework from her hospital bed.

The central visual question in Ann’s collection involves the transformation of body, mind and spirit. Ann questions how the female body and social roles of women are defined by exploring her changing body in artful expressions (see Plates 100 and 115). Plates 100 and 115 operate in relation to multiple streams of conceptualization and evoke responses that extend beyond the visible, intentionally creating aesthetic tension that involves dualities such as beauty-sublime, joy-despair and embodiment-alienation. The turmoil of Ann’s emotional state represented in Plate 100, where she feels physically trapped in a box and marginalized in the corner of everyday life, is intensified by the word association that shifts between the struggles of public-private realms: “freedom” “silenced” “doomed” “obedient” “morning sick” “subordinated” “blocked” “hypocrite” “headache.” Of Plate 115, Ann’s ongoing reconciliation of self becoming-mother is evident in a profoundly moving but disquieting poem entitled “Creating Life.” Ann frequently invoked such hybrid art methods, making text first visual then literary as a means to embed a more powerful resonance in an artwork. This poem reveals tensions Ann experienced within herself as a biological host, and the cultural divisiveness she felt from peers during the program concerning reproduction. Ann’s openness with her innermost
thoughts underscored her sense of trespass, and highlights the violation of a celebratory time in her life, an emotionally painful experience that remained difficult to reconcile. Such textual elements demonstrate how Ann doubles visual expression as a language tool, linking images and ideas as assemblage. Her visual expressions, like her textual narrative, tell multiple stories concurrently in which she criss-crosses cultural borderlands, including social as well as teaching cultures, creating visual connections that reflect her self-definition.

From a feminist perspective, Ann resides within two cultures and two histories of art (Chadwick, 1996). Her transitivity is a “porous” movement “between self and other, individual and social, personal and historical” (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 61). Themes of children recurred in her artworks, for example Plate 109, in which Ann deconstructs and reconstructs photographs of nature with images from the story of Alice in Wonderland, in which her depiction moves between gentle tones and lines of illustration and photography. Ann’s selection of Alice in Wonderland is also reflective of her intercultural background and that of her unborn children:

| Plate 109 | Alice in Wonderland was one of the first books I read in my AP English class. I loved the book before that and even more so after that. I related to Alice with her need to daydream and look at things differently. She seems so brave and doesn’t put up with nonsense. The imagery and imagination is great inspiration for art making for both myself and the students. ‘Down the rabbit hole’ is often how I felt being thrust into a world not of my own, one I have to adapt to and accept then take and make do what I can with it. |

From a postcolonial perspective, this selection may represent the visual reclamation of this western narrative to express how nature relates to Ann’s sense of identity, and her goal to bring
First Nations’ perspectives to the art classroom. At the same time, she is both cultural member and cultural observer in the example of Alice in Wonderland, revealing the complexities of transcultural movement that is in part, negotiating, claiming, embodying and discarding aspects of multiple perspectives of self.

Ann’s artful expressions about becoming-mother serve to challenge the conservative values of the teaching profession. During the self-directed project, she was free to visually embrace her experience, yet she made efforts to conceal her pregnancy when on practicum. Korsmeyer (2004) states, “the female body” as “maternal body” is symbolically “linked with both life and death,” that such bodily representations “convey messages about the transience of life” (p. 122). I suggest Ann employs her body to make a standpoint within the teaching profession and within the art world, to demonstrate how “cultural contexts” create different “meanings of female flesh” (Korsmeyer, 2004, p. 124). Becoming-mother is metaphorically extended to artful expressions involving nature that suggest nurturing and caring perspectives:

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Among research partners, Ann’s incorporation of photography was unique. The majority of Ann’s art involves photographs she constructed during the program. As Korsmeyer (2004) notes, photography as an art form is based on technology, not the structures of traditional fine art, making photography an ideal medium for feminist art and artists who “do not as a rule subscribe to the same aesthetic values that reigned when the concept of fine art developed in modern history” (p. 108). Photography served as a record of experience, a means to artfully document Ann’s journey, and given the constraints of the program, a method which enabled her art making to continue when she otherwise would not have created art.

Ann’s photographic rendering of her private room as a space of study stresses the importance of learning and intellectual pursuits in her identity construction (see Plates 92 and 93). Reminiscent of Virginia Woolf, Ann shared her desk in a “material analysis” of spatial location as a student becoming-teacher (Goldman, 2001, p. 5). Grumet (1988) affirms the importance of the symbolic desk in teaching, noting, “the woman who has chosen to teach … craves a space that bears her signature, holds her resources” (p. 92). Reflecting on photographs of her fraternity dormitory room, Ann states:

Plate 93

It was frustrating having to make do with the restraints of living in such confined quarters. It was even harder dealing with the nightly parties that occurred. Nothing like feeling old. I was one of the oldest people in the building and I was pregnant so I couldn’t even join in the fun with the nightly parties.
With artful expressions dominated by allographic works, over half of her images photographically document her journey of becoming-teacher, including indoor and outdoor school landscapes, institutional architecture, and the artwork of her students in the high school classroom. This suggests Ann was self-actualized in the role of teacher, making photographs memory markers of specific events, for example, Plate 88:

One lesson I was quite proud of was the First Nations lesson. I had arranged for a guest artist/speaker to come in and talk about First Nations imagery and teach a couple of lessons to the students. It was great to have someone come in from outside to collaborate with.

In this way, Ann “fostered transcultural communication” through art making by collaborating and decentralizing teaching and blurring the boundaries of insider/outsider in culturally informed art lessons (Staikidis, 2006, p. 127). Staikidis (2006) suggests mentorship as form and relationship in an indigenous context differs as a method of inquiry in which “mentoring across cultures has the potential for communicating unique aspects of cultural ways of knowing,” making cultural differences conduits in art education (p. 125).

In relation to the art education program, Ann’s early visual expressions were restrained, suggesting her discomfort with making art as a prescribed act, as in Plates 68 and 69, compared to images created during the self-directed project:

Sometimes I don’t think I’m a very good artist because I can’t pull stuff out. It is a problem with me, I can’t do art on demand or even when I want to sometimes but other times I just can’t help myself and ideas flow like mad.

Ann was also frustrated by the lack of instructor feedback concerning her art making in her formal visual journal:

We had a journal assessment just last week. It was really rushed. They did all the journals in a day. It wasn’t enough time to give us time to explain anything and [when] they went over mine, this is what happened: “Oh, this is nice.” Flipped through it pretty quickly. “Oh it is very visual,” and I’m thinking, go back,
there’s stuff in here! … I was one of the last people to show them, they didn’t give me much time.

As the program continued, Ann felt the formal visual journal shifted from a space where she was encouraged to make it her own, to a space where she was required to fulfill the instructor’s vision of content:

It was kind of scary after I got out of the meeting. I was told it is very visual, but I need more content and the instructor said, “I want to see where your assignments are, your responses to your readings,” but for a lot of the readings, I don’t have a response. I’m trying to make it look good because everybody else’s art looks so good compared to mine but everybody’s doing that too.

As Ann enacted the role of becoming-teacher, she described her movement through memories of schooling, reminiscing on her high school years: “I liked my art class in high school. That really inspired me to be a teacher because it was kind of random and fun. I could be myself and explore my own interests.” Yet Ann described a pragmatic approach to her undergraduate fine arts program where the curriculum failed to fulfill her interest in learning advanced technical skills:

I was subjected to instructors who had the right way of doing things and also, I had a few painting classes where they wouldn’t teach technique, which is what I was looking for … it’s ridiculous, so they wouldn’t teach us how to paint, and so I thought there was no point in trying to get that out of them so I just decided to move on, you know. I’m still in the same art capabilities, technically-wise as I was in high school.

Reflecting on Plate 69, Ann described her expressions as art-like and similar to high school art:

Like it or not, it looks like high school art a lot of the times … Because I came from living out in the bushes to living in the middle of a city, a lot of that experience comes through. At first I did a lot of landscape painting, because I missed home. So I did landscape painting, but that wasn’t highly regarded because landscape painting is dead, and I went to a conceptual art school, they’re all concepts and nothing else. I could have been developing my skills with landscape art but we had to do this other stuff so basically I learned how to BS my way through it to make things I wanted to do, into conceptual pieces which is all, you know, different points of view that see things differently. I just decided, fine,
I’ll do what I need to get the grade. It is all jumping through those hoops. But that’s what you expect with an education that is built that way.

Aspects of a discipline-based art education approach emerged in Ann’s discussion of her art making, in particular, her interest in the elements and principles of design, but she did not attend to qualities of art criticism or art movements in the same way (Chalmers, 1999). During her practicum, Ann conducted a number of technical lessons, including different methods of shading, which suggests she responded to perceived gaps in her undergraduate curriculum through her classroom lessons as a teacher. This is reinforced in Ann’s comments that she benefited from the “wide variety of lessons” and from the “knowledge base of experienced teachers,” pulling together many ideas in the development of her perspectives of art education, and her philosophy of connectedness and awareness.

Implicit in Ann’s comments of past learning is Deleuze & Guattari’s (1994) position concerning conceptual art and Zepke’s (2006) position that “when art is defined as ‘information’ or a ‘concept’ it loses its visual qualities” (p. 159). Kamhi (2006) offers a compelling argument that “the ordinary viewer” is increasingly detached because postmodern art “conveys no meaning, exalted or banal” (p. 33). For Kamhi, art should not be devoid of personal, passionate, emotional traces of the artist responding to the world, and teachers should not teach students how to interpret “incomprehensible” contemporary works, instead Kamhi (2006) encourages teachers to introduce students to “high quality works of painting and sculpture from all periods and cultures” (p. 37).

Indeed, Ann’s recollections of her undergraduate fine art program are reminiscent of a contemporary film rendering, *Art School Confidential*, a 2006 satirical portrayal by director Terry Zwigoff of student experiences in art school and within the culture of the art world. The film’s writer, Daniel Clowes, presents an insider’s view based on his own art school experiences
where, for example, instructors of drawing could not draw. Stereotypical characters demonstrate
the inversion of the art world with wider society, and the sensibilities of cultural production
through art that devalues talent over theory and promotes pretence over in-depth practice and a
lifelong commitment to the mastery of skills. The film has an almost burlesque quality that
carries a primary message: There is no venue for beauty in the artworld. To be concerned with
beauty is pedestrian. The structure of this film replicates the postmodern art thesis of
fragmentation and deconstruction, and in the disjointedness of the story, the creators again
lampoon the rhetoric of the art world.

In relation to Ann’s undergraduate fine art program, perhaps most troubling from a
pedagogic perspective is the requirement of students to conform to a specific genre of art making
with a curriculum rooted in postmodernism which at times is insular and either/or. Because of
Ann’s previous learning experiences, she expressed reluctance to base her high school
curriculum solely on contemporary art practices:

I do want to touch on the conceptual aspects of art for sure but in high school, it’s
just too much, I think, for high school students to have to learn. They should
understand it but they shouldn’t have it pressured onto them to do it all the time. I
like focusing on art more as a personal thing.

Ann’s artful expressions reveal socio-cultural tensions through her ongoing process of
inquiry, resulting in renderings that are autonomous and at the same time reflective of the
complex issues defining her lived and learning experiences in the teacher education program.
The transitive quality of becoming-teacher is “a useful interlocutor in engaging with the concept
of geography,” to reveal “signifying practices” that contribute to “identity constitution and
identity fragmentation” (Rogoff, 2000, p. 10).
A critical gaze: Nathalie’s artful expressions as materiality in becoming

Nathalie’s critical gaze brings attention to ‘unseeing’ in institutional settings, to that which is kept invisible, the “blind spot” (Levin, 1997, p. 410). Levin (1997) describes the blind spot as the experience of “looking at a problem from a position that seems to be inside, then in the next moment, in a leap without any warning, any transition, we find ourselves looking at this same problem from a position we had only been able to think outside” (p. 428). Attending to what is unseen is the basis for interpreting Nathalie’s artful expressions with an anamorphic perspective. Plate 161 suggests seeing without eyes, invoking similar symbolism as Hans Holbein the Younger, a skull to represent transience and hope for eternal life, which may also be interpreted as a symbol of loss, the loss of private student-artist identity to the emergence of public teacher-artist. Nathalie’s unique ability to unveil unseeing is evident in her first artistic act in the program, the selection of a visual journal, a discarded art education textbook which demonstrates how curricular orientations have shifted over time:

This is word for word the script that the teacher is supposed to read to the class. I found myself laughing. Can you imagine anyone standing up and reading this: ‘Now open your book, now open your crayons.’

Many of Nathalie’s contemporary works reflect a gaze which challenges definitions of social acceptance and perceptions of belonging in relation to the wider subjugation of women in society. Her works identify the boundaries of “power structures [in] space and time” within the emotional depth of her day-to-day experiences (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 129). Nathalie explored teaching culture by engaging in conceptual themes, creating “a particular pedagogic desire,” the desire for “experiences of learning as non-compliance and knowledge as in the making” (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 17). Through visuals, Nathalie expressed her overwhelming tensions as an outsider during the teacher education program, yet outsidersness became a site from which new possibilities of becoming-teacher began to emerge.
To enter Nathalie’s visual art practice is to experience feminist prismatics through dimensions of cultural production of the female body. Nathalie’s artful expressions are a “pedagogic pivot,” giving visual form to global issues concerning gender identity, in which “events, history, culture and socially constructed ideas” are methods to critically interrogate “inner thoughts, feelings, memories, fears, desires” (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 37). Ellsworth (2005) contends the “source of creativity” can also be “the source of a terrifying anxiety,” and I suggest the gendered presence of Nathalie’s artful expressions are imbued with emotions that at times were “too great to allow [a] positive experience,” causing her to struggle to “act creatively” (p. 89). As a result Nathalie’s collection is somewhat smaller, though the depth of her expressions offers an equally rich visual story of becoming-teacher.

As a collection, Nathalie’s works represent materiality in teaching culture, melding experiences of becoming-teacher through the events, objects and supplies of the art classroom and her private contemplations that trouble the representation of the female body and question the “creation and consumption of popular culture” (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 122). In the course of posing such questions, Nathalie “seeks to intervene in life and change it” (Goldman, 2001, p. 6). As a contemporary feminist artist, Nathalie’s art making challenges understandings of femininity and codes of cultural expression, and by drawing upon non-traditional materials, her work is laden with intent, as she adapts traditional art styles of the past to reconstruct and reinterpret meaning (Korsmeyer, 2004). Nathalie described feeling most connected to the anti-art conceptual framework of the Dada movement, in particular, the minimalist collages of Swiss artist Max Ernst. As Benjamin (1968) describes, the Dadaists strove to make art “the centre of scandal,” with a primary purpose “to outrage the public” by interrupting the viewer’s experience, to effect moral shock (p. 238). Situating her art in the anti-art movement is consistent with her counter narrative as Nathalie contested notions of art, art traditions, methods and styles in her
contemporary creations, continually casting doubt artful expressions should represent high aesthetic value (Korsmeyer, 2004).

Collage as reproduction of production is “a common and effective strategy for amplifying ideas, framing reality and revealing the workings of the mind” (Marshall, 2005, p. 234). As De Rijke & Sinker (2006) note, Dadaists “used novel materials, including discarded objects found in the streets” and “allowed chance to determine the elements of their works” (p. 213). This is a method Nathalie adopted in her collages, assembling fragments of visual culture in a process of selecting, cutting, pasting and recomposing images and ideas, in a practice of reconstituting existing images and personal photographs to demonstrate social irony, paradoxes and hypocrisies. She added to flat surfaces layers of meaning and feminist critique, a technique enabling her to reside in-between two- and three-dimensional representations. Fox & Geichman (2001) posit such contemporary art practice focuses on the blurred edges of thought, rather than the centre of what is understood, reinforcing an anamorphic perspective that can facilitate “greater openness to what we consider education” (p. 34).

Nathalie’s artful expressions were often constructed into textured forms composed of found images, magazine and newspaper clippings, construction paper, maps, organic matter, sewing patterns, threads, feathers, cookie fortunes and more. By inserting material fragments within pre-existing images, Nathalie’s artworks redefine original meanings, and by transforming materiality of the original, Nathalie breaks rules by applying allographic objects that are readily replicated in an autographic way. The resulting expressions exist as an “authentic instance,” for as Genette (1997) suggests, “every creative process involves not two, but many stages” (pp. 41, 44). Over the course of becoming, Nathalie refined her collage process, developing her own technique of reconstituting artworks to shift understandings of production and originality, which
oppose the traditional identity construction of artist, not by replicating known collage artists but instead by making herself into “a complex set of social practices” (Genette, 1997, p. 55).

In many instances, Nathalie interlaced segments of self-dialogue into her works, integrating text to layer and complexify visuals, of which Plate 135 is most notable, a profound statement of isolation and invisibility that emerged from Nathalie’s short practicum experience. In black, red, turquoise, and blue ink, Nathalie writes in a circular fashion, reversing every line so the image must be shifted one-hundred and eighty degrees to be read, a symbolic movement of her disorientation in teaching culture. She detailed daily accounts of her field experience on this collage, including the following excerpt:

Today I had my first observation by my FA [faculty advisor]. The lesson went OK but I feel so emotional now, I don’t know why. I got a lot of feedback of how I can improve … I feel overwhelmed by it as well … I’m proud to say I’m becoming an art teacher, but at the same time I feel sick about it.

Plates 146 and 149 are also among examples of how text is made to function as art, as a form of art making where the visual structure of the layout, the shapes, lines and balance of words defines Nathalie’s aesthetic. In Plate 147 she wrote, “I asked my parents to answer questions about me … both my mom and dad rated patience as my worst quality … I want to do this again.” Nathalie overlaid these words on an art activity illustrated in the book, creating a statement of self-definition congruent with ongoing action and reflection in art practice.

Much of Nathalie’s work is provisional, in the ébauche, as incomplete renderings enroute to further expression. She commented, “As an artist, I feel like all those preliminary projects that may be total failure or just crap, they lead you to something good.” Nathalie described her visual practice during the program as sporadic and negligible:

While I was on my short practicum I did do some journaling. I tried to journal while on long-term practicum but it didn’t work out so well. I did make a couple of things in and outside of class time at the school to be used as demos. Other than that I had a fortune cookie ritual that I did at home. I bought a case of
fortune cookies and opened one at the end of a hard day or when needed. I did this throughout the practicum to encourage myself. I kept the ones I liked and bound them into a small book. I think that is all the art making I did really.

A surface reading of her art practice from a Deleuzian perspective may evoke an interpretation of banality, but when the works are viewed in the full context of her teaching experiences, in the convergence of everyday life with intense emotional understandings, her compositional process is clearly not neutral. Nathalie’s works are informed by feminist theory, and her visual expressions reflect a politicised perspective infused with emotion, sensation and at the same time, information. She made no claims her works are Art, yet artful expressions materialize to bring “alternate social constituencies” to collage, pushing her works closer to a reconstructivist approach in art education that requires art be accessible in ways that students can more easily understand. Extending Nathalie’s artful complexities, I believe many of her expressions may be read as visual haikus of teaching. For example, in Plate 162, the black horse symbolizes the difficulty of Nathalie’s journey against the dreamlike backdrop of becoming-teacher, a contrast which creates a sense of foreboding. Plate 174 suggests Nathalie is dreaming about the practicum experience as taming a lion, yet with the gentleness of falling feathers.

Nathalie’s expressions represent historical eras from the 1950’s to the present, in which she explores the affect of the gaze on women through her own gaze as a woman becoming-teacher. Nathalie invokes traditional images and reassigns meaning, for example Plate 133, she utilizes a dated image of a woman, a “hysterically domesticated and normativized female” that despite her expression of consternation, Nathalie notes, represents an ideal, generic woman of the past (Rogoff, 2000, p. 145). Butler (1990) argues such gender formation “operates through repetition” as a performance, and as Nathalie depicted in her collages, an exploration of gestures, clothing and words over time demonstrates how gender identity is socially shaped, constructed, reinforced and repeated (p. 185). In this way, Nathalie enters a conversation involving the
“rewriting of history through a critical analysis of the representation of women’s bodies in the service of specific ideologies and cultural strategies” (Rogoff, 2000, p. 146). From a postmodern perspective, Nathalie deconstructed historical media images that displayed and objectified women through “representation,” by coding the female body as different, resulting in artworks of women as “transgressive” bodies (Chadwick, 1996, p. 380).

A number of Nathalie’s works have a haunting quality, particularly works centering on facial expressions, for example, Plate 136. As a researcher, I am troubled by this image, it is difficult to look at, and when I relate this to Nathalie’s story of becoming-teacher, it takes on another dimension, in a sense, foreshadowing the trauma of the experience and the counter narrative that unfolded during the teacher education program. Nathalie’s sensitivity extended to recognizing the presence of this image in the classroom, and valuing the emotional landscape of women through this image, which was defaced and discarded by an unknown peer in the teacher education program.

At the same time, Nathalie utilized her visual journal as a forum to affirm herself as a woman becoming-teacher, with key words of “empowering,” “reclaiming” and “redefining” appearing on the pages of her journal during the year (see Plate 154). Despite the integral role of feminist theory in the reconceptualization of the field of curriculum studies since the 1980’s, knowledge structures and women’s pedagogical work continues to conflict with “patriarchal forms of schooling and traditional curriculum theory” (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 373). Pinar et al. (2000) suggest the hidden curriculum of teaching can “reproduce familial sex-role stereotyping,” and fail to “challenge the gender status quo” (p. 387). This is reinforced in a number of Nathalie’s artful expressions, including Plate 134, which juxtaposes a characterization of a femme-fatale with a child-like ‘Be My Valentine’ art activity, and portions of an article from a popular magazine deliberating on why a woman may not be married. Her response is a reflective
assessment of the pressures she witnesses in the social construction of gender day-to-day, a provocative conversation that continued to resonate in her visual journal throughout the program of study. Nathalie extends this discussion in Plate 149, analyzing how women and girls are taught to visually construct gender by bringing together the tensions of modernist and postmodern notions of women’s identity, ideals of beauty, and definitions of body shapes.

Nathalie specifically attends to women’s body image in Plate 137:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate 137</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.jpg" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2.jpg" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It seems amusing. A lot of times these images of women are not given thoughts and even the thought I gave her is very limited. It is kind of void of any message or opinion, there’s just something, something brooding. I like playing with contemporary images and dated images and juxtaposing them. I thought the black and white pictures were so funny. It’s multiple images of women wearing girdles on top of their clothing in public. When I found them I had been feeling so out of place. I couldn’t believe the connection between the message in the pictures and the feeling I was experiencing. It was such a coincidence. So I made this collage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adding the phrase, “I just wanna fit in” to her collage, Nathalie reflects upon how this visual construction emerged during a period of her teacher education program when she troubled her public-private transformations as a woman becoming-teacher. In effect, her interior landscapes of meaning represented in the undergarments are worn over her public persona as an art teacher, articulating her experience of unfolding the unexpectedness of uncertainty in teaching culture. Nathalie challenges social and cultural understandings by exploring how women’s bodies are objectified in visual culture (Plate 149), the stereotypic renderings of women through romance.
(Plate 134), as well as the exploitation of women in the media (Plates 163, 169). In Plate 148, Nathalie overlaid understandings of gender construction onto a lesson about creating mosaics, suggesting female identity is a composite of many standpoints.

In Nathalie’s *Bildraum*, she dwells on the particular, finite, interior spaces of thought, yet there always remains something not said, lingering in the undercurrents of her expressions. Plates 155 to 160, and 175A and 175B, demonstrate how Nathalie reflected on moments in the field, sometimes omitting key words to demonstrate disjuncture as a caring teacher. The frequency with which she juxtaposed diary notes with images throughout the program suggests the ongoing tension Nathalie experienced becoming an art teacher was deeply inscribed in her art making. She reinforced her gaze on becoming by inventively inserting sewing patterns into her visual journal as a metaphor of constructing identity as a woman who is an artist and teacher (see Plates 155 to 157). Private-public dualisms are compounded by writing the teacher text through the transparency of patterns, incorporating sensuality by requiring a viewer to touch the fragile patterns to read the text. The patterns must be handled with care. Amidst the sewing patterns, Nathalie incorporated an image of a male body to discuss body types and gender identity:

Plate 159

This is also an intuitive creation.
I question if she is inquiring into issues of gender assignment in this intuitive expression.

Around this image are notes taken in a class lecture, including “the gaze is associated with power and powerlessness, it objectifies the body, it penetrates the body.” Layering text, the visual image and fragments of sewing patterns, Nathalie reinforces the juxtaposition of the male body to the feminist views expressed in her journal. In the process, Nathalie’s use of sewing patterns symbolically traces how clothes define individuals in the world. The impact of dress on becoming a teacher resonated in Nathalie’s visual expressions, for example, the doodle of Plate 153 reveals her perception of what is promoted as acceptable dress as a teacher. This doodle echoes traditional perspectives of teaching culture, along with a dress code impressed upon Nathalie as having changed little from by-gone eras.

As a collection, Nathalie’s “intuitive” expressions highlight ambiguity as a form of aesthetic and cultural functioning (see Plates 158, 159, 161, 162). Borrowing from Harrison’s (2001) discussion of painting, intuition may be called aesthetic because “intuition implies convergence between that which is not to be seen,” and in turn, “that which is not to be seen in the world of the spectator” (p. 159). Grosz (2005) describes intuition as a method where “original concepts are created and developed for objects, qualities and durations that are themselves unique and specific,” making intuition an expression of movement (p.7). Through intuitive movement, Nathalie’s identity as an eco-artist emerged at the end of the program, with her interest in ecological and environmental issues and activities influencing her approach to art education as “critical place-based pedagogy” (Graham, 2007, p. 379). Nathalie envisioned teaching students to consciously critique consumer culture and recycle ‘throw-away’ materials, making art education a forum for activism and social critique. She was most eager to explore possibilities of incorporating an urban garden into her curriculum in ways that ensured “art study and practice” would connect “art education to important issues within the local context of
students’ lives and encourage them to consider the convergence of politics, power, and culture in the places they inhabit” (Graham, 2007, p. 379).

Within her visual journal, Nathalie created a subset of images in a booklet, a compositional feature unique to her art practice (see Plates 164-172). Through this booklet, Nathalie troubles the appropriation of images and the exploitive nature of mass media:

I’ve been working with this idea of temporary non-value, so using one newspaper to depict from different points of view what is going on in the world … And the perspectives they present I find limited, so as an object, the newspaper is disturbing to me. On one page there is an image of a woman who is completely devastated, has no home and her dead child is in front. And if you cut that image out and turn it over and look what’s on the other side, it’s “Welcome Martha!” and oh my god Martha Stewart didn’t show up for the pumpkin carving contests and everyone in Nova Scotia was devastated! But images of the war had started, the people are suffering and the bombs and then there’s a sale on, and this is the stock market and this is what crude oil is selling for, oh my gosh … and then the next thing, it is displayed as a comic strip and it is all very desensitized …. and just deconstructing something that is always there and really looking at what are we saying and its importance, it’s so relevant to the art classroom.

Nathalie’s booklet emphasized issues of representation, multicultural understandings, war, environmental issues and consumer culture, themes which transcend her works and move her collection beyond teacher education. By changing the context, Nathalie stated she pursued “some clarity or truth” within a single issue of a newspaper she found late at night. For example, in Plate 168, Nathalie overlaid an image of sailors kissing a woman, a revivalist 1940’s composition in which a woman is positioned as the object of sexual attention for generic men in the same uniform, enclosing the woman’s identity by framing her in the world. The text above this image includes a caption, ‘Pay up for gas,’ a commentary on the current American war as compared to the Second World War, while at the same time, reminding that women ‘pay up’ in society. In Plates 164 and 165, Nathalie created visual tension by placing news of the devastating earthquake next to a movie caption, with a partial face that is submerged in text, leaving only metaphorically unseeing eyes and the externalization of world events that reflects
“transnational dimensions of contemporary art” (Bastos, 2006, p. 103). As evidenced in this series, Nathalie employed media culture as a means of investigating identity construction by situating her works in contemporary feminist aesthetics.

Nathalie brushes against the sublime in her booklet with appropriated photographic images of female subjects under extreme distress and images speculating on death, as demonstrated in Plate 166:

As Korsmeyer (2004) suggests, such work “evokes emotions that are not entirely comfortable,” instead, shifting viewers to spaces of tension (p. 136). Levine-Cousineau (2004) theorizes Canadian photographic practice has a historical preoccupation with depictions of death and dying, and Nathalie’s artful expressions intersect metaphorically with this thesis, demonstrating how as a Canadian, she works within the “in-between two zones of reality” (p. 8). Levine-Cousineau (2004) claims in-betweenness is particularly evident in how Canadian photographers “use the portrait,” attempting “to remove the image itself from the context in which it was embedded, and then treat that image as if it had very little to do with the subject matter” (p. 26). In this way, Nathalie rendered liminality in art making, where exterior forms of the world were
adapted to interior landscapes and geographies of self. Nathalie invites viewers into her intimate, emotional landscapes, but she does not expose herself fully, leaving spaces for viewers to enter in their own ways (Benjamin, 1999).

Her gaze unto teaching culture is evidenced in her array of avant-garde artful expressions as anti-artworks within contemporary practice. Through questioning and critically investigating her experience, Nathalie dove into the social dynamics of becoming in ways that were distinct within this research study, deliberately subverting traditional aesthetic perspectives to explore identity from social, cultural, sexual and gendered roles in society. Her method of engagement was so different and so removed from formalist approaches, her instructors and sponsor teacher raised questions as to whether her work constituted art, an experience not unlike many feminist artists who pursue meaning-making through contemporary methods (Korsmeyer, 2004). Gendered understandings are traced throughout Nathalie’s works and I believe the visual construction threaded in her artful expressions is arguably an effort to liberate herself within teaching culture.

**Ruminating on artful expressions of becoming**

Based on the artful expressions of research partners, the art classroom, both in public schools and university, emerged as spaces of increasing visual self-awareness. Ruminating on visual expressions created during the teacher education program suggests to me the construction of art teacher identities, generated from reflective and creative practice, record movements toward becoming part of teaching culture through the transformation of self from student of art to art teacher. During the course of becoming-teacher, research partners expressed their interest in technical skills and self-expression, as well as discipline-based art education and social constructivism. Yet Freedman & Stuhr (2004) suggest “art educators have begun to move away
from emphasis on traditional fine arts disciplines toward a broader range of visual arts and cultural issues” (p. 815). This shift in the field of art education to a strong focus on visual culture is an area of study that resonated most strongly in Nathalie’s works, but Nathalie’s visual journal was critiqued for lack of artful engagement. The process of reconceptualising and reshaping art education curriculum in relation to teacher education requires increasing transparency of learning practices and awareness of the experiences of becoming-teachers within teaching culture, for such “intellectual and creative work and/or scholarship remains undocumented and invisible within the field at large” (Beudert, 2006, p. x).

Visual expressions instruct in particular ways, in this case, opening spaces within research to blend creative non-fiction and visual art practice within learning and teaching. This collection may be viewed as moving to a critical mass, where the momentum of a collection of artful expressions is a turning point to a new aesthetic in understanding teaching culture (Harrison, 2001). For me, these departures in form and content of artful expressions represent “entirely new constructions of knowledge among knowers” (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 578).

Despite debates in arts inquiry concerning what constitutes art, the areas of dissatisfaction for research partners in their learning experiences and repeated comments that meaningful aspects of learning, whether technical, reflective or socially constructed, were frequently absent from art experiences, requires further attention. If educational programs institutionalizing art consistently fail to support learner needs, I question if such programming becomes a form of performance by students, rather than active intellectual engagement.

Turning from visual art practice and feminist prisms, I now move to conversational considerations, the final part of the third triptych, to reflect upon the educational significance of exploring becoming-teacher through customary arts research, and assessing, in processes, practices and products, how arts research informs understandings of becoming.
Conversational Considerations

Ruth
Arts research rendered as a triptych installation, a conversation flowing across and between research processes, practices and products, creates alternate constructs of *doing*, unfolding the unexpectedness of uncertainty to “give rise to entirely new forms of knowledge” (Benjamin, 1999, p. 420). Drawing attention to both living and learning experiences seen and unseen within layers of textual and visual expressions, as subterranean rhizomes connecting topographical plateaus, I embrace complexity and plurality in arts research. Like a conversazione, this study is an invitation “to interrupt, to transform, to utter,” an ongoing discussion of the arts and education, a conversation that is ever-becoming (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p. 14).

In mosaic experimentation, I began by writing against, and conclude writing with, as a “critique from the inside,” contemplating arts research as cartographic explorations of artful possibilities (Baudrillard, 2005, p. 75). Composed over several years, these triptych panels are material interludes, involving writing interrupting teaching, teaching interrupting writing, and writing interrupting writing, creating concepts as nomadic in-betweenness, writing in the middle of researching, writing forward and back, and around again, concurrently, writing in all parts, a non-order, perhaps in the tradition of Hannah Arendt (1978), I have discovered, my thinking is always out of order.

**Arts research as a triptych installation**

With a rhizomatic “AND” spatially mapping this conversation of arts research, my triptych installation begins with paradigmatic deliberations of research processes unfolding in *Bildung*. Exploring the politics of inquiry and research, art/Art debates, analytic aesthetics and socio-cultural gentrification in the ébauche, the underpainting of arts research, I situate thinking about research processes by deviating from known positions (Tubbs, 2005). Layering the
ébauche, research practices emerge unexpectedly, in expressions of creativity, shifting understandings and contextualizing lived and learning experiences of Ruth, Ann and Nathalie. Within the art practices of research partners, richly textured seams of narratives and artful expressions appear as impressionistic and expressionist backbones that define arts research and becoming-teacher. In processes and practices, inquiry generates seeing with uncertainty, an anamorphic view, in a search for alternate meanings in the interpretive findings of research products.

The selection of a triptych form to render arts research is more than a stylistic decision, my purpose extends to the fusion of historical and contemporary meaning-making and representations. Triptychs traditionally embody emotion and provoke emotional interpretations, a disposition that appreciates the gravity of lived and learning experiences of research partners in this study. As an ensemble, this triptych approach is a synthesis of multiplicity, a rendering of becoming-teacher and doing arts research, while at the same time serving as a site of exploration in teaching culture, a form of artful expression to explore and open dialogue by attending to textual and visual form and content in relation to becoming-teacher (Stott, 1998). Narratives of becoming-teacher as creative non-fiction, as contemporary feminist Erziehungsroman, a subgenre of Bildungsroman, understood artographically, uncover congruence, borderlands and resistance in becoming-teacher. Artful expressions as Bildraum, interpreted as visual art practice, with a lens of feminist prisms, depicts embeddedness, mediation, and a critical gaze, revealing experiences of becoming-teacher as visually connective, transitive, and material. This study presents distinct renderings of arts research, interwoven with diverse theoretical constructs and research methodologies, culminating in discrete but interrelated analyses of arts research. Research products reflect my immersion in different bodies of literature, resulting in interpretations that are rooted in several areas of interest, where form and content of ideas,
languages and nuance are unique, demonstrating substantively how multiplicity in arts research functions to ensure comprehensive and significant inquiry.

Bringing together divergent theoretical and methodological approaches makes unruliness a means to complexify arts research. To rhizomatically interconnect concepts, moving laterally and longitudinally, diagonally, erratically, in the application of arts processes, practices and products, renders research in ways that are often out of order, making my expression of doing arts research an introductory comment to many more conversations still to be shared, discovered and imagined in a revisioning of thinking, seeing, knowing and becoming.

**Relational researching**

Relationality in arts research and the importance of research relationships in the transformational experiences of becoming-teacher are contingent on bonds of mutual respect, cooperative structures, and most importantly, trust (Manicom, 1992). This conversation of *doing* is foremost about the lives of research partners, and it was my privilege to collaborate with women who became my teachers of becoming.

A most important outcome for me was the positive response by partners concerning the study. Ruth reflected on negotiating our relationship and on representation in research:

I very much enjoyed working on this project right from the beginning. I wanted to be involved with it. I was more held back by the fact that I didn’t understand that things could be taken away [from transcripts] and it was really interesting for me to have [transcripts] in e-mail form and I could take out what I wanted. It took me a couple of times of doing that, and once I did, I think that helped me become more open. I find it interesting that I feel the need to be philosophical and give you a nice, proper sort of answer.

Ann shared perspectives on collaborative dimensions of the research process:

The one-on-one discussions were a great place to release. It was like a back door to sneak in and out of without being noticed. At some points it was very helpful and at others it was a bit of a burden. Mostly it helped me get
through and complemented what I was being taught. It was like having a
good friend, not just one that was a good listener but one that actually shared
interests and points of view, who had more information about the topic and
could contribute immensely. When I was on practicum, living with my
mother who worked with the school board, I shared a very similar
relationship and respect. It is an excellent feeling being able to come home,
or to your office, and be able to vent and talk shop, to seek ways to improve
and learn from the experience. I found it very rewarding. It helped me grow
and learn and I hope the project helps others in other ways.

In our final meeting, Nathalie reflected on the relational nature of partnering:

Being a part of this has been really powerful. I’ve had someone track me
through the whole program and I think that should be mandatory. I can’t
imagine having gone through it without this experience. It would have been
very … less personal that is for sure, and I would have felt a lot more alone.
I think it has helped inform my understanding of becoming because I’ve had
all these opportunities to reflect on things that maybe I wouldn’t have
reflected on. It enriched this experience for me.

Researching is not a perfect practice. As research partners, we continued to learn in the
course of doing, with each encounter adding another layer to our understandings. By sharing the
inner workings of our process, we bring forth the values that situate us as educators, attending to
our ways of creating meaningful spaces, to contemplate, and to reflect on questions raised and
experiences shared. Perhaps in doing so, we collectively refine our practices as artist,
researchers and teachers, seeking new ways to dialogue about the intricacies of our experiences.
Within the constructs of this study, I believe we collaborated as research partners in ways that
helped us overcome many of our individual challenges. Such close working relationships
became expressions of connectedness, of mutual understanding and support, and at the heart of
our friendships, meaningful moments extended beyond the parameters of the academic study
Angulating findings

My multiple, customary methodological approach of arts research in this case study highlights the complexities of addressing quality in research when traditional qualitative methods and alternate arts approaches converge.

To assess my engagement of qualitative methods, I applied a series of research protocols to the study (Creswell, 1998). I attended to integrity by including data sets of narratives and artful expressions, offering the sources of information for an examination of content and contexts to confirm interpretations. Validity was secured through trust and caring in our ongoing interactions, which led to progressively closer research relationships between research partners and myself. Member checks were routinely performed at each stage of the study, with research partners actively engaging in verification of interviews, narratives and interpretations. A critical examination of my role and the roles of research partners attended to transparency. By disclosing positionality and sources, the least distortion of information is made possible, ensuring better understandings of becoming-teacher. Generating interpretations of becoming-teacher from narrative and visual expressions strengthens results by drawing attention to areas of overlap, conflict, and gaps between experiences. Because stories of becoming are interpreted for dominant features, generalizations from this research are gestures offering insights, illuminating questions about teacher education that surfaced during the course of doing research, making generalizations an invitation to contemplate and consider possibilities in the transformations of research partners.

Embracing emerging methodological practices of arts research and continual movement in methodologies in the course of this study requires a more holistic view of quality to gauge success. Moving to an active form of ‘angulating,’ I address demands for new protocols within the plurality of arts research processes, practices and products. Ongoing self-reflection and
reflection by research partners documents transformations, and the consensus of research partners with my interpretations of their experiences affirms understandings are consistent. In this way, arts research is a means to rethink the notion of the expert when expertise emerges in collaborative relationships (Benjamin, 1999). Creative non-fiction as a research method represents both ambiguous and definite understandings, depending, as Genette states, upon the receptive abilities of the audience. I anticipate too another researcher would write different creative non-fictions based on the experiences of research partners, demonstrating the potential for transformation and the values and beliefs of pre-service teachers in other ways. The interrelatedness of experiences, feelings, intents and beliefs attends to sensory awareness, making “vigour,” as Leggo suggests, “rigour,” further infusing my trust in mosaic experimentation as a catalyst for high levels of certainty in this conversation of arts research (C. Leggo, personal communication, April 28, 2007).

The issue of representation, an ongoing debate in traditional qualitative research and an issue needing to be further problematised in arts research, requires I continually question how research partners are represented in the study, how my role as researcher may have influenced understandings, and how research can generate unintended power imbalances. Detailed accounts of both doing arts research and the processes of becoming-teacher reveal social and political contexts that shaped this study, and contributed to improved representation overall. Decision-making was shared between myself and research partners, with control of sources belonging to research partners. In this way, our working relationships, our dialoguing, kept issues of representation central in this study. Perhaps most importantly, I am concerned with how and why knowledge was created, constructed and shared in the context of this study, not in making truth claims.
Arts research and becoming-teacher

The application of arts research methods to analyze becoming-teacher attends to the intimate, transformative experiences of research partners by highlighting social practices within teaching culture. Arts research is a starting point for critical, reflective discourse rooted in situated, partial knowledges and multiple perspectives of self in the world, a rhetorical, aesthetic and ideological framework where methods of creative non-fiction and visual art practice honour the complex and conflicting experience of becoming-teacher textually, visually, and integratively. As an arts researcher, I concurrently wrote the intertext of research processes, practices and products as a conversation of directions, dilemmas and deliberations, an expression of presence and accountability when conducting arts research. In this way, the premise of messiness in arts research is a metaphorical and literal approach to understanding teacher education as an uncertain experience of becoming.

Adopting creative non-fiction as a core method reinforces the importance of engaging with integrity in arts research, and finding the method(s) best suited to emerging research, rather than applying the arts method in which I am most expert and imposing my disposition unto the research. Because arts research resists singular methods of inquiry, and singular interpretations of research, I cannot envision only doing arts research as a photographer, I must be able and willing to apply multiple genres as methods of inquiry. Such decisions and realizations encapsulate dimensions of ethical responsibility as arts researchers, engaging in conversations in ways that best enrich educational discourse by connecting lived and learning experiences and informing educational practices and research (Witherell & Noddings, 1991). After doing arts research through a method new to me, I question if entering artful experimentation as a novice and generalist is critical to generating arts research with an anamorphic perspective, where artful expression is no longer the sole domain of art specialists or practitioners, but a source of
knowing that extends beyond traditional confines of art. In this way, expertise in a given arts method like creative non-fiction is not necessarily a prerequisite, but engagement as an arts researcher in the interpretations of such expressions is, placing less emphasis on a fine arts approach and more upon a Deleuzian geophilosophical approach for conducting and generating understandings through a lens of the arts. Creative non-fiction is a responsive, fluid method enabling me to move from everyday storying about to storying with, the context of which is not singular events but relational constructions, affirming arts researchers have a critical role to perform in conveying intimate understandings of lived and learning experiences as part of the community of arts researchers and in this case, the community of becoming-teachers, particularly when a group like pre-service teachers do not necessarily have the power or privilege to share their experiences within teaching culture. Attending to how and why research partners think, rather than engaging in a critique of the program, focuses research on learning about the social context of becoming-teacher, a position consistent with the interests of research partners. During our year together, partners often commented they viewed the study as a means to make public their stories as a resource for incoming students as well as policy makers.

Creative non-fiction has further implications for the art-like / Art debate, suggesting responsiveness in arts research requires researchers move across and within genres of arts methods to find appropriate methodological fit(s), and I argue, in doing so, arts researchers also position works more explicitly, for example, as definitive or ébauche, as art-like to Art works, bringing greater transparency and deeper understandings about the scope and degree of their expertise. Arts research is a new way of researching that holds an inherent vulnerability as a researcher, potentially revealing in some circumstances, artful experimentation in inquiry is novice arts practice. In this case, my engagement in creative non-fiction is a shift from my photographic practice, a shift which may be interpreted as a disjuncture, but I would suggest, the
ébauche of storying experiences in text shares certain parallels with storying experiences visually, and while my venture into creative non-fiction is new, and I am a learner of this method of artful expression, the resulting stories are powerful, definitive art-like tellings of what it is to experience becoming-teacher. Creative non-fiction emerges, as Genette suggests, with artistry and artistic character that is relational, with an intentional aesthetic function and effect, as autographic occurrence-works, impacts an audience in the effect the artworks induce, in this case, as potential teaching and assessment tools of professional development and knowledge. Through creative non-fiction I seek to demonstrate what Witherell & Noddings (1991) advocate for in teaching, a call to caring in the words of research partners that is unbound in teaching culture, making each rendering a means to ruminate in layers between the parts and the whole story, creating an opportunity to speak to teacher educators and becoming-teachers. Creative non-fiction as the central panel of this triptych installation provides the framework around which to build a conversation about arts research in action. In the course of engaging in creative non-fiction, I began to map a geography of arts research defined by storying as the method and object of inquiry. In fact, in all genres of the arts, whether expression is written, visual, oral, performative or virtual, the story is arguably both behind everything, in the background, the underpainting, AND at the heart of all arts practice, making the story the pinnacle of convergence in arts research, a thread woven through all artful expression. In a search for meaning-making, it is upon the story that art-like and Art works emerge as refined artful expressions.

This study demonstrates my commitment to artistic expression, educational practices and openness to possibilities. The extent of information shared by research partners warranted a comprehensive period to analyze, reflect and interpret, and then to begin again, to honour their commitment to the project, a commitment even more significant given the extent of emotional
distress that occurred during the strenuous experience of becoming-teacher. Thinking through the sources of information, synthesizing lived and learning experiences with theoretical perspectives and practice-based research in art education, teacher education and curriculum studies, required both intense intimacy with research partners, and degrees of detachment to achieve an independent eye, to reassess my thinking and writing, to find the continuities and ruptures. Aspects of this study intersect with interdisciplinary lenses, blending education with philosophy, feminist perspectives, social and behavioural geography, cultural studies and art history, collectively creating critical perspectives in and about arts research. This study was an aesthetic experience that I did not wish to rush, but to savour for the fluidity of ideas, imaginings and movements that exist independent of timelines, and in due course, became a triptych of arts research.

**Educational significance**

According to Thurber (2004), “research should be conducted not merely to describe but to ground theory and inform practice,” and in this conversation, arts research draws attention to intimate portrayals of transformations, as well as insights about the processes and practices of education needing reconsideration, and in some cases reform (p. 487). Stokrocki (2004) states the field of art education requires “more arts-based methods of presenting contextual research findings” to “further readability” of research (p. 461). The purpose of this conversation is to bring different perspectives to the field of education by charting movements of students of art becoming art teachers, in an effort to better understand how to educate future art teachers, how to teach art, and how to make art a means to enhance understandings of self.

Pre-service teacher education is a well-established area of study with a host of themes, including pre-service teachers’ belief acquisition and ideas about teaching (Virta, 2002);
instructional and management strategies used by pre-service teachers in the classroom (Crespo, 2003); and professional practices including supervision and mentoring (Ralph, 2003). Although there are some studies examining how identity changes for pre-service art teachers in secondary settings (Galbraith, 2004), this study broadens constructs by exploring identity in relation to learning institutions and teaching culture as documented in a substantial collection of textual and visual expressions and reflective inquiry. Arts research as an alternate way to access becoming-teacher attends to the tensions, challenges and in-betweenness research partners experienced as they negotiated changing definitions of self. In so doing, critical discussions about the transformative shift of art student to art teacher made art and art making curricular learning tools. Strategies for curriculum development in art education may be derived from the social and political practices that shaped how research partners understood experiences as becoming-teachers.

**Teaching as a ‘listening culture’**

Among lessons learned from the lived and learning experiences of research partners, it is paramount aspects of art education and teacher education practices are reconceptualised in terms of health and well-being. Because pre-service teachers on practicum are not regarded as students, and they are not employees of schools, they exist in-between. During periods of liminality, not belonging fully to either domain is problematic. As uncertified pre-service teachers, they are not members of the teacher’s union and thus, do not qualify for support programs, even though they are bound by the same rules and regulations, such as the professional code of conduct. Because pre-service teachers are not in a student environment on a university campus, immediate student support is not readily available, or even accessible, depending on the geographic location of the practicum assignment. In addition to access, time is
also a factor, given expectations of participation in schools beyond working hours when on practicum. In the case of research partners, the only formal support became third parties outside of their community of practice, such as personal physicians.

For the well-being of students, and as an investment in the profession, the promotion of explicit standards of practice that facilitate positive emotional climates, as well as higher levels of emotional literacy in learning organizations through the adoption of “a listening culture” would be beneficial (Carlyle & Woods, 2002, p. 147). Raising awareness among pre-service teachers about the stresses of the teaching occupation and establishing within the curriculum a comprehensive component to educate becoming-teachers about the profession in this regard is one approach to prepare becoming-teachers with better information and awareness of potentialities in the field (Sumsion, 2002).

Such strategies emphasize social connectivity as the basis of support systems. For preservice teachers, formal peer support and mentorship, as well as opportunities for informal debriefing within the program, specifically, encouraging pre-service teachers to speak freely and in confidence, serves to address the current gap in student support. Opportunities to connect with recent graduates of the programs, for whom the teacher education experience is current, as well as retired teachers, who offer professional maturity, may benefit pre-service teachers. In the case of research partners, such relationships, forged informally and often by chance, proved to be critical in their successful completion of the program. In this way, the findings of this study indicate the relationship between students, learning institutions and teaching culture in general needs to be redefined, moving from the current reactive model, to a more constructivist approach that emphasizes membership in teaching culture and raises the profile of becoming-teachers as important to the teaching profession.
A disconnect between research partners and learning institutions is evident in experiences of ambiguity, insecurity and doubt reported during the program of study. Given faculty advisors did not figure prominently in the lived and learning experiences of research partners, the absence of strong relationships with faculty advisors may be a contributing factor to these tensions. Faculty advisors were at best shadow figures. Ruth described a good working triad between her sponsors and faculty advisor, but her faculty advisor was always peripheral. Although Ann described her faculty advisor and sponsor as excellent mentors, she stated the faculty advisor failed to perform as required:

My faculty advisor also had many personal matters and health issues throughout the practicum to which I had to be sensitive to, work around and deal with. I was previously under the impression that our relationships were supposed to be strictly professional but they ended up becoming quite personal and in so doing, it was hard to tell where I might cross lines in our relationships.

In Nathalie’s experience, the relationship with her faculty advisor, like her sponsor teacher, was “very superficial.” Nathalie reported the failure of the faculty advisor to make regular visits, and the frustration of “sometimes I wouldn’t hear for my faculty advisor for three weeks,” despite her e-mails requesting support. In the end, Nathalie had to ensure her final report was signed by the sponsor teacher and delivered to the university because the faculty advisor did not complete the paperwork. This represents the extent of the faculty advisor’s impact on research partners. The minimal role of the faculty advisor may be a contributing factor to the disjuncture between the university as a site of postmodern learning, and the more modernist orientation in the field. The responsibilities of the faculty advisor and the importance of building bonds with becoming-teachers warrants further consideration, for as Phelan (2007) suggests, “choices are not predetermined but are conditioned by the patterns of meaning that are available to us at any given time” (p. 54).
In turn, beginning-teachers described physically performing as required, but in some instances, they did not embody their actions with authenticity. This suggests critical and unseen levels of resistance were underway, in response to institutional structures and power relations. If, as teachers, and teachers of teachers, we are always modelling to our students, we must be mindful that in spite of our best efforts to create collegial and relational environments, students may experience those environments with oppositional stances. Students may perceive actions, behaviours and conversations in unexpected and unintended ways that are dependent on the interplay of social dynamics within the classroom, and contingent on the social locations students inhabit outside of the classroom. The doubling of roles in becoming-teachers and the degrees of difficulty that can occur in classroom practice provide a starting point for making different curricular decisions. In this case, curriculum decisions extend to the delivery of the practicum assignment.

**Geographies of self in teaching culture**

A core element in this study involves how research partners artfully represented and negotiated understandings of self in new physical and socio-cultural environments. In this case, research partner’s entry to the profession of teaching brought about critical questions concerning gender, class, power and voice. Bodily interactions in spaces of learning and teaching shaped how partners constructed and mapped geographies of self. Tensions that emerged during the teacher education program are manifest in textual and visual expressions documenting how they navigated educational landscapes through personal, social and cultural experiences. Reflective of mind, body and spirit, geographies of self as cultural practice in teaching emerged as a critical site for understanding the material and transformational nature of lived and learning experiences.
In this case, bringing art education together with spatial perspectives through creative non-fiction and artful expression provides a forum to construct identity and place artfully.

Geographies of self in teaching culture attend to place and identity most significantly in the connectivity of partners to classrooms as sites of becoming. As landscapes of meaning, classrooms involve complex sets of social practices reflecting the situatedness of research partners and how research partners encode their worlds of teaching. Research partners mediated classrooms and were mediated by classrooms, as both the subject and object of observing and analyzing experiences in relation to teaching culture.

During the teacher education program, research partners moved through multiple communities of teaching and learning, emerging as authentic insiders who spoke of their individual experiences as situated knowledges generated within groups. Identifying with different social, cultural and class groups, with each group in relation to other groups, research partners gradually shifted from students of art to art teachers. Their movements revealed changing relationships between their social groups, as well as between art practice and teaching practice, not as incidental, but as extended and in-depth conversations of becoming. As Grauer (2007) states, “it is not enough for [pre-service] teachers to be capable of replicating their own education in art,” rather pre-service teachers “should be able to reflect on their own understandings in light of the values and theories that are part of the field of art education” (p. 8). Through arts research, pedagogies may be understood “not only around our feelings for what we know but also around our knowledge of why and how we have come to feel the way we do about what we teach” (Grumet, 1988, p. 128).

Such situated knowledges evolve from dialoguing about everyday experiences, and in this case, the art education cohort and field placements provided key locations for social interactivity through which research partners experienced an array of teaching networks. Social
interactions guided knowledge development as becoming-teachers, reflective of social realities and understandings of existing power relations. Through the teacher education program, research partners questioned different aspects of institutional practices that constituted teaching culture in their university program and in their field experiences, revealing in the process how lived and learning experiences of pre-service teachers are often hidden from view. As demonstrated in narratives and artful expressions, research partners became conscious of, and reflected critically upon, social location in relation to sponsor teachers, school staff, faculty advisors, high school students, as well as cohort peers and university instructors.

Drawing upon understandings of situated knowledges, research partners, physically embedded in educational landscapes, formed emerging relational identities as becoming-teachers. Research partners described becoming as finding connections between art and teaching, interweaving concepts, ideas and experiences, as well as in the recognition that becoming-teacher unfolds at different times, through different events and in varying degrees. Geographies of self were mapped through critical engagement with creative non-fictions and artful expressions of research partners, where the aesthetics of lived and learning experiences reveal transformative shifts by actively “seeing-with” research partners (Wylie, 2005, p. 243). Movement between public and private realms suggest changing perspectives of research partners in relation to physical locations within teaching culture, and the interplay of social contexts and memberships in many groups, has implications for curriculum development in art education and represents an alternate way of engaging in teacher education as social practice.

**Changing delivery practices in teacher education**

As demonstrated in creative non-fictions, emotional contours and a sense of dislocation potentially create constraints in the understandings and practices of becoming-teachers. Opening
teacher education to collaborative leadership with becoming-teachers engaging as researcher-teachers has a tremendous potential to reform and revitalize programming. By ensuring programs continue to evolve from the grassroots with innovative and progressive changes, teacher education becomes change-in-action, a forum for self-conscious and candid reflexivity that empowers becoming-teachers with new understandings of individual and social agency, and voice and belonging. In this study, research partners were in a collaborative research relationship with me for one year, and unlike efforts to bring researcher notions into short-term art methods courses (see Chapter 4), research partners did develop strong research identities through extended engagement, bringing notions of researching into teacher education in ways that changed their understood roles within their learning cohort. Extending the role of researcher to becoming-teachers, embracing pre-service teachers as researcher-theorists, as researchers in their own right, is a provocative notion, an approach advocated by Irwin as a potential reform in teacher education (R. L. Irwin, personal communication, May 30, 2007). Indeed, the narratives and artful expressions shared by research partners are examples of such research, and could serve as the beginnings of a body of artful work dedicated to sharing experiences of becoming-teachers. Given the availability of electronic forums such as blogs, websites and archives, initiating conversations through such resources would offer incoming students a valuable source of information, with a clear sense of the ‘checks and balances’ required in teacher education.

In this way, I bring into question the ‘traces of parentage,’ not only in research approaches, but in teaching practices that linger in the field (Hughes, 2004). Research partners identified a number of long-held assumptions in teacher education, some reminiscent of the early history of teacher training, as practices deserving closer examination. Rethinking traditional institutional structures, like the apprenticeship model, would encourage greater flexibility in teacher education, opening boundaries within the potentially confining spaces of teaching
The curriculum then takes new directions, with less emphasis on skill-based, “mechanistic” content and more concern for the cultivation of qualities that encourage “moral and intellectual attitudes” (Farr Darling, 2007, p. 9). The curricular implications of this study, in accordance with emerging research like Farr Darling (2007), suggest reforms in teacher education begin with the “development of dispositions, sensitivities and understandings that guide thoughtful judgements about what to believe or do in the complex world of the classroom,” against the “backdrop of dynamic political and social factors” (pp. 9, 13). Creating new standards of curriculum through arts research and new pedagogical methods in the delivery of information to becoming-teachers may make the future of teacher education, as Farr Darling (2007) suggests, an expression of collective improvisation.

Attending to creativity as pedagogy, making spaces of possibility available to students, reterritorializes teacher education as a “social group,” always engaging in “transformational learning processes” (Evans, Cook & Griffiths, 2007, p. 2). According to Gale (2007), “teacher education practices as sites of inquiry … encourages a careful and thorough re-thinking of the theory and practice of teacher education as a terrain of complexity, multiplicity and interconnectivity” (p. 471). In this case, narratives serve as critical interconnected sites of inquiry, as alternate ways of thinking about becoming-teacher, making rhizomatic processes the impetus for program and curricular change, shifting the experience of becoming-teachers to nomadic subjectivity in relation to teaching culture (Gale, 2007). Embedded in the creative non-fictions of becoming-teacher are aspects of that which brought many of us to the teaching profession, an ethic of caring, shared by research partners and reflected in the attentiveness and thoughtfulness of their stories, grounding purpose, commitment and agency within teaching culture, and giving pause to reconsider the weight of teaching practices and the profoundly heartfelt transformations of becoming-teacher. Honouring relationships in this way affirms
teaching is a calling rather than a job, and this is perhaps doubly so in art education, where individuals come to art as an initial calling, and teaching as another calling, often struggling between these identities. The complexity of living callings both publicly and privately, at all times, is evident in the lived and learning experiences of research partners during their teacher education program.

**Conversational considerations**

Reflecting on arts research as unfolding the unexpectedness of uncertainty has unveiled questions concerning transformations of becoming-teacher, and movements between and across the processes, practices and products of arts research. My research often emerges from teaching experiences and art practice, and in the interchange of art, research and teaching, I discover the fulfillment of my researcher role, to return to the classroom with heightened awareness of teaching as a complex undertaking, with a commitment to challenge and improve practice, continually rethinking how and why in the design and delivery of curriculum. Because of this study, my inquiry into arts research has kindled an emerging passion for theorizing methodologies, in particular nascent approaches like arts research, an area of interest I anticipate will continue to evolve.

My artistic practice too has shifted through the course of this study, most notably from making specific art for the public forum to more emphasis on general art as personal inquiry, a shift that corresponds with actively creating spaces for students to exhibit artworks as part of courses. As an artist-researcher-teacher, I attend to the importance of doubling in the role of art educator, being both a researcher of, and educator to, becoming-teachers, recognizing in my practice my becoming radically aware of the real struggles for some pre-service teachers, considering how such struggles have been missed in past researching and what such revelations
mean to the field of teacher education. In turn, mosaic experimentation emerges in my teaching practice as a way into developing more sophisticated understandings of teaching culture while at the same time, encouraging evermore methods and processes in art making for students and for me. Opening art making in this way evokes student responses of excitement and willingness to engage in conversations about their artworks, culminating in generative spaces of learning. For some students, engaging in art practice with a perspective of mosaic experimentation is a novel experience, and to then participate in an exhibition as part of an art education course generates newfound interest in art, broadening ways of seeing among becoming and being teachers with an educative spirit I hope will hold possibilities for their future students.

Mosaic experimentation prompted my interest to explore additional mediums of sketching and fibre arts after an interlude of many years, as meditative and personal spaces. In the act of doing such activities, I contemplated a “particularly intellectual agenda” concerning the possibilities emerging in arts research and in this case study of women becoming-teachers, enlarging my conversational considerations and generating potentially deeper sensitivities and insights about landscapes of meaning for research partners and myself (Wylie, 2005, p. 234). Many of the resulting expressions are definitive works, while many more remain in process, in the ébauche of becoming, repositioning my artful expressions in accordance with my situatedness as an arts researcher, as a generalist, hybridist, a nomadic outsider, always in-between. Enacting the role of generalist in arts research during the course of conducting this study has proven a significant educative movement, opening myself to more and more possibilities within genres of artful expression, recognizing my differing levels of expertise with each medium, my art-like to Art, yet confirming plurality as the cornerstone of research AND art.
As a small scale, in-depth research undertaking, this study reflects the most meaningful moments for Ruth, Ann and Nathalie in their times and places of becoming-teacher. Joining with research partners granted new insights, a witnessing of dreams and struggles as student-teachers, student-artists, artist-teachers, always striving to become-teacher. I did not anticipate the expansiveness of my inquiry, the range and nature of experiences Ruth, Ann and Nathalie shared, nor the style and content resulting from this work. From the richness of their experiences, interpretations about becoming-teacher broaden this conversation of researching in art education to resonate and circulate with possibilities.

I consider how the narratives and artful expressions of research partners can serve as teaching tools, as reference for those interested in teacher education. Perhaps in this way, a contribution of this study resides in curricular and pedagogic questions that engage lived and learning experiences, inspiring artists, researchers and teachers, and becoming and being teachers, to view practices differently through the revelations of Ruth, Ann and Nathalie. If teacher education is truly transformative and constructive change is possible, then extending this study to further inquiry generates a host of relational research questions: How can contradictory perspectives unfold with openness in teaching culture? How can unexpected experiences shared by Ruth, Ann and Nathalie inform future becoming-teachers and change practices in the field? How can uncertainty become an innovative pedagogic approach in teacher education to enhance teaching and learning? I consider too how unfolding the unexpectedness of uncertainty invigorates my continuing explorations of arts research as a becoming-researcher, making this research a working text, a research triptych which continues to generate questions, including: Is this study an arts anomaly? Where are my artful blind spots? When is art and learning, rather than what is art and learning? And as I conclude, I wonder: What would it be to revisit research partners a year from completing the study? Or in a decade? How differently would they recall
their lived and learning experiences of becoming-teacher over time? How might teaching change for them, and how might they change teaching?

Indeed this has been an experience of making the familiar strange, of reverberating across and in-between arts research, of being out of order, for I did not set out to research teacher education or becoming-teacher, but responded to research scenarios with a lens of arts research as it happened, writing creative non-fictions, the central panel of this research triptych, moving to accompanying panels, to theoretical discussions and interpretations, only to return again, to expand again, refining all research expressions in the process. Lingering in the processes, practices and products of arts research, I now consider how creative non-fictions as arts research can be understood in many ways, just as the experiences of becoming-teacher are understood so differently. Together with research partners, we offer with care this conversation of becoming, reflecting our understandings of the experience, but I can only speculate, not anticipate, the affect this rendering of arts research may have on audiences. Doing arts research has been an intuitive, fluid movement for me, always wanting to learn more in a process of humility, of knowing less and less, and becoming certain of even less. Coming to inquiry and research through arts methodologies and methods requires, as Benjamin (1999) states, “contemplating one’s own activity – new awareness – not as a constraint but as an impetus to rigorous study” (p. 667). I now remain, tangled in ideas and out of order, and so, the conversation continues, and begins anew.
## A TRIPTYCH INSTALLATION
### AS ARTS RESEARCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNFOLDING</th>
<th>UNEXPECTEDNESS</th>
<th>UNCERTAINTY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A triptych installation rendered as arts research, a conversation flowing across topographical plateaus ~ unfolding research processes, with the unexpectedness of research practices and research products ~ connecting in-between subterranean rhizomatic interruptions, tracing concept formation in arts research to create alternate constructs in inquiry, a rearranging of understandings, the essence of mosaic experimentation, a becoming that is out-of-order, in a conversation that is ever-becoming, and now begins anew . . .</td>
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</table>

*Nathalie*
REFERENCES


professors’ beliefs about knowledge and research in education. **Teaching and Teacher Education, 23,** 2, 123-135.


APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Artful expressions of becoming
APPENDIX 2: Demographic profiles of research partners
APPENDIX 3: Behavioural Research Ethics Board Certificate of Approval
APPENDIX 1:

ARTFUL EXPRESSIONS OF BECOMING
Artful Expressions of Becoming
In response to Eisner’s (2002) call for comprehensive research in the field of art education, I explore artful expressions of research partners and their reflections on making art by placing their works at the centre of this conversation, positioning artful expressions as “an essential component of the curriculum” (Sanders-Bustle, 2003, p. 9). Visual expression renders different perspectives than text, and in this way brings another dimension to the experience of becoming. Visual expressions created by research partners were collected from visual journals, photographs supplied by research partners, and images created as part of the self-directed project near the end of our study.

By asking research partners to participate in reflective inquiry, partners were prompted to engage in their art making and to become more actively involved in their learning experience. Much of the literature concerning art education addresses an array of themes of the art teacher experience (Gibson, 2003; Har Lam & Kember, 2004; Page et al., 2006; Thorton, 2005), yet there is little research focusing on artful expressions or teacher reflections on making art (Ross, 1999). Artful expressions document moments and acts of questioning, thinking and making, an approach enabling me to imagine possibilities through arts research.

In this expansive collection of one-hundred and eighty-five images, visual expression is a means to explore the development of knowing among students becoming teachers. I organized each data set as a matrix to align images and reflections together, rendering information in arts inquiry in a way that assures transparency and does not delimit understandings to my interpretations alone. Like narratives of becoming, the following collections invite multiple readings, interpretations and writings.
Ruth’s artful expressions: I’m feeling so creative
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate 1</th>
<th>These are my textiles, and it is not artistic so much. This is my favourite one that I did but it is supposed to be a square. Felting is so much fun! I thought it was a tug boat.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.jpg" alt="Plate 1" /></td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>Plate 2</th>
<th>Knitting is just so wonderful, you sit in front of the TV and you can really, you know it’s one of those things you can do at the same time as you watch TV. But the purl stitch rolls in, the knit stitch is very, how do you say, it will stay very flat and when I do the purl stitch the ends rolled in. I want to make so much art right now I’m feeling so creative because they’ve given us so many ideas. I think of a concept and do it. I was thinking the other day for the first time I would almost like to have a gallery space.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2.jpg" alt="Plate 2" /></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate 3</th>
<th>And then we did weaving. This was so much fun. It was just really cool because it was something you could do with Grade 8’s for instance. It took me such a long time! If you want make a purse, you just go around the template all the way. I think purses are better because if you do a tapestry the strings on the end tend to go in, convex or concave, one of the two, it goes in. I came home and I said, guess what I did today!</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.jpg" alt="Plate 3" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What I was really trying to do was to pretend this was a jungle and I was going to do another photo transfer of me but I haven’t done that yet. It was really cool, oh I love this class! It is just so great! And because of the Pass/Fail deal I feel so free to try whatever I want. I just love it! If they were going to give out A, B, or C’s, it would definitely change it. I didn’t realize that this is a different way of being an artist. I think that even showing boys, it could get them to have fun and also show them that it is hard, it’s not just women sitting by the fire doing it.

It’s best to be able to see everything. We just did indigo dyeing. This has been so much fun … I want to do this with my kids. We got to collaborate with a Home Economics teacher and we got to do a range of thirteen. It’s a beautiful color, ours was the best vat too. That was fun and there are so many different things that you can do and it was so neat and so easy.

We were shown about five or so different ways to make patterns with our cloth pieces. The type of cloth was also important in determining how the indigo would interact with it. I just jumped right in and I think I tried all five!
I really like that one because it looks like skin. Like reptile skin. I know that this was done the same way. But this one was tied tighter and in a different way, it’s amazing.

These are different ways of making. And this one is so structured.

I’m writing all sorts of things, using different materials. This was the first sort of collage. I have never collaged, not ever, so it was really fun to get in there and on the first day, there was a little bit of, ‘What is everyone else doing, should I be doing that too?’ Since then it’s gotten really, whatever you want to do that’s fine. And I just really like that.
### Plate 10

Notation: In very general terms, the arts contribute to our personal efficacy as well as our interconnectedness with all living and spiritual entities.

I found this from a quote in one of our readings. I really like fonts. I try different things. Since my undergrad years studying ancient Greek and Roman art history, I’ve always loved their architecture, especially their victory arches. They celebrated success.

### Plate 11

It’s my favourite thing to do, to draw portraits. I love portraiture. I always find my pictures look more like caricature. I would call them more cartoonish than real, just because of the lighting and shadow. We did this in class. I had to write it down, you know, you don’t think about those things afterwards so, these are the ten things about teachers and we had to pick our favourite three.

### Plate 12

There’s a girl in my class that cuts up credit cards all the time and so I thought what a neat idea, so I had to try it too, and it was awesome! Yeah, it’s my old one, and since my husband and I have gone to the bank, I’ve got four new ones now that I can cut up! Well my friend and I got some peacock feathers and we thought okay let’s make some art this weekend. We can show each other and we did this really neat picture with the peacock feathers. You do a picture, like portraiture, you know, those pins that women use to wear that had the side of the face?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate 13</th>
<th>I was trying to be conceptual and bring in the historical so I was thinking about the Roman arch, like a victory arch, and how they are so important in that society, and how people would ride under them and make them for such special occasions. I think being a teacher is really something to be celebrated and to allow your kids to walk under you. That was really fun because I had never made an icon idea before and it was really hard to put all my ideas into one picture, so I think for me, I did it quite well.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plate 14</td>
<td>Well this was early on, and I was thinking, ‘Is what I’m going to say, going to make sense to my kids? Are they going to be hearing a different language? Is it going to be awkward for them?’ It was very interesting. A very interesting feeling at that time. Each discipline has academic jargon that can really get in the way of learning sometimes. Expression is not about the big words you can use, it’s so much more than that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate 15</td>
<td>There was this commercial airing at the time that had this little girl on the edge of a diving board, and there was this caption that read, ‘Remember when you thought you could?’ Or something similar. The next scene was a full grown woman who had made the decision to take part in what the commercial was selling, and the background music was playing ‘This little light of mine, I’m going to let it shine.’ It just really touched me, and this is my own personal interpretation of that commercial. I would probably put myself in that little girl’s position, and all the words are being associated with my thoughts and feelings, fears and desires.</td>
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</table>
Plate 16

This was part of a discussion we had in class. We were all brainstorming together, and I was in a ‘I have to get all this down!’ mode. Mind-mapping does work very well for me, and I still wanted to use some sense of creativity, hence the colour.

Plate 17

At this point in the teacher education program, I was really wondering why teachers are sometimes stereotyped badly. I drew this picture from a couple of magazine shots, and tried to brainstorm what might make a teacher stagnant, or unable to teach anymore? Might it be the tight hair bun? I was also trying to find things that I did NOT want to be as a teacher.

Plate 18

This page really marked a change in my visual journal. After this page, I used so much more colour. It was as though my creativity really sparked into flame. I loved this page for the font. I was just drawing it out, and kept doodling, and I loved the result! The writing on this page was kind of my ‘get it all out before the two week practicum starts so I’ll just have positive thoughts.’ I think I had been on an observing visit with my class, and all sorts of new questions had come to mind.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate 19</th>
<th>Originally, some double pages were used to get more done in my visual journal. I thought there was sort of an expectation that we would have a lot accomplished when we handed it in at the end of our first term. However, the larger pages did have a lot of extra space! And so, many times, they became very important little milestones for my thoughts.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plate 20</td>
<td>I remember this night, my husband wanted to go to the theatre and watch a new movie. Edvard Munch’s <em>The Scream</em>, for some unknown reason, just popped into my head. I think having so much I want to do: Read, write, take in, memorize etcetera, so I wouldn’t forget. These colours really spoke to my emotions. This overlay of visual culture and fine art doesn’t happen to me very often, and even less often is what I would call successful. I think this image speaks to how students feel. Be responsible? Or have fun? I was in that funny place of learning how to be a teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate 21</td>
<td>While I was working in my visual journal it didn’t matter whether or not it was personal or public. I think I really thought of it more as personal, sort of as an ‘anti-textbook’ that I had to fill in, rather than reading what was inside. In many ways my husband was one of my most influential teachers throughout the year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Visual records of teacher clothing

Plate 22
All of the outfits really spoke to my insecurity of looking young. One of my good friends often says that when she puts on a suit, she becomes the suit. It gives her confidence. One could say the same about my tireless search for the ‘teacher outfit.’ I needed to become the teacher. It’s funny to think this way, but what I wore really helped me put forth a confidence that I did not have in the beginning. Because of that confidence I was able to put forth the knowledge that I wanted to share with the students. I would say that outfits with blazers are still the most ‘teacherlike.’ At the time, dressing was not an example to me of making art. Looking back, I don’t know!

Plate 23
E-mail: I wore some nice brown slacks and a ‘teacherish sweater’ that was just a bit less formal. It seems from today that the teachers are very very comfortable. Some wear jeans!

Plate 24
E-mail: Today I wore blue slacks and a blue, brown and tan sweater - young teacherish.
Plate 25

E-mail: I wore a grey skirt with grey blazer with a bright yellow shirt underneath. I wore black tights with black shoes, and yellow earrings and necklace.

Plate 26

E-mail: Today I wore some black and red pinstripe pants with a white sweater with red, purple and plum stripes.

Plate 27

E-mail: I don’t know if I e-mailed my wardrobe from yesterday - I wore some plum colour pants and sweater and then a black blazer overtop.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate 28</th>
<th>E-mail: Hello! I wore maroon pants with a light pink striped collared shirt, with a very cool belt. I felt quite teacherish yesterday.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plate 29</td>
<td>E-mail: Today I’m wearing brown slacks and a striped non-collared shirt, with a dark tan blazer (empire waist) - my favourite one.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Self-directed project**

| Plate 30 | Journal entry: I am excited to embark on a more studio approach to researching the differences between artist and art educator.  

All the decoration and much of my doodling I would say speaks to exploration, whether it be teacher or artist. I have to say that I learned a lot about my artistic practice, probably as much as teaching during education. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate 31</th>
<th>At first I thought this was a symbol of the ideal artist, but through the year I learned that traditional and contemporary forms of fine art are equally important.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plate 32</td>
<td>Throughout the year, I remembered back to my high school years, and my art teacher always had a start up activity for us to do. I’ve read some books on how the brain is enriched so much by the arts, and I really felt that one day when I had my own class, I would make sure I had activities that would help open students minds so they could begin thinking more creatively, whether it be by a game, brainstorming, colouring, anything. I believe creativity is an important key to transferring personal expression from thought into art.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate 33</td>
<td>I guess I’m really into mind-mapping! Whether it be in thought bubbles, or branches, etc. When I think about it, this process helps me to focus my thinking, and linking of my words and thoughts together in an organized picture. I like how you call it a tree of knowledge!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This picture related to one of my lectures one day in the teaching program. It must have been a Monday or something, I don’t know, and we were all kind of doing our own thing. After my short practicum especially, I learned to watch how our professors taught us and what they did to try and keep our attention. How could I transfer that into my classroom later on?

Actually here I was bored, I was sitting in a classroom during a presentation, and they were talking about technology and trying to show us a process. They went too fast for me, and I got so behind that there was nothing I could do but wait until that part of the presentation was over. So, I started drawing!

This is more of a personal rendering of my marriage. One hand is my husband’s, the other mine. I liked how the fingers interwove, and I coloured them as I saw fit. This was during a small period of time when I was thinking a lot about intellectual diversity within the classroom, and how teachers teach individual students. In that sense, colours really were metaphors of differences and similarities, if that makes sense.
### Plate 37

Journal entry: God has implanted new life in us … Afraid of being popped? We’re not even fully blown.

If you want to use this picture, you’re more than welcome. It’s a very situational piece of art. I felt that I was given a vision if you will, in church one day. This image relates to what the pastor was speaking to, and what I saw in my mind. I felt the need to stand up and say those words to everyone in the congregation, but felt a bit scared. I wondered if these words would affect anyone? So I kept silent, and afterwards felt a great sense of loss, as though I had kept a secret that was supposed to have been told.

### Plate 38

I love this page! This was a beginning of my journey to learn how to use line. So, what I did was paste the picture of the polar bear on the page. I had found it and just loved the picture! I got out some paint, and put it wherever looked good, smeared it around a bit, let it dry, and then tried to figure out a composition. This is really a visual image of exploration.

### Plate 39

Notation: Nurture the mind’s pathway; let it wander.

This is very similar to the polar bear image. I believe I’ve mentioned before that a friend had a lot of experience in drafting, and shared with me how she created fascinating work with just a pen. I was so interested that I spent much of the year practicing and creating my own style.

This speaks again to exploration, and finding your self within your artwork. What do I enjoy? Why? The free flowing movement just appeals to me, ribbon-like shapes give the picture a feminine touch, as well as swirls. Then, adding whatever colour you feel like and having it just fit in so well really excited me. The more I worked with line, the more I realized what I could do with it, and I started branching off in different ways, trying hard sharp lines, corners, etcetera, along with curves. And so on and so on. It was a really neat process for me, and as a metaphor for teaching, as the year went on, there was so much I wanted
to cover as a teacher, and so much I wanted to teach and I realized there is only so much time! I have to choose what the students will learn about. I felt the need to connect with each student at some level to find where their passions lay, and then give them a push so that they could embark on their own journey to learn more about what they love. I hope this ramble makes sense!

Plate 40

I love the picture, and I tried to create a composition around it.

Plate 41

Journal entry: A year long project designed to stretch the mind and creativity through doodle. The doodle page.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate 42</th>
<th>I had someone else draw the figure for me, and she happened to draw a boy! I cut out the figure and put it into my composition. It really should be read as any gender.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plate 43</td>
<td>This was the work of about an hour of time, on one of the wharfs one afternoon. A friend and I went to do some sketching. I began what I thought would be one picture, and my ‘models’ moved, so I just kept drawing what I saw.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Plate 45 | Journal entry: Let your mind explore unknown territory

I didn’t like this page so much, it didn’t feel like ‘me.’ Collage was another process I really learned a lot about during my education year. I would call this picture a successful attempt on how ‘not to collage’ because to me the composition just doesn't fit with the other pieces I chose. |

| Plate 46 | Filling up some space, exploring with two mediums, one I know and love (paint) and one I am still learning (line). A study if you will. |

<p>| Plate 47 | Journal entry: Day 1: 10:30 p.m. I felt sometimes that I had nothing to paint! So, one day, I was looking at some of my art books, and I had this idea that I should paint the same thing like Monet did, just as a practice or study, to inspire what and how I see. This was my first attempt. I was looking out my main window, with the courtyard in front of me. I had never painted darkness before, and this really interested me. I finished this in about twenty-five minutes, it was really fast, put it all down, as I envisioned Monet would capture the light as fast as he could in his studies. I really liked how the grass ended up, I felt I really captured some of the shadows that were hidden down in the courtyard. I had every intention of doing this many more times, but I think I only did it a couple more times. |
| Plate 48 | I like that it takes a long time to finish, and that I love to go back and continue working on it. Many of my art pieces I find I love starting, but towards the end I get bored, and want to start something else. Doodles and lines can always change into something else, and I think that is why I ended up finding I liked to work over a long period of time. Teaching is like this too! Students don’t learn in one lesson, or in two lessons, but over the course of one, two and more years, they learn the practices of art too! |
| Plate 49 | This was a continuation of my Monet phase. I wanted to watch the water and look at how the light changed. So I painted four pictures in about an hour of what I saw, and tried different techniques each time. This was down a path by my house which led to the ocean. All four are done in acrylics, some watered down more than others. |
| Plate 50 | Because it looked more interesting! |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate 51</th>
<th>I do plan exactly how I want things done, in what time period, and what will be for homework.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plate 52</td>
<td>These rubbings were what I taught some Grade 3 students while I was an artist in residence one day. My professor took our whole class into an elementary school to get a dose of how smaller kids were in school. It was a fun, very exasperating day!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate 53</td>
<td>Trying new things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate 54</td>
<td>The picture and piece of paper were interesting and I wanted to include them in my journal. These were ‘new’ ways to integrate them in.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Plate 55 | Notation: We’re killing our inherent creativity; we are creative on our own!  
You know, I don’t remember what drove me to do this page, but I remember being disgusted with advertisements and how women are expected to look. This was my small rebellion in my journal! |
| Plate 56 | By this time, collage was appearing more and more fun. I was on a bus when I did this, and I must have driven the people around me crazy with the constant ripping of paper! As I was on the bus, I had brought some coloured paper with me, but when I looked in my purse, I noticed I had a cheque that I had voided, and I thought why not use that! My mind was still thinking in lines. This is one of the swirls that you’ve seen in many of my other pages, just with a new medium. |
Plate 57

Notation: The entire time on my practicum was sunny skies … I would have liked to have stayed longer or have everyone on the experience as an extended practicum … when the school was done … though I don’t think I would change anything … overall it was great!

Plate 58

Plate 59

This page was done close to the time of the two hands interlocking, and I was really thinking again about intellectual diversity. Some people think so differently than others, and there is no right or wrong way to think! This is my visual representation of those thoughts. It was really fun to draw!
| Plate 60 | Notation: A mom of a friend of mine recently told me I should REALLY consider exhibiting my work … No one but my family has ever told me that before! Kind of caught me off guard. |
| Plate 61 | This is the same idea as the night time painting, Monet phase, painting at different times. |
| Plate 62 | Notation: Sunny, few clouds; 4:30 p.m. Monday  
A side note to this picture, it really relates to the censorship of images, and if it’s OK to paint or take pictures of other people or not? I remember wondering if I should hide so these kids wouldn’t see me. A funny thought now that I think about it. I knew that since I was painting really fast that I would never capture a realistic rendering and it wouldn’t matter, but none the less. Something to talk to students about! |
| Plate 63 | Notation: I found in general students did NOT talk about art as much as other topics. They were usually very engaged in pop culture.

This page was a transfer of line from pen to paint. The circle seemed a good spot for my thoughts. Also a thought page of what colours go well together and when. Have you ever gotten bored of colours, and needed to try new ones? I had felt like I had used a lot of red and pink at this point. |

| Plate 64 | This was a drawing I did on the bus heading up to visit family. It just sort of came out while I was drawing. Again, the order of this page in my visual journal speaks to where my thoughts were at the time. I was also thinking about how there’s no wrong way to draw! It can be wacky and that’s fun too. |

| Plate 65 | |

| Plate 66 | Like the other page with ripped paper and the cheque, I did this on the bus ride home! Five hours of rip, rip, rip, rip, rip, rip. People must have been so annoyed! I had fun. I had originally wanted to include a sailboat, I don’t remember why, but I liked how it turned out at this point, and left it. |
Ann’s artful expressions: I kept my reflections honest

Content in my mind
alone or stay
to go my way
to travel, excuse
back to myself where
I wish it could stay
momentarily free
just for today
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate 67</th>
<th>I like focusing on art more as a personal thing. And if you do art for therapy, or for yourself, just for the enjoyment, for the aesthetic, or if you do it to sell it, you can focus on what you want to focus on. It doesn’t have to be a certain thing, that kind of stuff.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plate 68</td>
<td>As an artist, I’m a jack of all trades. Sometimes I don’t think I’m a very good artist because I can’t pull stuff off. It is a problem with me, I can’t do art on demand or even when I want to sometimes but other times I just can’t help myself and ideas flow like mad! Like the visual journals. I don’t know if I dam up or what, I have a hard time trying to be creative with it. I’m starting to warm up to it and be freer with it. I’m not too fond of my journal. It is for us, and that’s how I’m approaching it. You should see some of the other journals, I’m just like, I don’t like mine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 69</td>
<td>In this image I was thinking of the confusion and struggle we experience both in public school and post secondary schools. The overall image has a bit of a retro look to it. I thought all my work was really random, but after looking back on four years of work, a lot of it relates to each other and concepts or themes or styles. I even have a style, which I didn’t know before. I don’t like my style but it is my style and I don’t think there’s a way to get away from it so go with it. Some people might see it and like it or not, it looks like high school art a lot of the times. Because I came from living out in the bush to living in the middle of a city, a lot of that experience comes through. At first I did a lot of landscape painting, because I missed home. So I did landscape painting, but that wasn’t highly regarded because landscape painting is dead, and I went to a</td>
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conce...tual art school, they’re all concepts and nothing else. I could have been developing my...s with landscape art but we had to do the other stuff so basically I learned how to ‘BS’ my way through it to make things I wanted to do into conceptual pieces, which is all, you know, different points of view, seeing things differently. I just decided, fine, I’ll do what I need to get the grade. It is all jumping through those hoops. But that’s what you expect with an education that is built that way.

Plate 70

I had a lot of fun creating this image, my favourite part is that it is so shiny! I was done with it and I was thinking of their advertisements where they say that everything is priceless, and I just thought that cutting up a credit card is more priceless than actually having the card. This is the first thing I liked in this whole book and I was like okay this isn’t so bad. I mean I’m trying to make it look good because everybody else’s art looks so good compared to mine but everybody else is comparing their work too. They’re looking at mine, going wow, you did that and everybody else’s better than everybody else’s. I have images that express how I feel or how I feel about a bit of information. For example, the cut up credit card resembles my feelings towards my financial situation and at the same time the cost of education, priceless.

The pieces are sharp shards with a single line that winds and weaves between them. I guess that’s me and it explains how we never really have money, it just passes through our possession anyhow. And the card looks pretty, shining like money, it is idolized and tempting to touch.

Plate 71

I found myself doing homework and I have an idea so I just move over to my sketchbook instead, and I actually feel good about that, it doesn’t happen very often. It clears my head, just like, start over again. Now my little doodles, I see things in my head. I don’t really draw. I can’t really draw at all, but sometimes I can. It takes a long time. I’m more of a sculptural person. Most of the doodles/drawings represent a larger idea or 3-D image in my head, they often just serve as reminders, like the fridge notes you leave to remember an appointment or whatever.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate 72</th>
<th>It’s easiest to go over the found images in the book. I do a lot of jumping around in it. I go to the back page or a previously started page and then I just keep adding to it more and more. This helps when I feel artist’s block.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 73</td>
<td>Some thoughts and feelings about the program and many of the readings and lectures I felt should stay personal. So I kept my reflections honest to how I felt and tucked them away behind this flap I labelled ‘CAUTION.’ I mostly felt that a lot of the reflections should not be read in case it offended anyone or made me look bad.</td>
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</table>
| Plate 74 | Notation: If what you are looking for is not seen in this than that is quite unfortunate because I have here everything I need in one form or another. Language creates meaning and I often speak in many tongues. My mind is the only translator you will find.  

At the back of the book I put this little statement about the content of the book. I felt that the instructors were not seeing everything there, not really looking or understanding. I wanted to guarantee that all the work, everything they’re looking for, was in there in one form or another. |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Plate 75</th>
<th>I got this one from a magazine. We could do whatever we want with this. I’m trying to add more and more stuff and it doesn’t really make any sense unless I explain it. I try to keep this book as a resource so I can find things in ways that I understand, things that I won’t remember, that inspire me to do things. There are many doors and layers within my book.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 76</td>
<td>As we collect items I try to pick things that I will use later and find a place to put them. The doors and layering and flaps hold much of this information. I particularly like the flaps. I can put things in and take things out. Stuff I can really use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate 77</td>
<td>Some of the information I found useful I would just write down, like the teaching strategies. Other things, like the feedback triad, I would find imagery to represent it. Visual reminders if you will.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plate 78
I really like the chair. It was going to be one of my metaphors or something for us, as beginning teachers. It’s like a school representation. I turned it upside down and you can read what you like into that.

The carpet image with the ‘x’ block on it reminds me of childhood. The upside down chair is a technique and a metaphor for this program and the education system. Upside down hanging from the roof sort of, not really giving anyone a place to sit down and relax in.

Plate 79
A response to a field visit. I did a quick sketch as I watched the teacher, taking note of his methods for further use. I also noticed his back towards the student in the wheelchair and how the demonstration was too high for her to see.

Plate 80
I just remembered how to fold these the other day. This is something we used to do in high school, but we were doing reflections on our education past and present, and so, my first thought was a school of fish and that a school of fish is stinky and the smell never goes away. There I was referencing the negative things that occur throughout our education that tend to linger into our future. The past lingers on. The fish is a school of fish metaphor with a bit of a poem to go with it. The folded papers hold some interviews and memories from my childhood education.

It was kind of like remembering about the insecurities that people have in high school and also that there are schools of fish and, oh yeah, confused identity, rejection. It was sort of like writing about how I was feeling about that, and there’s this thing that says, ‘We don’t know why we driving up that stream and no turning back, in a lot of rapids and continue forward.’ Sometimes I do poetry. I don’t really focus on it, it just comes out like that.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate 81</th>
<th>Here I was feeling totally stressed out from school. Everything was hectic. No time, energy, sleep, money and behind in assignments as they piled up more and more. I was also taking a ceramics class at the time. We were making horses for some reason and I found this in a newspaper ad and thought it was suiting to the situation.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 82</td>
<td>This image is a response to the male dominant environment I find in many places where simple things become blown into a power struggle when one is simply just trying to accomplish something. Guys often don’t like women stepping into their realm. I found that over the phone with parts stores and even in the trades department of my school. There is also a collage with a woman and hair. The hair is taking her over, suffocating her. It is the struggle of ideal and individual or real. Style and image seem to be so important now-a-days. People don’t look at what is beneath the surface. Another interpretation I can give you for this is a metaphor for how I feel about this course. I feel like I’m in a large deep sea of hair trying to find my way out, my way to the top where my hair, my body and my mind will be free from the tangles and all that political restricting crap.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 83</td>
<td>Here are some wise words to remember. I had to make it look interesting and easy to read so I could scan it at a glance to remember what I need to.</td>
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</table>
Through various symbols within First Nations cultures, this image represents the essence of what I hope to represent and achieve as an educator.

The center symbolizes the individual or community center, surrounded by four people of different races, hand-in-hand helping each other. As an educator, I do not stand alone. I work in collaboration with the education system, community and students.

The lines through the wheel between the people, dividing the four colors, represent lines of communication. Through the Medicine Wheel, these lines purify and cleanse the spirit promoting the sharing of knowledge and patience to understand people of any age, race or gender.

The four colors of the Medicine Wheel signify the four directions that stand for the seasons, life stages, age groups, elements and multiculturalism, as well as the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual balance sought out in all aspects and cycles of life.

The four feathers extending from the center stand for strength, endurance, vision, and honour. Extending to the outer circle, or worldly view, is the image of the turtle, which represents the land we inhabit. This turtle symbolizes perseverance, safety and home. It also acts as a spokesperson for the environment and the many animals that inhabit this land, re-establishing our place among them.

The circular format used parallels, many existing organic structures such as the sun, moon, earth, tree, embryo, etc., all of which are our sources of survival and sustenance. The internal composition also resembles the form of a double peace sign and reflects the values of the Yin and Yang. Overall, this image represents how we can achieve the balance and success needed to overcome any obstacle in life.
Visual records of practicum experience

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Plate 85</th>
<th>I took some digital photos of the school during my practicum. I just wanted to document my experience and part of it was my artistic urge. Part of me wanted to show off the beautiful view I got from my classroom and the landscape around the school because the classrooms in [other schools] often had no windows and no view. I was proud of my placement and I felt privileged to have such a beautiful room to work in.</th>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Plate 85 Image" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 86</td>
<td>When I take photos I often shoot with my eyes and mind focused on the overall image, paying more attention to the edges rather than the focal point or center of the image. Balance has always been important to me in life and in imagery.</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Plate 86 Image" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 87</td>
<td>Nostalgia, that’s what it was, that feeling I felt when I walked down these halls or in the school yard. I never really went to this school but I did spend a lot of time visiting friends here on my spare blocks and when I skipped classes. It was hard to shake that feeling of being a student in these halls.</td>
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<td><img src="image3" alt="Plate 87 Image" /></td>
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One lesson I was quite proud of was the First Nations lesson. I had arranged for a guest artist/speaker to come in and talk about First Nations imagery and teach a couple of lessons to the students. It was great to have someone come in from outside to collaborate with. He brought in some valuable information and the students really enjoyed having something different in the classroom. Breaking out of the boring routine helped gain their attention again. They learned a lot from the questions they asked the guest. We also had the other art class join us during for the lessons. Our classroom was packed wall to wall with students. Most of them showed great respect for the guest artist.

Demonstrations are a great way to show the students that we art teachers are not just teachers but artists. It really helps them understand what exactly we are asking them to do as well. Sometimes it has the opposite effect though because doing art on the chalkboard is harder than on paper. The media is difficult to work with. What works best is to have samples of other student’s work. It is less intimidating and more successful as examples.

I remember one of the first books I read was *Anne of Green Gables*. So when asked for a pseudonym I used Ann. First it was because it was a take off of my middle name that I liked and then I kind of got attached to it. It helped me get in touch with my inner self and my feminine side.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Plate 91</th>
<th>Sketching what I see and incorporating how I feel with the imagery helped pass time and get through some excruciating classes. I was able to pay partial attention to the class while sketching and it made me feel good to be sketching freely again. The hoop jumping was easier when jumping with the book and pencil.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 92</td>
<td>Here I was documenting my last moments as a student. Student life doesn’t get much more student like as when you live in a frat house dorm room. No room for big art making but just enough to manage a sketchbook with.</td>
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<td>Plate 93</td>
<td>It was frustrating having to make do with the restraints of living in such confined quarters. It was even harder dealing with the nightly parties that occurred. Nothing like feeling old. I was one of the oldest people in the building and I was pregnant so I couldn’t even join in the fun with the nightly parties.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 94</td>
<td>I remember my first art attempts as a child were with simple things I had found around where I lived. Nature surrounded us for miles and miles. I often drew with a stick in sand or sculpted with sand. I even drew on birch bark with berries. Carving little sticks or creating patterns in snow, sand or grass were common pastimes for me. Many of my images bring reference to these times for me.</td>
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Plate 95

I was taking pictures of these raccoons one day and found myself identifying with the raccoon as it paced around trying to get away from the people. It started to retreat when people got too close or in its way. I felt sorry for the little guy with all these people following him around, flashes going off everywhere. He seemed like he just wanted his grub and to be left alone.

Plate 96

I also felt sorry for the fact that these creatures are native to this land and our cement tourist attractions encroach on their lives. People consider them the pests, meanwhile, we are the ones taking up their homeland.

Plate 97

I related this image of a white crow to both myself and the students I will teach. It says, ‘The young crow is starting to leave the nest.’ It’s as if we students are placed in our nests of knowledge built by our parents and forerunners. Our graduation marks our leaving the nest to build our own nests or stay in another previously built one. As for the fact that the crow is white, it seems like a really good teacher, one you can connect with and relate to, which is such a rarity. And the transaction records reference my travel by jet and bus between my three ‘nests.’
Plate 98

One long weekend I got to visit my boyfriend and we got to go camping. It was such a nice release from the same old homework routine. I got to forget about everything, leaving it all behind as I boarded the jet.

Plate 99

As we are becoming teachers, it seems like we are under construction, being worked on. Our brains digging through information, digging up our past experiences and rearranging things for the building blocks of the future.

I have also always dreamed of being a heavy machinery operator. That will be my backup career or summer employment someday.

Plate 100

This image started with the drawing. One day I had to draw what I felt like, trapped. I’ve felt like this many times. After the drawing, I added the text that describes the various feelings and struggles that are wound up in the image, in me.
Plate 101

This dove, representing peace in blue and white, is a little piece of a field visit with the Grade 2 class I taught for a day. I felt very proud of the image cause it made me feel very good inside. It also made me remember that good art can be simple and made with simple materials. This was just a crayon tracing of the doves the children decorated.

Plate 102

Notation: Content in my mind; alone I stay, travel excuse, to go my way; back to myself where I wish I could stay; momentarily free just for today.
Plate 103

Notation: Lack of understanding - Life so strange when history involved unsolved mystery evolved; put in a place, life of disgrace because of his dirty embrace; lost so much; haunting, hovering, hiding, what she never shows now exposed to realize she’s not to blame. Some scars never heal, they spread infection through the heart.

Notation: The domino effect - dominos hit from behind; don’t know why or how; it hit them but they all fall down until enough space is left between two for one to stand looking back at confused hurt faces on the ground and the source still stands behind, and out of reach.

These poems are in response to a couple of things. One is the tragic past of Canadian education in relation to the residential school system. The other is that I heard some bad news about my family’s past that helped me understand why my family is the way it is. It really just comes down to understanding and realizing that there are factors to consider that are not always clearly put out there or easy to accept.

Plate 104

When I was walking home from class I found this tree that was planted in 1982, my birth year. Looking at that tree I found myself noticing the larger older trees around it and that made me think of me standing there amongst the staff of experienced teachers. I’m just starting out and they all hold years of wisdom in their roots, rings and branches. They hold large shadows of knowledge and experience. My shadow is growing each year still.

Plate 105

Sometimes I just needed to remember to stop and smell the roses or watch a sunset to relax and remember the beauty of this world and forget about all the work and stress.
| Plate 106 | Notation: I’d rather meditate, roaming free with nature than a contained dead end concrete path.  
I was talking about the concrete labyrinth we engaged with on campus as a class. On a more general and grander scope I was also thinking about the city lifestyle we live in these days. I miss the times of my youth when I lived free of concrete roads, walls and fences. |
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<tr>
<td>Plate 107</td>
<td>This flower here is a symbol of me. I felt like I was a single flower contrasting against this educational system but thriving in spite of it and different than the rest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 108</td>
<td>Then looking at the system, the tasks ahead of me both current and future, from my view point, seem quite daunting like a never ending battle, a wall to be climbed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 109</td>
<td>Alice in Wonderland was one of the first books I read in my AP English class. I loved the book before that and even more so after that. I related to Alice with her need to daydream and look at things differently. She seems so brave and doesn’t put up with nonsense. The imagery and imagination is great inspiration for art making for both myself and the students. ‘Down the rabbit hole’ is often how I felt being thrust into a world not of my own, one I have to adapt to and accept then take and make do what I can with it.</td>
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<td>Plate 110</td>
<td>These little green growths on the tree are the new growth I feel as I learn more and more through this program. It’s all knowledge growth, learning more on top of what I have already acquired for knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 111</td>
<td>It’s beautiful to look back and see what I knew and notice what I have learned over these months. Learning and growing, learning and growing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 112</td>
<td>I believe that creativity and creative thinking are some of the most important things we need to teach our children. They are going to be constantly faced with new problems which they have never encountered. By developing their creativity and creative thinking we can prepare them for such instances. They often just need the confidence to approach challenges. Knowing that there is often more than just one right answer may help. My dad always showed me creative ways to solve problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 113</td>
<td>Engaging with the Japanese Gardens reminded me of the beauty and peace we can find if we slow down to take a look. The space is very controlled but in a very peaceful way. A nice get away from the cement world we encounter daily.</td>
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</table>
I wasn’t really thinking of threads as a metaphor but I guess they are. I was mostly just trying to be creative with what I had, thread ends. Point being, art can be made out of anything.

Notation: Creating life; Scary; Feeling like a host; One person brought up the idea of babies as parasites to the body; Possibly to the world, and if so, we are all parasites which has been proven time and time again; The process and ability of creation creates a connection to all that is alive.

I have always enjoyed playing with words and using poetry in conjunction with visual imagery to express myself. Sometimes it is about the visual element of the words on the page that emits a feeling or sense. It might be the way it is printed or written, or the placement or size of the words. It might also be the colors sometimes or just the words or image themselves that carry the message.
Plate 116

At this point I was frustrated and needed a release. I found this scribbling to be relieving and beautiful at the same time. I wanted to create an image that I felt reflected how I was feeling at that time.

Plate 117

The scribbles of tension and unwinding, piling up and breaking.

Plate 118

Notation: Invading, the rain pours, looming, even harder, advancing, strange something, heart pounding, nerve.

It was pouring outside and it felt like how I felt. I was feeling like I was being invaded, like foreboding of something fantastically overcoming. Not sure if it would be good or bad, fearing the worst but knowing it is just a feeling coming from the rain and the stress of the end of another section of the program.
I realized that after the practicum I was feeling very negative and reflecting in such a negative way. So I decided I needed a Positive Reflection page to try and balance it all out. So I used crayons and started to list and draw some of the things that I enjoyed during my practicum, reasons to continue and reasons to go back. Not all doom and gloom. This was my little piece of sunshine when looking back at the practicum experience.

I have become more and more aware of the way different subjects in school overlap. It is more than just school subjects that overlap, it’s everything in life that is overlapping and interconnected. My life philosophy is that everything is connected and awareness of this connection can lead you down the right path in life.

I found moments when I needed to dig deep inside myself to find the strength to continue and endure, both during the program and the practicum. This image is my representation of the strength I have inside. It came in handy when I was put on bed rest in the hospital. I found the image inspiring and it gave me the strength I was in search of yet again. I figured that if I could make it this far, both in my pregnancy and education/career, then I could use my inner strength to make it the rest of the way.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate 122</th>
<th>I spent a lot of time exploring different paths to take between point A – home – and point B – school. I often preferred to take the more luxurious paths, the paths that made me feel closer to nature, closer to home.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 123</td>
<td>Inspired by the text, I worked the image from there outwards. This is the first self-portrait that I feel looks like me so I was proud of it. I especially liked how I used my different styles of art making, textual, realistic and bold design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate 124</td>
<td>I guess the paths I chose to take are metaphors for the life paths I choose to take. They also serve as a reminder that there are many options we may take.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 125</td>
<td>The totem pole for me is a great symbol of knowledge and power. They hold their own stories that educate the viewers. The imagery is strong and powerful with its bold colors and strong design. Here we have four poles from four different Native groups. One of which is a memorial pole for a Chief. We need to remember where we came from and respect those who we encounter from other places. Having these poles existing together shows respect for co-existence of people from different places.</td>
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<td>Plate 126</td>
<td>More than anything though, I paid particular attention to the beauty of nature that I encountered along the way. There was a constant desire for me to be home, close to nature and all its beauty. I found little pieces of home here and there in the big city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate 127</td>
<td>The view of ocean and beaches are a new form of nature to me, a new sense of home has developed from it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 128</td>
<td>At first I felt like I was on vacation when I hit the beaches. I didn’t like the salty water though. Now I feel more at home but I still feel the need for fresh water lakes and rivers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 129</td>
<td>Travelling has been a large part of my education. I spent a lot of time and money travelling, between practicum, to and from home in the summers and to visit my boyfriend. We often take time out to go camping or hiking as well. These trips are often a great release for me. I don’t know how I could do without them. And I don’t know how some students could live life without experiencing them either. I’m glad that spending time with nature is a large part of northern living.</td>
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<td>Plate 130</td>
<td>This is a picture of my second elementary school. I am quite surprised at how much has changed since I went there. It looks more like a prison now but it’s still the same on the inside.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 131</td>
<td>This is the school I did my practicum at. It has a large hall attached to it that people from all over town come to watch plays and the orchestra in. Not only is the school big but it plays a large role in the community. I was lucky to have such a wonderful placement. Not to mention the beautiful view of the city that I got from my classroom windows.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plate 132</td>
<td>More journeys and mountains to climb.</td>
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</table>
Nathalie’s artful expressions:
Like a fly stuck under a sheet of wallpaper
Plate 133

This is from a 1950’s magazine. I love collecting. I’ve always been interested in the portrayal of the female, and how women are depicted and in what scenes and what tools they are given.

She’s very concerned, critical, a little bit frightened. She seems a little helpless, she’s biting her finger, I mean, who does that? This is my visual response to my response to being graded. The symbol of the check mark and how much weight it has and words like excellent.

It just doesn’t seem natural at all. Everything is very manicured. Her hair is like a helmet! I think she represents the generic and ideal woman. But in the context of my journal, her gaze is staring at an early assignment that I had gotten back. I didn’t do a very good job on it in my opinion. I got it back and was told I passed. It had a check mark on it. I thought her confused and frightened looked seemed appropriate.

Plate 134

As much as I’d like to say that I don’t have the pressure to find a partner, I totally have that pressure on me. Culturally and from my family, there is pressure to reproduce, you know? And I just feel I’ve made the right choices for me. If I had a kid when I was twenty, none of this would’ve happened. I would be a totally different person. So I’m really thankful for where I’m at right now.
This is a picture that I thought represented how I felt on my short term practicum. I really liked the sense of space in the image. I thought I’d use my daily diary entries to blanket over the girl. Smothering and trapping her like a fly stuck under a sheet of wallpaper or something. I had planned to cover the entire image with entries but I never did.

I found this picture in the recycling bin at the back of the classroom. Someone drew a crude moustache on her. I liked it so I glued it in to my book. I think the presence of this image in that classroom said something to me at the time when I found it.
It seems amusing. A lot of times these images of women are not given thoughts and even the thought I gave her is very limited. It is kind of void of any message or opinion, there’s just something, something brooding. I like playing with contemporary images and dated images and juxtaposing them.

I thought the black and white pictures were so funny. It’s multiple images of women wearing girdles on top of their clothing in public. When I found them I had been feeling so out of place. I couldn’t believe the connection between the message in the pictures and the feeling I was experiencing. It was such a coincidence. So I made this collage.

This is a book, an art education book from thirty years ago. It was in a free bin downstairs so this has turned into my visual journal. On the inside it had a ‘property of’ sticker. I filled in that label with all the characteristics I hope to have as a teacher. It reads: ‘This of the property of someone who wants to be open, available, involved, a good listener. Can laugh at oneself, who is open to change, someone who can learn from others, who takes risks, who experiments, explores and evolves.’

These are burning oil fields and that’s from National Geographic. National Geographic is problematic for a couple of reasons but I sometimes like the contrast of the bias, less with the traditional female role, and judging both. Both are kind of propaganda and so in a sense I use this to illustrate what’s going on in my mind. It’s like the doom, the smoke.
Plate 140  
When I was in university, I was studying a lot about art history. I got into Dadaism and one guy that I really connected with was Max Ernst. His imagery is so interesting to me and his collages were so minimal. He would just take two things and put them together to create a whole new meaning. Since reading one of his books, I appreciated the simplicity of putting two things together and making a new meaning from that. Not having to rework it with ink or paint or whatever, just letting it speak for itself. So this is one.

Plate 141  
This is my journey as a student from home to university, and as a teacher from home to school on practicum. The black and white images were found. The frame by frame sequence reminded me of how I, as a commuter, viewed landscape from a moving vehicle. Sometimes when I stare out the window I can almost see it in film frames. It’ll go by quickly, then it’ll slow down. The stitches are tight and then they space out. I used the broken stitches to try and allude to the change in speed in which I travelled physically and mentally. I tried to select the colour of thread based on my daily mood and emotional state. Each day that I worked on it, I would use the colour that felt right for that day.

Plate 142  
It’s funny because this is word for word the script that the teacher is supposed to read to the class. Can you imagine anyone standing up and reading this? ‘Now open your book, now open your crayons.’

Plate 143  
The leaf is a page in a small booklet that I made as an art student in my undergrad. I included it as a reminder of who I was then. The leaf I picked up while walking to school. I like documenting my experience through collecting things. Like souvenirs I guess, except they’re usually ordinary and free. The drawing underneath is part of the original page layout in the textbook. I cut a window in the green wall paper that allowed the drawing to show through. By covering up the original context of the drawing I isolated it from the art education narrative.
### Plate 144

This is another page in the booklet that I made as an art student. I got the clipping of the vacuum scene from a 1970’s magazine. I was using old magazines a lot then. I surrounded the clipping with gold leaf. I was thinking about the role of women in society at that time and how it paralleled my experience in my time. I used gold leaf because I found it funny that the magazine ads made housekeeping, and cleaning seem ironically glamorous. Something about the presence, yet absence of a woman in this image struck me.

### Plate 145

I remember making this page. I was sitting outside the education building surrounded by people and feeling really alone. It was early on in the program and I was having a hard time adjusting to living in a new place. I remember looking at the image and discovering things about it the longer I looked at it. I added drawn elements to those that stuck out the longer I looked.

### Plate 146

‘We are sorry’ is the invite for the Master of Arts program at the gallery on campus. Again, following Ernst’s method of collage, I was interested in how this postcard could be transformed into a billboard when combined with the image of a crowd. It became even more ominous.

### Plate 147
I guess all identity, male or female, is a mosaic. I would sometimes just use the journal to flesh out ideas. Writing over the pages in the textbook without an awareness to the content of the pages. Later I might collage on top.

I was writing out lists of things that socially construct gender for girls. These are things that girls are taught and that they learn as appropriate and inappropriate behaviours or characteristics. I used this image of the girl, the beauty queen, because she has been a very obedient learner of her gender rules.

I find that there’s a lot of stuff going on, there’s a lot of serious issues that have been coming out from this process and that is good. This was actually a poster of a hip-hop festival and this guy turned out to be a photography teacher, and I thought it was hilarious, just very funny.
So I was kind of playing with this. I have my own snapshots and then the magazines, and I thought, I’ll play with these and it worked out. These are snapshots of my apartment when I was an artist recently graduated from art school. I had just read an article about teenagers and their rooms and I responded to it with this collage. The quadrants are just the way the design came out.

It is very interesting because he’s reinventing himself which is what we’ve been talking about as the teacher. He’s reinventing himself to sway everyone from thinking that he is a child molester. He is going to make himself into a skirt-chasing rapper. And it’s just, so weird, so sad. Anyway it’s sad because he’s like a joke. Someone gave me the ‘Touch the teacher’ sticker that they altered. I thought, how fitting, so I pasted this in, I don’t like where it is going but it’s got to go together.

This is an excerpt from notes taken during the last lecture we attended before our long practicum. The lecturer made a point to tell the female teachers not to let their thongs show, hence the little no thong doodle. I thought it was just one more thing that added to the constraints that are put on female teachers. I drew a small doodle of a female teacher wearing a gown to go to work in.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate 154</th>
<th>Notation: Empowering yourself, reclaiming, redefining what it means to be female.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Plate 154" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate 155</th>
<th>Notation: She actually seems … in class. I think she is … I hope she continues to be as …. I am worried about Denny.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Plate 155" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Plate 156 | Notation: Today I was supposed to do unit planning, but instead I watched way too much TV. Now it is 5 o’clock and I’m starting to freak out. I’m so scared. I can’t stop crying. I feel like I want to quit so bad. I have so much anxiety about the long-term practicum. I feel like I’m totally alone. I know I have so much I should do but at the same time, I’m not sure what that is.  

Sometimes, I find it easier to approach a page if it isn’t blank. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Plate 156" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate 157</th>
<th>I like the quality of sewing patterns. It has a graphic nature to it. Yes, I did think of how it is used for constructing something. It is so important to a garment yet not part of the finished piece. I like how you can layer it. I was looking for a material that was only semi opaque. The visual journaling experience was a public and private one. It was something that we were asked to do publicly but for it to have any sincerity I had to feel that it was a safe space. I really enjoyed experimenting with it. Writing on top of it, beneath it, dipping it in beeswax.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Plate 157" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate 158</td>
<td>This image emerged from an intuitive space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate 159</td>
<td>This is also an intuitive creation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Plate 160 | Notation: I grew up middle class, but my parents instilled their working class morals on us. We always worked for our money and appreciated the wealth we had. I’m not sure how many of the students share the same kind of work ethic or who know what it feels like not to get what you want. The headmaster said for a lot of them, their uniforms are their one ‘No.’ Growing up, I had a lot of no’s. Still do. I feel like most of their students already believe they have options in life. They are provided with choices from birth. I want to work with kids who don’t assume their greatness. I would like to help kids who don’t have these privileges. Kids that need money just to get something to eat, not just a code that charges their milk and cookies to their parent’s account.  

This image was very intuitive. |

362
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate 161</th>
<th>This image emerged from an intuitive space.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Plate 161 Image" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate 162</td>
<td>This image also emerged from an intuitive space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Plate 162 Image" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate 163</td>
<td>I just added this one bubble, but the two kids, decorating the tree and again, just feeling like my gender is a major issue for me during this process, being very aware of being female and I don’t know if that is something I’m always kind of dealing with or because all of the teachers in my family are women or, I don’t know, in some ways the role of teacher may have become a domesticated one for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Plate 163 Image" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate 164</td>
<td>I made this yesterday. I’ve been working with the idea of things that are temporary and non-valuable. I’ve been using one newspaper to depict the events around the world from different points of view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate 165</td>
<td>The newspaper is so weird when you look at it. It’s quite overwhelming. I find the perspectives they present are limited. So as an object, the newspaper is disturbing to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate 166</td>
<td>It’s from an article about a photographer and that was one of his pictures. Something is wrong with her. She’s either dead, she’s having some kind of episode like a seizure, or an overdose, or maybe she’s been assaulted. There is no context for it and there wasn’t in the article either. It made me think about how easily an image can be taken and reappropriated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I got a lot from the process of deconstructing the newspaper and reconstructing it. Limiting myself to using only what I find within one issue at a time. It doesn’t cost any money, I got the newspaper late at night when it is free. I used staples from downstairs and all I had to do, in an hour or two hours, with some scissors and paste, and just deconstructing something that is always there and really looking at what are we saying and its importance. It’s so relevant to the art classroom. I don’t know how many students read the newspaper but even just bringing in magazines and trying to make a bookwork from what you find in it, what images are you getting from it. I think even though I am changing the context of the text and images, there is some clarity or truth that comes from the process about the images and their meanings. By spending time looking and reconfiguring them, their significance or lack thereof to the world that I live in is revealed.

This woman is an American pop singer. You know what I think is strange is that the images of devastation start to become more about the value of the reader/observer of the images instead of subjects in the images. If you open a newspaper and read it visually, these images of devastation and suffering serve as entertainment to the public who reads it. The contrast between the severity of living conditions in third world countries versus the lavish excessiveness of Hollywood, are visually juxtaposed within the pages representing one day of news. It is something everyone knows about and I think few really think about. Often this contrast exists an inch or two apart on the same page.
On the previous page there is an image of a woman who is completely devastated, has no home and her dead child is in front. And if you cut that image out and turn it over and look what’s on the other side, it’s welcome Martha and oh my god Martha didn’t show up for the pumpkin carving contests and everyone in Nova Scotia was devastated!

I saw this face as sort of genderless. Arms embrace the head and the face looks calm and tranquil. The text pasted on top says: ‘…natural disasters around the world point to the end of the world and the imminent return of Christ.’ I thought that this was an interesting quote. I think people are looking for some kind of saviour from this world, but I doubt that they would want to save us from the disaster that we have created. By owning up to our actions we may find comfort while we suffer the consequences.

I like the idea of the human race. The cycle of birth and death. Also the rat race idea and how useless it is.

It’s very weird, the way they use the scientific documents and everyone believes it, like it’s totally reliable and it’s a graph. No one looks at who made the graph, who was interviewed or what it relates to or what it means. It’s so bizarre. So I was just looking at that.

It was just so disturbing to me. Images of the war had started, the people are suffering and the bombs and then there’s a sale on, and this is the stock market and this is what crude oil is selling for and oh my gosh it’s affecting this or that, and then the next thing, it is portrayed as a comic strip and it is all very desensitized.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate 173</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I opened a fortune cookie almost everyday on my practicum. I saved them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>so that I had a constant positive and wise source of encouragement. I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>made a small book with them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate 174</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restful sleep was lacking over my practicum. I ended up getting some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sleeping pills prescribed so that I could make it through. I also started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taking anti-anxiety medication.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
March 2\textsuperscript{nd}. Everyday I come home and cry. I feel sick to my stomach about this whole process. Everyday I come home and call my mum. I tell her how I want to quit because I feel like I’m doing a shitty job. I was sick Monday and Tuesday of this week. I really didn’t want to miss. I went to work even though I wasn’t feeling great, but I had planned a field trip that day. It was a bit of a negative for me. I had twenty-five kids to get to the gallery. I took them on the bus. It was just me. We were twenty minutes late for our tour! My sponsor teacher met me there and then left early cause she had to teach another class. I just felt very nervous and unprepared.

*The negative space is a cut-out where Nathalie fitted a miniature fortune cookie book she created.

March 2\textsuperscript{nd} entry continued:

She then asked, ‘You went to art school, didn’t you take drawing classes?’ I couldn’t believe it. I made it through my bus ride and through my front door and I started to cry.

I folded wallpaper in half, drew a version of a portrait I had seen and then cut it out. I was reading a lot about paper cuttings at the time.
## APPENDIX 2:
### DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF RESEARCH PARTNERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEMOGRAPHICS</th>
<th>Nathalie</th>
<th>Ann</th>
<th>Ruth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth year</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at start of study</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martial status</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When married</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Class</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Lower-Middle</td>
<td>Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Background</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>First Nations</td>
<td>Canadian; Second Generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Degree</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of study</td>
<td>Fine Art</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>Studio Art; French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for entering the teacher education program</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Love art and want there to be more understanding of the world taught in schools.</td>
<td>I have a passion for kids and want to share my art interests with them to help them learn in a fun, exploratory manner.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# APPENDIX 3:
BEHAVIOURAL RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

The University of British Columbia  
Office of Research Services and Administration  
Behavioural Research Ethics Board

## Certificate of Approval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR</th>
<th>DEPARTMENT</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grauer, K.M.</td>
<td>Curriculum Studies</td>
<td>B05-0675</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT**

UBC Campus

**CO-INVESTIGATORS:**

Sinner, Anita, Curriculum Studies

**SPONSORING AGENCIES**

**TITLE:**

Narratives of Becoming a Teacher

**APPROVAL DATE**

05-08-31  
05-05-2006 (from day)

**TERM (YEARS)**

1

**AMENDMENT**

Apr. 30, 2006, Research method / Procedures / Study location / Access to data / Interviews

**AMENDMENT APPROVED:**

MAY 25 2006

**CERTIFICATION:**

The request for continuing review of an amendment to the above-named project has been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

---

Approved on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board  
by one of the following:  
Dr. Peter Suedfeld, Chair,  
Dr. Susan Rowley, Associate Chair  
Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair  
Dr. Arminee Kazanjian, Associate Chair

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the experimental procedures