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VOKE

Dialogue & Reflective Visual Journaling: A Means to Empower Preservice Art Educators

The tensions experienced by preservice teachers in their undergraduate preparation programs can be difficult to negotiate—for both the preservice teacher and their university faculty. Preservice art educators are both students, who must gain pedagogical and subject matter content knowledge, and beginning teachers, who are learning how to teach through on-the-job practicum and field experiences (Galbraith, 1995). Being sensitive to the realities of this experience can help educators of preservice teachers better support college students and budding young professionals as they navigate the liminal space between the worlds of student, teacher, and artist. The intricacy of the preservice art educator's undergraduate experience is further complicated by their own lived experiences as students and the resulting desire to replicate the teaching environments in which they were acculturated (Eisner, 2002). One contributing factor to the teaching process, and by extension the learning process, is beliefs on how and what to teach (Hudson & Hudson, 2007). A significant result of challenging our beliefs is a deeper understanding of teaching. However, the challenge for educators of preservice teachers is to find supportive methods to negotiate the need to investigate assumptions, beliefs, and ideas about teaching while simultaneously preparing and empowering preservice educators with pedagogical skills, tools and habits of inquiry. This task carries its own set of tensions (Stockrocki, 1995); those tensions are the focus of the qualitative arts-based research inquiry I undertook during my first year as an Assistant Professor of Art Education. In this paper, I share the results of this qualitative arts-based research study in the hopes of fostering dialogue among others. The two parallel lines of inquiry I returned to during that first year as an Assistant Professor were: 1) How could I support my students and together create a dialogic community that would foster a space and place for them to feel better equipped and empowered to enter into the practical and metaphorical conversation of teaching (Bakhtin, 1981), and 2) How could I find my way as an academic in this new geographic, physical, and relational territory where I, too felt uncertain and dislocated. As you will see, I turned to what I know best and what reassures me most—making art. Arts-based and theoretical research became one of the structures through which my preservice students and I reflected upon what we were experiencing, the relationship of teaching to art, and the connections of theory to practice. From those individual reflections we built a collective dialogue in the classroom.

A Newly Minted PhD

I arrived at the University of Dayton to begin my very first tenure track position as Assistant Professor of Art Education feeling a whole host of emotions. My family and I had been in our new residence for two days and in our new city for five days. We had said farewell to our Southwestern desert hometown of 15 years. My sixteen year-old daughter was miserable and, in the way of teens, made every attempt to ensure my partner and I were as well. My desire to pursue my passion for teaching art and working with preservice teachers had forced us to move 2000 miles from all things familiar including a seemingly idyllic rural life to settle in a congested strange urban land. My life was in complete disarray.

The messiness of such a transition seeped into all areas of my life, resulting in a mass of conflict-

ing feelings. Personally, my life felt as if it had been turned upside down. Professionally, I was filled with excitement and a pervasive sense of gratitude; as I began my much anticipated, and hard won, first position in academia I was all too aware of the stiff competition new doctorate recipients experience (Adams, 2002) and the lessening number of tenure track positions that had been available in my field. After all my studies and hard work, was I truly equipped to do this job? My hiring institution had put their faith in me yet I was filled with doubts and anxieties.

My misgivings were compounded by my realization that in this time of enormous life change my family needed me to be certain, positive and proactive. Yet I felt unsure and alone. I worried about my ability to successfully juggle my role as partner, mother and professor. Kemp, Madrid, & Flynn (2008) note in their article *Reflections on the First Year*, many female academics acknowledge that a great, and unexpected, personal challenge when entering the professoriate is how much our families are asked to forego because of our professional pursuits. I had already asked them to uproot their lives. What more would I ask my family to sacrifice because I had chosen this academic journey?

A thick blanket of doubt hovered around me as I tried to find my way through the fog that first semester. My insecurities were reinforced daily. How could I, I wondered, be a competent professional yet be unable to locate my favorite pair of shoes (which really did make me feel confident), find the office to get my University ID card, or make it back to the local grocery? Even armed with a map of the University and the city of Dayton, my trusty smartphone (which made me feel incredibly dumb every time I missed a turn), and a persistent feeling of disorientation, I felt completely out of place.

Many first year academics struggle with the transition from graduate student to Assistant Professor (Adams, 2002). These struggles include adjusting to the cultural differences of the institution (Malesic, 2006), being overwhelmed with new teaching challenges coupled with service and committee obligations (Fant, 2000; Herrmann, 2014; Kemp, Madrid, & Flynn, 2008) – especially in one-person areas like my position – (Segal, 2001), working long hours (Knowles & Cole, 1994), feeling isolated (Herrmann, 2014; Palmer, 1993), and experiencing a sense of living a divided life where the academic and personal selves compete. This was echoed in my experiences that first year.

Today, supported with the stories of other new academics, I am better able to analyze the realities of my rollercoaster, but at the time I girded myself with the best formula I could scratch together: Mix two cups of excitement with four cups of education and preparation. Stir in three heaping teaspoons of anxiety, a large dollop of pure bravado, and sprinkling of humility. Mix together well. Allow mixture to settle until it reaches the desired consistency (your guess is as good as mine). Pop it into the oven and pray. For many, that may be a certain recipe for a disastrous experience. For me, I came to the dawning awareness that the dislocation actually felt familiar. Not pleasant, but familiar none-the-less.

I had been in this place of the unknown and the uncertain before. And I would speculate that if we changed dates, geographic location and content taught, the narrative above might sound familiar to many of my academic colleagues and to educators in the K-12 system. This strange concoction described above resembled too closely my first weeks teaching middle school almost ten years prior-- I cried a lot, made unending lists of tasks I needed to accomplish, worried that I needed to "prove my mettle", and felt a general sense of apprehension. Knowles & Cole (1994), in examining the pressures that accompany induction into the university professoriate, acknowledge that a commonly shared experience of new professors is reliving aspects of their first years as teachers in elementary and secondary schools. In fact, somewhere within that first month at the University, I posted a note of encouragement on my office computer to remind myself that if I could survive working with adolescents, I could easily learn to surf the waves of academia.

Introductions to people and departments across

campus, department- and university-wide meetings, conversations with colleagues and my ever-gracious Chair, much note-taking on my part, and a dawning clarification of the complexity of my new position filled my early days at the University. Looking back I am grateful for the concern, expressions of support and other kindness shown to me by my departmental colleagues, and the general university community that pierced my sense of isolation. These acts served as echoing reassurance; just as I had survived and thrived teaching middle school, I would do so here. Ultimately, the greatest barrier I encountered was myself.

The Art Education program at my institution had been strong and thriving for more than 20 years. However, upon the retirement of the primary professor, those leading the program and its students encountered difficulties. Personality conflicts, unrealistic demands, an outdated curricular model, and lack of organization resulted in the once flourishing program becoming practically extinct within a short three-year span of time. I had been hired with the specific task of reviving and revising the Art Education program to reflect a contemporary social justice approach. Being all too aware that, as an educator, the assessment of my work is based, in part, on those who graduate the program (Kezar, 2012), I felt intense pressure. As the new coordinator of the Art Education area, my focus consistently returned to thoughts of what I needed to do to build a strong, sustainable art education program where future educators would be empowered to support K-12 learners in making meaning. What did I need to do, specifically in terms of curriculum, to prepare these future teachers? What changes should I be making to the courses? As I read the preceding words I am sadly aware that they ring of egotism. The only excuse I can offer is that my uncertainty and fear fostered my navel-gazing focus. I thought I had a sound plan; I had my syllabi ready, my first day of classes planned, and most of the boxes in my office unpacked. Being prepared helped me keep the fear at bay.

I decided to invite the senior Art Education majors to gather together that very first week of classes. I hoped to gain a better sense of their view of the program, what they felt equipped to do as art educators, and where the gaps in their knowledge might be. This would be their last course before embarking on their student teaching journey so I wanted to be certain that at the end of this course each preservice teacher felt ready…or at least more ready than they had at that initial meeting in August.

In his article, *Good Talk about Good Teaching*, Parker Palmer suggests that good teaching involves recognizing the "critical moments" (1993, p. 10) where the focus shifts from teaching to learning. We've all had these moments where we sense a shift in ourselves or our learners, where a student challenges us or a peer, where we can honor the moment and grow as learners or dismiss it out of hand and create a barrier to the learning process. That very first meeting with my seniors held one such crucial moment for me. It was the instance that my perspective shifted from a focus on myself to a focus on the students I was charged with supporting in their educational endeavors. It was the precise moment that the universe gently reminded me that as an educator it was my students' needs that should be my priority.

I began by asking the seniors to talk with me about the ways in which they felt their university education and art education coursework had prepared them to teach. It was clear that their education coursework empowered them to understand children, developmental stages, diversity within the school setting, and the institution of education. However, the more questions I asked about art education, the more they expressed unfamiliarity with terms, skills or the pedagogical methods particular to the field. I asked more questions. Their anxiety became palpable and within a short span of time, the tears began as one student said, "The more you ask, the more I realize how little I know." (PI reflective journal, 8/26/2013). I stopped asking questions and instead reassured them that they knew more than they realized; we would begin where they were (Nordlund, Speirs, & Stewart, 2010) and determine how we could, together, get them to a place and a space—cognitively, physically, and emotionally—where they felt better prepared for the profes-

sional task of teaching art.

Dialogue and Discovery

As I drove home that evening I contemplated our talk. I realized that our fears were really quite similar. Did they know that I felt just as unsure? Perhaps not about teaching art in K-12, but definitely about teaching them. The presence of the Bakhtian conversation metaphor ran rampant through my thoughts. I had left behind, in the space of doctoral studies, one particular art education conversation; arriving here I had now entered a space where a different kind of conversation about art education had been in progress. That unsettling feeling of not being fully *in* the conversation but *of* the conversation was something my students and I shared. They were entering into the much larger dialogue about teaching and art—a discourse with multiple strands, participants, and outcomes—that had been in progress for years, and that was changing at the moment as the state of Ohio and the university were considering the inclusion of the performance-based assessment for preservice teachers called edTPA. As I had asked questions and rolled the names of theorists and educators like Dewey, Lowenfeld, Eisner, and Gude off my tongue, the students had felt less and less sure of their ability to participate in the discussion. Contrary to the annoying voice in my head reminding me I was supposed to have it all figured out, I decided that the best course of action was to be open and honest with my students. I could share my experiences in K-12 education and reference the parallels to my experiences as a new professor in academia. I would invite them to join in a conversation with me about teaching and learning, about the anxiety of teaching and learning, and about the theories, curricula, and pedagogical practices surrounding art education as a means of developing their voices.

Dialogic pedagogy invites students to tell their stories, to examine them and in the process refine them as a process of meaning making (Skidmore & Gallager, 2005). Having determined that I would allow dialogic pedagogy to shape the agenda of our classroom discourse, the role of reflection became all the more important. Reflective practice is a primary component of good teaching (Anderson & Millbrandt, 2005; Kraehe & Brown, 2011; Susi, 1995) and fosters space for learners to consider their current actions and beliefs in light of their past experiences and understandings. Reflection especially helps preservice teachers to look at why they think what they think, how they know what they know, and the behaviors they espouse as an educator and artist in relationship to the new knowledge they are gaining in terms of content and pedagogy or are experiencing in the field thereby "building competence" (Susi, 1995, p. 111). For those of us in teacher education, there is a tendency to encourage reflection in verbal ways—either through discussion or writing.

Visual journaling is not necessarily new within art. It has long been practiced in art therapy as a means to connect to self (Ganim & Fox, 1999). However, over the past fifteen years it has received more attention within the field of art education, both for its value as a reflective practice that supports self-awareness (Grauer & Naths, 1998), as an integral component of arts-based research (Sullivan, 2003), and as a support for meaning making (Sanders-Bustle, 2008). Visual journaling is a hybrid of journaling -- systematic reflection, typically achieved in written narrative, and the artistic processing tool – the sketchbook. The use of visual journaling as a form of educational pedagogy to connect course content to lived experience is increasing (Sanders-Bustle, 2008; Scott, 2010). The propensity of the medium to move participants beyond words, to a deeper awareness that is often difficult to articulate in written language but possible in visual communication is attractive. Within community and prison-based art education sites, visual journaling has been used as a means to manage stress, improve self-respect, and develop creativity (Williams & Taylor, 2004). These benefits apply to anyone working with the process of visual journaling. As I considered the needs of my preservice teachers, I saw the potential of the process to achieve the above noted aims but more

importantly believed visual journaling would facilitate conscious examination of assumptions, beliefs, and tensions associated with the practice of teaching.

Creating a Practice of Visual Journaling

I could give prompts that would provide opportunities for preservice educators to examine beliefs and assumptions about teaching outside of classroom time. I had done that in past classes I taught. That had not been tremendously effective. Students often waited until just before the journals were shared to hastily create numerous entries. This defeated the reflective purpose of visual journaling and was frustrating—to both the students and myself.

I wanted to demonstrate the value in visual journaling as a practice. Practice implies a repeated encounter and necessitates a feedback loop. Much like teaching, active reflection on the practice and process of visual journaling allows the creator to hone and refine their craft over a period of time. Increased self-awareness, clarity of purpose, and a stronger practice results from reflective visual journaling. Additionally, I anticipated that visual journaling as a group could support the development of a sense of community and trust. I was new to the university and these students, yet over the next eight months, I would be both their methods instructor and clinical supervisor for their student teaching experience. Those are two vulnerable learning spaces where the roles of student and teacher are navigated. I wanted to reassure the seniors that they would not be walking this journey alone.

I decided to make visual journaling a consistent component of the reflective, dialogic pedagogy in our classroom. Dialogic pedagogy is an exciting teaching practice that supports inclusive education by drawing on the theoretical ideas Bakhtin (1981, 1984) posed about the dialogic nature of language. Dialogic pedagogy invites teachers to do away with the predominant teacher-student interactions in which the teacher defines and constructs meaning for the students by instead fostering a relationship of exchange, community and voice—that of the student (Skidmore, 2005). Establishing a visual journaling practice created spaces for students and I to engage in visual dialogue. Having time to process, reflect, and critique the course content through the discourse of the visual and the textual cultivated spaces in which students could construct their meanings of Art Education and teaching.

Visual journaling was valued, modeled, and practiced consistently but not necessarily in each class meeting. Some classes we took time to create, reflect on, and then discuss our visual journal entries with each other. Other times I invited students, through homework, to respond to a question or prompt in their visual journal and then bring it to class to share. In all cases, the visual journaling was intentionally connected to our course content and the goal was an exchange between student and teacher, student and student, teacher and student. In the next section I share examples of the various methods I employed to support students in developing a practice that was personally meaningful, relevant to the creator, and fostered an exchange of ideas.

Visual Journaling in Class

In one of our first classes, I attempted to introduce students to visual journaling in a relatively non-threatening manner. Students arrived to discover tables covered with a wide assortment of media. As music played, I asked them to create a visual composition that responded to the prompt "Today, I feel…" Much to their surprise, I worked alongside them creating a visual image that referenced how I felt in that moment. There was a brief moment of discomfort as they sat there, looking at the materials and considering how to respond to the prompt. It took every bit of self-control I had to not repeat the directions, prompt them in some way, or try to explain what they should do (the traditional teacher reactions that often shut down the space in which dialogue lives). I just let them work at their own pace. After a period of about twenty minutes I asked if they were ready to stop. There was a resounding chorus of "no". I saw in their

faces the joy and pleasure that creating offers. We continued working and after an additional period of time, I drew the engagement to a close by gathering us together. Participants were invited to share their compositions but were not required to do so. Aware of my power as their educator, I debated if I should share or not. I wanted them to feel safe and hoped that by sharing first I could open the channels of discourse (please see figure 1).

Figure 1. D. Bradshaw, Difference of Light. Paper, cellophane, stitching

As I talked about feeling divided between the possibilities of my new home in Ohio and my longing for Arizona's light-filled landscape, I felt vulnerable and exposed. I was supposed to have things figured out now that I finally had those three little letters behind my name. What response would the students have as I indicated, through my visual journal and my words, that I was not fully happy in this new place of Ohio, the world of Assistant Professor-hood and academia? Students graciously listened, nodded and then shared their visual compositions. I felt a growing sense of empathy developing amongst us as one student acknowledged her anxiety about the amount of work ahead of her in student teaching. Another student shared her entry (see figure 2) which reflected her feeling of being overwhelmed in the classroom.

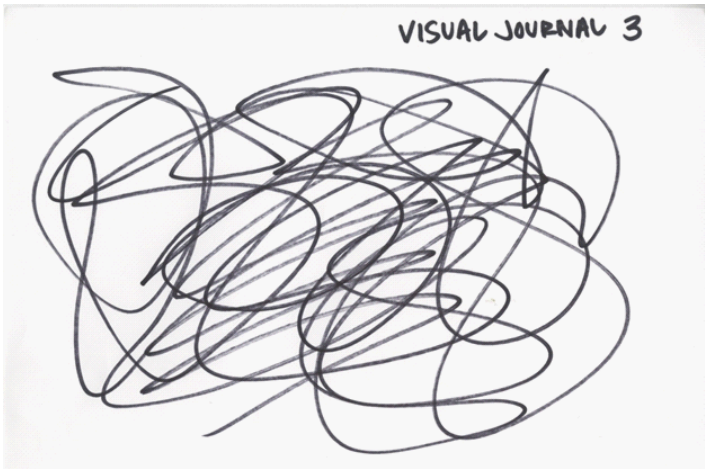

Figure 2. Entry by PB. Messy mess. Marker on paper.

Another student created a more general response that celebrated the changing seasons (please see figure 3).

Figure 3. Entry by PC. It is Fall. Texture rubbings, tissue paper, pastelpaper.

That first time, no one commented on anyone else's work. I believe it was a natural outcome of our shyness. I am glad it happened that way. If someone had commented negatively, I doubt, despite my wish to

create a space for discourse, that I would have been inclined to continue seeing how the practice might work.

Over the next seven months, the practice of visual journaling was a mainstay in my own personal life, and a consistent practice in our classroom and in their student teaching experiences. Following our first foray into visual journaling, I asked students to read Lynn Sanders-Bustle's (2008) article *Visual Artifact Journals as Creative and Critical Springboards for Meaning Making*. In this article, Sanders-Bustle articulates the value of using visual artifacts like photographs, strings of beads, objects collected from daily experience, etc. as a jumping off point for pre-service educators new to the practice of visual journaling. This procedure, according to Sanders-Bustle allows the visual artifact to serve as a trigger or starting point instead of the empty white page while allowing them to engage in the "world of art through the contents of their everyday lives" (p. 9). Additionally, embedded in the journal entry is a written component that contextualizes the artifact and the visual entry--for the creator, and in other ways for the reader. I encouraged students to adapt Sanders-Bustle's approach and allow the process to become a place in which concerns could be voiced in a less direct or confrontational manner than writing. For example, one student addressed the discomfort she was feeling in her student teaching placement (see figure 4). Her cooperating educator had kindergarten students creating small snowflake cut-outs to embellish winter drawings. The practice of cutting is a fundamental skill that early childhood learners must develop however, these students were given a quarter page of 8 ½ x 11 paper and expected to manipulate their scissors successfully. The preservice educator recognized that a larger piece of paper would have offered them a better chance of success; lacking fine motor skills the majority of them were unable to achieve their teacher's learning goal without considerable assistance. As their frustration level rose, the clamoring for help overwhelmed the student teacher. In this case, the visual journaling process was a safe space in which she could express her exasperation of the situation and her disagreement with her cooperating educators methods. Furthermore, sharing her visual journal with her peers in our classroom allowed all the pre-service educators to openly discuss the challenges of being a visitor in someone's classroom.

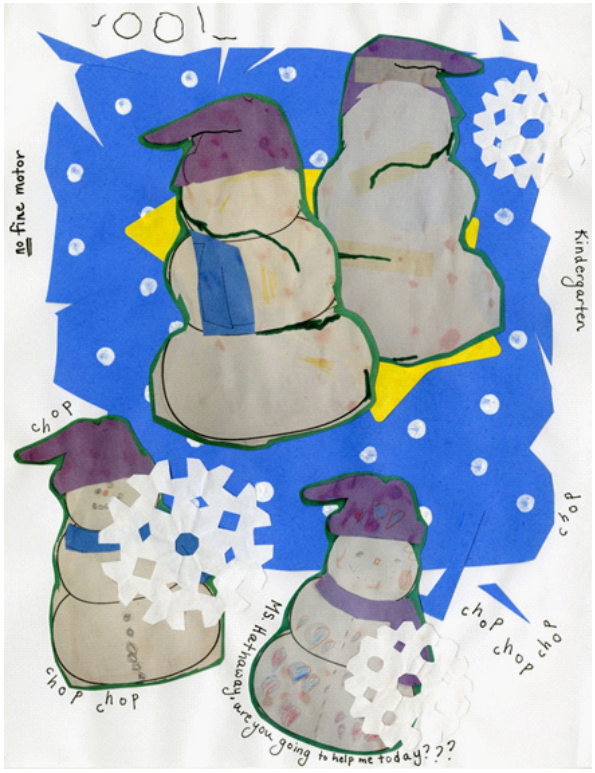

Figure 4. Entry by PA. Chop | Chop. Paper collage and pen.

Visual journaling became a way for me to take the pulse of my students and to see where issues were arising. About every two or three weeks, time would be set aside in class for visual reflection to occur. Unlike our first experience, in our subsequent practice, we used these visual compositions as the springboard for discourse and dialogue. If an issue or concern arose in the conversation, I would make every effort to ensure that our readings or classroom engagements responded to that concern. For example, after receiving one entry from a student who was struggling with the notion of what Art Educators should teach in contrast to what others believe we teach, I redesigned our next class meeting to address this issue. I had five large sheets of poster paper on the walls; at the top of each was a sentence starter or

phrase. These phrases were "Media/Materials used in Art Education", "Processes/Techniques," "Content we teach," "Art is….," and "Students in Art should…". I gave the students markers and asked them to write what they believed should be included with each category or phrase. After giving the students fifteen minutes to engage in this activity, I asked them to sit down and look carefully at what had been compiled. Their awareness that what was on the "Media/Materials," "Processes/Techniques," and "Content" lists were not always in line with what they believed "Art is…" and "Students should…" was eye-opening. For instance, the preservice educators noted that they wanted their students to create art that is meaningful and relevant but the media, materials, and processes they had listed may not be relevant or meaningful for their students . As they dug deeper into the discussion, students became aware that much of their focus had been on the elements and principles of design and media of art as the content of art education which excluded what they believed were the big ideas and hoped for takeaways of Art Education.

Figure 5. Entry by PA. Safe and supported. Tempera, pen, and tissue paper on board.

As we discussed the challenges faced by PK-12 Art Educators to ensure we are teaching skills and techniques that prepare students for increasingly complex art engagements while embedding content that fosters critical, personal, and creative expression, the preservice educators got more animated and excited than I had seen them. Our discussion came to a close and I invited them to each select one phrase that they could hold as a focal point for the upcoming week. I encouraged them to keep coming back to that phrase in their placements, with their cooperating educators, and with their students; to reflect on the way in which holding onto that phrase or idea informed their interactions as an educator during that time frame. The following week's discourse was rich, not just in our class, but in their visual journal entries. The student who chose the phrase "Students in art should feel safe, confident, and supported" did so because she felt this philosophical statement was a key pillar of her desire to teach (see figure 5). As she worked with students during that week, she kept reminding herself of the phrase. She found subtle but valuable ways to create positive, open channels of communication with her students – including a greater attentiveness to each student with which she was working at the moment and a more concerted effort to smile when she felt irritated. In reflecting on the week, the preservice educator noted that she had not been aware of how much her body language communicated to her young charges.

Building on the curriculum conversation, another preservice educator created a graphic organizer to sort through what she believed were themes she would like to be present in her teaching (see figure 6).

As she created these circular forms with words, she noted that for future use she could consider the connections between words as larger big ideas or student learning objectives. For instance how might character development be informed by culture? How do artists create work that responds to culture and informs community? What is the value of contemplation for growth and change within the art room? I was excited as she asked these questions of herself and her peers. We were sharing in this transformative moment in which we all recognized the power of connecting the what we teach in art (elements, principles, art history, production, etc) with the why we teach art.

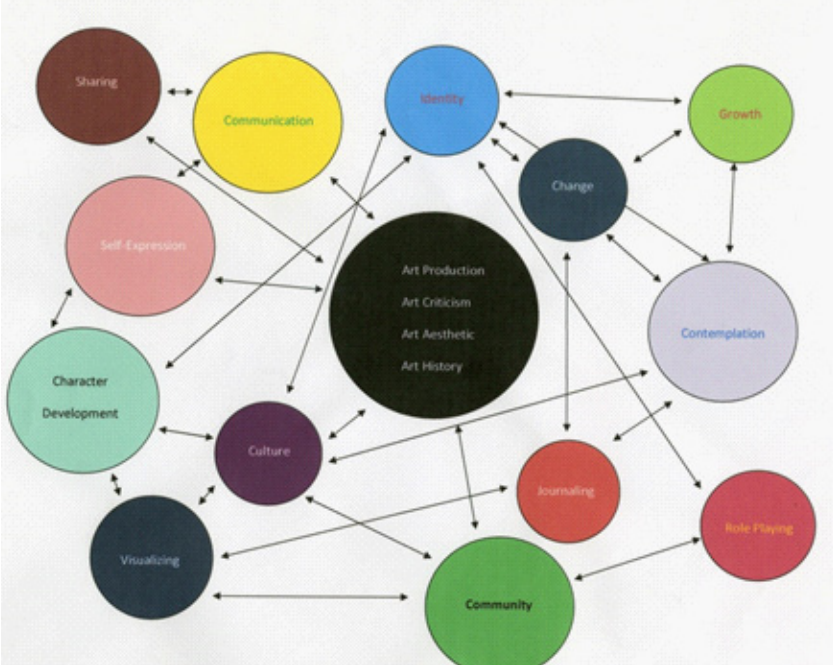

Figure 6. Entry by PH. Curriculum. Computer generated.

The dialogue and reflective visual journaling created a shared space in which I – a new tenure track faculty, and my students – new preservice educators, found encouragement in the face of challenge; clarified our beliefs, values and purposes as Art Educators; articulated visually what words were inadequate to express; and connected theory to practice.

Growing in Place

> Place can be difficult to locate. One might think that one can spot it somewhere, some way off in the distance, perhaps, and yet as one approaches, it seems to disappear, only to reconfigure at some farther point, or back from whence one came. Place itself can seem a confusing place in which to find oneself, an uncertain place to explore, even with someone to guide us. (Dean & Millar, 2005, p. 11)

Finding your place in the field of education is a daunting task that seems to be unending and can mimic the dislocated feeling of walking into a conversation already in progress. This was true for all of us. For the preservice teachers, visual reflection and dialogue supported expression of individual viewpoints, encouraged listening to one another, and invited interrogation into the field of art education. Some of our classroom topics, derived from the students' questions and concerns, included looking at the history of Art Education, discussion about the use of aesthetics and art criticism with young learners, exploring visual culture art education, investigating the increasing role of technology in the art room, teaching from big ideas, and creating lessons for social justice art education. The visual and textual entries you will encounter in this research indicate that as we cycled around and through the topics, reflecting and talking about pedagogy, strategies, and teaching practices students' comfort level as art teachers grew. The preservice educator's ability to understand, to see, and to relate to their students as co-creators in the learning process was enlarged. One student-teacher wrote "the more I expand my own definition of what art education is, so to [sic] do my students increase their own awareness

of what art education can be" (PB, reflective writing, 3/26/14). I could not agree more.

Each preservice teacher had individual insights that led to growth, but many of them were shared. For some, their perspective on the teaching of art broadened and shifted from that of a practice focused primarily on skills and techniques to that of a practice that celebrates the power of art to make meaning of the world. One student noted,

> This shift and reflection is something new to my teaching. I have already noticed that I have started analyzing my lessons and curriculum and how it will effect [sic] my students. It is no longer about the medium, the end result, the technique, but the content and relating it to my specific student body. (PH, written reflection, 4/2/14).

For others, the process of visually engaging and reflecting through a dialogic pedagogy allowed them to further the process of finding themselves personally. "I came into art education for a number of reasons but I now know I am staying because I am an artist first." (PB, written reflection, 4/2/14). A few found an outlet for their discomfort and isolation of being both teacher and student; it became an instrument through which to memorialize and celebrate the fleeting moments in which they found their changing place within the larger art education conversation. One preservice teacher wrote, "I see a change in myself and in my ability to talk about why art is important in the education system" (PH, written reflection, 4/25/14). For most, the certainty of their place in art education became confirmed while sadly, for one, the possibility that teaching was not the right place for her, or at least not right now, became apparent. "As much as I love making art, I no longer believe this is the path for me. I struggle with this, after devoting so much time and energy to get here…I am not applying for jobs this year. I am going to wait and see if I still feel this way. Maybe it is just the exhaustion from the student teaching, or the fact that Mrs. R. and I butted heads so much…" (PC, written reflection, 4/25/14).

Visual journaling and dialogic pedagogy allowed me to ground myself in the place of Ohio and the space of academia, a byproduct of which allowed me to truly listen and hear my students; to share my past teaching experiences and in that sharing redefine my present; to be vulnerable with my own discomfort and in doing so, build a bridge to find my way back to myself.

Join In

I could relay all the findings from this study in a chronological narrative yet to better reflect the hermeneutic nature of our dialogue as well as the cyclical manner in which we kept coming back to issues, concerns, problems, and successes, I prefer to share the findings in an interactive and contradictory manner both acknowledging the journey we embarked upon and highlights the intersections of our reflective practices despite being in two different professional arenas. Through the images and text in the accompanying webpage, you are invited to enter into the dialogue with us, to listen to and see us through our visual journal entries, and to reflect on your own practice and experiences as an art educator. And, of course, you are encouraged to continue the conversation in your own community of practice.

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