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## ABSTRACT

### TEACHING ARTISTRY AS A *CRITICAL* COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: AN ARTS-BASED ETHNOGRAPHY

by

Laura K. Reeder

There is increasing inequity in access to arts education among students in the United States that corresponds to an increase in demand for teaching artists – career artists who apply their artistry to teaching and learning. The increases have been documented both as a benefit and as a threat to arts instruction that is provided within standardized public school curricula. In turn, policy debate has emerged around professional positioning and development of teaching artists. This arts-based ethnographic study investigates resistance by teaching artists in the United States to policy recommendations for formal credentialing of the work that they do (Rabkin, et al, 2011). The researcher, as a participant in the study community of over forty teaching artists who contributed to the *Teaching Artist Journal ALT/space* blog, engaged in ethnographic fieldwork for over two years. Through content analysis, interviews, and *exquisite corpse* analysis of narratives, a critical community of practice theory emerged as a structure for better understanding individual artist, learner, and teacher roles in an arts education ecosystem. The arts-based blending of methods within this study reflects a dynamic tension between artistic and educational practices that can be found at the core of teaching artist practices and may be of value to future education research and advocacy.

TEACHING ARTISTRY AS A *CRITICAL* COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE:  
AN ARTS-BASED ETHNOGRAPHY

by

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B.F.A., Syracuse University, 1986

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Dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Teaching & Curriculum.

Syracuse University  
May 2015

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To  
Josephine and Betty

- you are my first teaching artists.

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Thanks to my extended community of mentors at Massachusetts College of Art & Design: Lois Hetland, Adriana Katzew, Dan Serig, Steve Locke, Aimée Archambault, Beth Balliro, Kyle Brock, Ceci Mendez, Matthew Hincman, John Crowe, Jen Hall, and Dave Ardito. Our not-so-normal school has become an important proving ground for the theories and activism that this study aspires to support.

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*To be sunk in habitual routines, to be merely passive is, we well know, to miss an opportunity for awakening. But we as teachers take the chances the young do when we try to enable them to defamiliarize their familiar situations-to take another look at them, to break through the crust, to reflect on things as if they could be otherwise.*

- Maxine Greene, *Variations on a Blue Guitar*

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## CHAPTER ONE - Introduction

*“It seems someone is always editing my work and filtering it through the lens through which they view the world, be it funders, teachers, parents, administrators, politicians, educators, consumers, or other artists, to name a few. Most of the time I find this to be a very productive process. It demands that I take a closer look at what I am doing and why I am doing it. In viewing my work through another’s lens I have grown as an artist, teacher and human being.”*

- Linda, 2012

*“When are we going to do hiphop?”*

- 5<sup>th</sup> grade student, 2011

This study addresses emerging professional identities of artists who teach in schools, community, and cultural organizations by pursuing the question: How do teaching artists navigate and communicate their own career development across social, educational, and artistic situations? Teaching artists have expertise in disciplines including visual, music, dance, drama, literary, and media domains as well as a diverse variety of educational abilities. Inconsistent certification and training curricula are beginning to emerge around careers in teaching artistry. There is little representation from practicing teaching artists in the policies that shape their professional development criteria. Yet, there is increased demand for their skills as schools and social institutions seek resources to combat multiple failures in educational reform (President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, 2011). A national policy debate around the role of teaching artists in schools has emerged over the past few years and this study addresses that debate by investigating the relationship between “national policy and situated meaning” (Bogdan, 1976, p. 229) through the practices of over forty teaching artists and the discourses that surround their work.

The methodology for this study embraces an arts-based ethnographic approach. I have chosen this form of “cultural portraiture” (Van Maanen, 2011, p.1) in order to describe and reveal complexities that are difficult to find in policy statements about the work of teaching artists. Public portraits of a teaching artist field have been crafted by policymakers and not by the people who make up their growing workforce. In my own life work as a teaching artist, I have found beneficial flexibility in belonging to a field of controversial-but-undefined workers. That flexibility has also made it difficult to identify the specific qualities of a dedicated profession.

As ethnography, this study becomes many things at once. McGranahan (2012) wrote, “Ethnography and the ethnographic is a method and a theory and a material object (“the book”) and a position in the world” (What Makes Something Ethnographic? para. 2). This study engages ethnography as a research methodology (Ortner, 2006) that aims to describe systems and practices of a culture of teaching artists, of which I am also a member. It is also a method of investigation that involved gathering and analyzing data through immersive fieldwork and participant observation in a community of teaching artists. This ethnography is also a material object - a body of texts, theories, and images that represents a position of teaching artistry in a larger system of arts educational practices. The sub-questions to my research have been pursued over time with an array of approaches and products that are meaningful to teaching artists and the educational, artistic, and research communities that we inhabit. This study uses a body of theories to describe and reveal the working parts of a cultural phenomenon of teaching artistry that has not yet been articulated by members of that culture itself.

The sub-questions that guided my choice of theories in this study include:

*- What is or is not happening in and around education and arts education specifically to engender increased interest in teaching artistry?*

- *What do teaching artists do that differentiates their practices from school arts instruction, from regular classroom instruction, or from existing social and cultural and standards-based services?*

- *How do teaching artists identify and extend their own career communities?*

These questions examine evolution of a teaching artist career path in the United States, a rapid growth of demand for their work, and issues surrounding their professional development. Along the way, my own experience as a teaching artist has been used as a lens, and that becomes evident in the methodology.

#### *Rationale for teaching artistry as a critical community of practice*

This study began with a *community of practice* theoretical lens (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Duguid, 2008; Duguid, 2005) as a way to limit a sample group of teaching artists. Voices and practices of individuals and groups of teaching artists were then documented and analyzed using *situational analysis* (Clarke, 2005) as a way to visualize the movement of teaching artists from situation to situation. An arts-based *exquisite corpse* analysis (Garoian, 2011) was used to problematize and align identity qualities that teaching artists grapple with in their emerging roles as cultural workers in a changing educational world. This dissertation concludes with what I propose as a theory of *critical community of practice* that synthesizes what teaching artists do, how they participate in development of their profession, and how they are represented in arts education policy.

This study was designed at the outset to better understand and inform the role of teaching artists in what Eric Booth has labeled an “arts-teaching ecosystem” (2009, p. 19). Yet as the study unfolded, I found that there was a critical pedagogy at the center of teaching artist practices that warranted further investigation. The teaching artists in this study consciously grappled with

their roles as cultural workers who did not have identifiable career categories. This study proposes that teaching artists actively find or form *critical communities of practice* to address both the needs of their students and refinement of their own professional practices in a way that promotes active resistance to standardized or oppressive institutional structures. By bringing these voices and counter-narratives to light, it may be possible to diffuse ongoing debates that “...pit art[s] education providers against each other” (Lackey, 2003, p. 101). I hope that this will inspire action in arts education professional development to outfit teaching artists for navigation of a complex and socially conscious career path.

### *Context and controversy*

Educational, social, and cultural organizations have been wrestling for decades with ways to capture or categorize teaching artist practices in order to make more efficient and effective use of their expertise. Many documents were published in the past decade to define how and when teaching artists could be best engaged in educational settings (Burnaford, Doherty, Brown, & McLaughlin, 2007; President’s Committee on the Arts & the Humanities, 2011). These policy documents reference a breadth of studies that define skills necessary for teaching artists to be competitive in an expanding field of work. Consistent among these documents is a lack of teaching artist representation. No specific source captured the motivations, challenges, or opinions of the teaching artists for whom recommendations were being made. This does not indicate a lack of sincerity on behalf of policymakers. It calls attention to the need for teaching artist voices to be better represented in policy. Their own voices have not yet emerged to lead or determine their own direction.

In 2011, a landmark report titled the *Teaching Artist Research Project (TARP)* documented the voices and work of over three thousand teaching artists in the United States

(Rabkin, Reynolds, Hedberg, & Shelby, 2011). This report established a primary source for my study because it provided significant data directly from a diverse field of teaching artists in the United States. It proposed that teaching artist practice is a phenomenon that emerged from a critical pedagogy formed in settlement houses at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, it provided evidence of teaching artistry as a career choice that has proliferated during the past thirty years of education reform efforts beginning with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (NCEE, 1984).

In the TARP report, teaching artists are documented for the first time in United States history as a measurable and definable force in education. In a report published the same year by the President's Commission on Arts and Humanities (PCAH, 2011), teaching artists were recommended as an under-developed resource for education reform. In a report published by the National Center for Education Statistics (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012), teaching artists were identified as having an increased presence in schools and in out-of-school-time programs and some impact on inequities or solutions that exist due to declining access to arts education.

A decades-old comparison of teaching artists and certified arts educators (Lackey, 2003) became a public controversy when a white paper published by the State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education (SEADAE) (Richerme, Shuler, McCaffrey, Hansen, & Tuttle, 2012) positioned teaching artists as a potential threat to existing arts education systems. SEADAE stated

Over the past few decades, the work of community artists and arts organizations with students has been highlighted by the *Teaching Artist Journal* and other important media coverage. While such publicity is unquestionably well deserved, an unintended consequence has been the temptation by some policymakers to embrace such supplemental programs as cost-saving replacements for public school-budgeted arts

education. While in-school and out-of school enrichment experiences offer important arts learning opportunities for students, the funding—and consequently the programs—are often transient and do not provide a regular system of universal, sequential, standards-based, K-12 arts education. (p. 2)

The authors of the white paper were rightfully defending the erosion of school-based arts education opportunities that has come with an increasingly standardized system of teaching and learning in the United States. The paper was written to advocate for stronger arts education support in public schools, yet it positioned teaching artists as “supplemental” to certified arts educators. Further, the white paper had little effect on direct policies for teaching artists. However, the white paper came from a powerful policy group and was received in national blog posts by teaching artists (Kelin, 2012; Gibas, 2012) as an attempt to limit their work within standardized curricula and by proposing that teaching artists offered transient value to public education. I found that the emphasis on standards-based education also failed to address existing inequities that had little to do with individual artists or teachers (Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011).

The messages in all of the policy documents presented here emphasize the professional abilities of teaching artists and recommend more consistent professional development for their field. Yet, most studies addressed the school-based or school-aligned, and in turn, standards-based needs of public education. This means that the benefits of their findings are applied only to students who are being served by their experiences in public arts education. Since public education currently fails to meet the needs of as many as half of the children enrolled (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Ravitch, 2010) and teaching artists have largely been employed to address those failings (Rabkin et al., 2011), it is curious that policy advocates for more compliance with standardized systems. As I began to prepare for this study, it became

evident that teaching artists had been trying to speak out about system inequities, but their lack of collective voice at a higher policy level was limiting.

Teaching artists in this study provide a representative sample that aligns with the TARP census data. From that statistical information it is evident that they are doing work that is largely outside of the school-based, standards-based system (Rabkin et al., 2011, p. 8). If they teach in schools, then their work is often enrichment, arts integration, or extended day curricula which are not part of standards-based curricula as indicated in the SEADAE paper and other related policy documents.

In this study, I propose that there is controversy surrounding teaching artists' professional practices and development, existing in a swirl of education reform efforts that can be outlined within the spectrum of these reports. The controversy centers on education reform efforts that have reduced the role of school arts instruction in schools and positioned teaching artists as a potential threat to certified arts specialists. The reduction of school arts instruction correlates to serious educational inequities (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012) that have been deepening over time. In turn, many of those inequities are addressed by implementing partnerships with teaching artists as a way to work with complex and restricted schedules, facilities, willing professionals, and of course, economics. A perceived threat to the work of certified arts specialists has resulted from expansion and recognition of a teaching artist profession despite additional studies to date that show no causal relationship. Teaching artists have showed little interest in replacing the positions of certified arts educators in schools. They have demonstrated greater interest in re-shaping a system that devalues the role of certified arts personnel. This study indicates that they may have greater interest in changing a system that does not provide sufficient arts education experiences for more than half of the learners in our nation.

I propose that a collective teaching artist career community is developing in the United States with uneven representation in policies that are being made on their behalf. The career community is developing with a degree of resistance to mainstream qualifications usually proscribed for public educators due to evidence of inequitable access to arts learning in public education for a majority of learners. I believe this requires greater investigation to determine:

- The range of contexts that have encouraged individual and collective teaching artist professional practice. *What is or is not happening in and around education and arts education specifically that engenders increased interest in teaching artistry?*
- The qualities of teaching artist pedagogies that are developed intentionally or not, through practices in and outside of schools. *What do teaching artists do that differentiates their practices from school arts instruction, from regular classroom instruction, or from existing social, cultural and standards-based services?*
- The ways that teaching artists are beginning to form a collective career or professional identity in spite of an unformed system of training or advancement. *How do teaching artists identify and extend their own career communities?*

*Study Site: A community*

Teaching artists are defined in the TARP study as artists “for whom teaching is a part of professional practice” (Rabkin et al, p. 7). This means that they earn money and dedicate much of their regular activity to engagement as artists. While a majority of teaching artists begin to teach as a way to support their artistic work, many continue to teach when they find that their work can address social or educational issues. In many cases they find that their teaching practices also contribute to the advancement of their artistic expertise (Booth, 2004). In this

study, I focus on artists who self-identified as teaching artists and who considered their teaching to be incomplete without artistry and their artistry to be incomplete without teaching.

The teaching artists in this study came together as part of a national, virtual community of contributors for a blog titled *ALT/space* ([www.tajaltspace.com](http://www.tajaltspace.com)). This site was launched in fall 2011 as a supplemental resource to *Teaching Artist Journal (TAJ)*, a quarterly publication from Routledge Press. While the print journal is a peer-reviewed publication, the *ALT/space* blog recruits teaching artists through national arts education communication sites and solicits candidates with an eye toward diversity of geography, discipline, and pedagogical context. The blog quickly became a point of social and professional reference among other live and virtual teaching artist communities in the United States. It was a site of social exchange, linked to a range of geographically diverse social media sites where teaching artists shared practices in real time without the constraints of an editorial board and publishing schedule.

Before I conceived of this study, I was an editor for the Newsbreak section of *Teaching Artist Journal* for five years from 2006-2011. It was difficult to gather fast-breaking news that was of interest to teaching artists when we were on a nine-month academic publication schedule. The work involved a constant exchange of stories with fellow teaching artists. Their stories were not especially newsworthy, but they were rich with dialogue about teaching artist work that was not being shared with great detail in any other forum. I lobbied the editorial board of *TAJ* for permission to create a web presence that would align with my section and offer a real-time portal to stories of national teaching artist interest that were not making it into the print publication. We enlisted an initial cohort of twenty teaching artists from a wide geographic and demographic field to provide narrative entries. I handed leadership of the blog over to another editor so that I could commit more effectively to participating in, and not coordinating, stories from the field.

The stories that began to come through the *ALT/space* site presented a pleasant source of distraction as I was taking courses in research methodology and issues of education. The influx of teaching artist voices from around the country (and around the world) kept me current at a time when I was surrounded by the priorities of academic life and finding myself to be less of an everyday participant in school-community, teaching artist life. With the formality of peer-review lifted from the writing process on the blog, teaching artists were able to provide stream-of-consciousness observations that did not always end in conclusive arguments. With the possibility of serial entries, they were able to provide updates and interim tales of changing circumstances and new, unplanned events. A plain-talking chorus of voices offered familiarity and some safety for sharing worries and wonderings out loud without risk of censure. The frank and conversational exchange of teaching artist experiences established a three-dimensional space that allowed participants, readers, and writers alike to see parallels and issues to their isolated situations around the nation. As one participant wrote:

Writing, reflecting, researching, and sharing ideas from my own teaching artist practice with my peers has built a much greater sense of community in me and, having done so, I feel that my work has been further affirmed and validated. (*ALT/space* participant, 2012)

The *ALT/space* site became a contemporary form of community. It was a gathering space that was mediated by computer technology, yet it was a rare gathering place for isolated practitioners who rarely worked with other teaching artists in their daily lives.

#### *Study Participants: A corps of voices*

Over forty teaching artists who provided entries for *ALT/space* make up the corps of practitioners that I chose to observe and engage as participants in this study. I describe them here as a corps, because it is an identifiable body of participants, with a chorus of voices that may not

represent all teaching artists. These participants move and speak, and live and breathe individually, but when their voices are read together, they provide a body of distinct, collective dispositions. My own position as a participant observer, and eventually as an *ALT/space* contributor, allowed me to have rich familiarity with the language and circumstances of this corps.

In the fall of 2012 I began formal dissertation study. I decided to use *ALT/space* as a source for content analysis and to become familiar with teaching artists that I could interview and possibly observe. It was familiar and relevant world that I could access easily as I moved from graduate school in upstate New York to Boston, where I had taken a faculty position at Massachusetts College of Art & Design (aka MassArt). My perspective as a veteran in the field of teaching artistry allowed me to apply theoretical and big-picture perspectives to the study. My years as an art teacher in urban and rural schools from 1987-2000 established a deep empathy for school arts specialists who are often part of teaching artist practice and policy due largely to inevitable comparisons that can arise (Lackey, 2003) in the field. Validity and integrity of the research design required constant awareness of my own role as either participant or observer. From my position within this corps, I also determined to be selective and skeptical in use of the word “profession” to describe what teaching artists do. The defining characteristics of teaching artist work shift as they move from situation to situation, thus a static professional profile for this corps remained beyond formal definition during my time in this community.

It is important to note that this study of teaching artists names three distinct cadres of participant voices. The teaching artists who wrote blog entries for *ALT/space* are represented by their first names. Since their words are already part of the public domain, it is not legally necessary to address them with pseudonyms and in most cases the teaching artists expressed

interest in having wider readership of their published work. At the same time, I chose not to cite them with full names and dates so that their words were represented in a more familiar context. That context is as part of an unfolding and juxtaposed body of narratives and images that are encountered in virtual spaces. Hyperlinks and appropriated web content in this study provide portals to public information that is essential to this ethnographic portrayal. The teaching artists that participated in interviews and with whom I have conducted deeper conversations and situational analyses remain unnamed to protect their privacy. My own voice is part of the study data because it situates the researcher's stance and participation within a culture of teaching artists. I continue in first-person narrative as one of the continuous threads for the study.

### *Virtual ethnography*

Teaching artists do not see much of each other in everyday life. They are often hired as individual specialists who can help a team of educators or cultural workers to be more inventive with their standardized instructional approaches. They have no consistent physical spaces or cultural centers where they commonly socialize with like-minded practitioners. Teaching artists have turned to social media sites such as *ALT/space* as a way to congregate among peers (Rabkin et al., 2011, p. 138). They have inhabited a virtual geography on the Internet that is quite common in contemporary life. Thus, an important question shaped my early design of this study: Can a website be a legitimate space for ethnographic immersion? I engaged in conversations with dissertation advisors and with research colleagues in the field of arts education. I considered whether the process of gathering blog entries, online conversations, offline interviews, and memos from my own parallel teaching artist practices was true ethnography or some hybrid version of content analysis.

Literature on my virtual-or-real ethnographic dilemma is provided in Chapter 2 and in description of the methods in Chapter 3. I present the issue here as an introduction to the distinct reality of a teaching artist culture. Teaching artists are often de-centralized figures in the educational institutions that enlist their expertise (Rabkin et al., 2011, p 136). In a philosophical sense (Deleuze, 1968/1994; Peirce, 1902), even without Internet communication, teaching artists hold identities as virtual practitioners due to the fact that they are *real* artists and educators, who hold little *actual* membership in the places where they do their work. This presents a contemporary definition of virtuality in agreement with what Deleuze considered to be a very generative condition. In his own dissertation (1968), Deleuze proposed that, “The actualization of the virtual, on the contrary, always takes place by difference, divergence or differentiation” (p. 212). By being a virtual participant in any world, rules and limits that confine people within a membership may be applied differently or divergently.

Much like my own role as a virtual “lurker” (Kozinets, 2006) to the *ALT/space* site, teaching artists enter into an established community for a brief period or for a special project, and then they move on. My own participation as a contributor to the *ALT/space* blog entries (Reeder, 2014) warranted further exploration within the growing canon of internet ethnography (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Hine, 2000; Kozinets, 2006). This study does not suggest that all teaching artists find community through social media. But, it does suggest that there is logic and support in naming the virtual and social repartee of *ALT/space* as a rich and dimensional ethnographic site.

#### *Researcher as observant participant*

In order to understand the dimensional situations that form and are informed by past and present learning, relational identities, and multi-scale experiences of a teaching artist career path

or profession, this study focused attention to interplay among these elements. I interpreted data from my research stance as a teaching artist, so this study required instruments that blend artistic and educational lenses. The ethnographic foundation for this study requires full disclosure and development of researcher positionality. I acknowledge my own role as a participant in the populations under observation, not as an auto-ethnographic endeavor, but as an *observant participant*. Participant observation often requires a researcher to become part of a population (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). *Observant participation* is a variation that describes fieldwork completed by researchers who have existing membership in a population (Abu-Lughod, 1988; Wacquant, 2009). My participation with the *ALT/space* community was a natural extension of my collaboration with teaching artists who sought peer exchanges.

The study must be valid and relevant to academic and practitioner audiences that care about this information, and so it requires interpretive rigor that is meaningful for knowledge development and for active use. For this reason, I have chosen a social learning theory called “community of practice” as a theoretical framework. This theory was first developed by Lave and Wenger (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and later expanded by Wenger (1998). It was re-interpreted with an activist stance by Duguid (2005), and it is this variation that I use for this study.

Lave and Wenger originally introduced community of practice (CoP) as a social learning system that originates through identity as developed in human learning and social theory (Bourdieu, 1977; Foucault, 1980; Vygostsky, 1978). Wenger (2010) proposed that identity is a system unto itself, is formed through “learning in a landscape of practices” (p. 5), and that it is a central medium and transaction in communities of practice. Lave and Wenger (1991) wrote about identity as a system that that we construct through a *trajectory of learning* shaped in the past and present; a *nexus of identities* with multiple memberships that can coexist, complement,

enhance, or conflict at any time; and as *multi-scale experience* that allows us to identify and find resonance with individuals, groups, regions, ecosystems, and worlds. Lara Lackey (2003) used this theory as a way to extend the field of art education beyond a binary in-or-out of school debate as a network. This entrée to the usefulness of CoP came when I was searching for tools to defend an either/or debate (Zakaras, 2008) in national policy spheres about teaching artistry in school-based situations.

The metaphors of networks, systems, and complex ecosystems reminded me to keep my perspective more dimensional than binary. Duguid (2008) presented a critique against the installation of CoP as a workforce tool by organizational management professions because they lauded CoP as a design tool for simplifying professional relationships in the name of efficiency. His re-presentation of the theory argued for CoP as an “agonistic” force (p. 7) that required wrestling with contexts of practice and collective identity construction. This would eventually reveal complex systems of practice and learning that could be identified by practitioners to improve their situations. I found this active interpretation to be an elegant lens for studying teaching artist practices. In this study and in literature on teaching artist practices (Rabkin et al., 2011), teaching artists consistently wrestled with named methods in their work. They demonstrated conscious criticality that led me to pay closer attention to them as a corps of highly individualized practitioners who were seeking a better way to grow.

#### *Arts-based methodology*

Literature and research methodology surrounding the practices of teaching artists to date have been largely qualitative for good reason. Qualitative research has historically been used in social science to empirically understand behaviors as they are situated in lived experience

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Sullivan, 2010). Artistic engagement, which is a core quality of teaching artistry, draws deeply on aesthetic sensibilities that are not quite identifiable in qualitative terms. Interpreting and amassing aesthetic data requires thick and descriptive understanding of the relationships between mind and muscle, between concept and craft, and between quantity and quality (Wacquant, 2009). For that reason, this study involves a foundation of qualitative methodology by using ethnography to investigate social and pedagogical nuances of aesthetic engagement. It is carried out with an arts-based epistemology using analysis, theory building, and activism as a way to mirror and honor the pedagogical methods of the teaching artist participants in the study.

Arts-based research is essential to my study of teaching artists because the study is also about artists and the arts. My stance is reinforced by early and urgent messages delivered by pedagogues Maxine Greene and Eliot Eisner in 1998 when they collaborated with American Educational Research Association leaders and argued for “[n]ew ways of doing education research” (Suppes, Eisner, Stanley, & Greene, 1998, p. 34). Eisner proposed that those new ways were “unabashedly rooted in the arts and humanities” (p. 34) and that they provided information that was more meaningful to the populations being researched. Greene argued for the arts as a humanizing force for a new era of multiple literacies and “realities” (p. 36). Many studies of artistic work in education advocate for using more art, reading, or math, to achieve better education. Others use a metaphorical message of “wide-awakeness” (Greene, 1977), which is often invoked to describe the arts-based methods of teaching artists (Bose, 2008). By invoking this “awareness of what it is to be in the world” (Greene, 1995, p. 35) this study advances a theory that education is an ever-responsive and distinctly human art performed by all people.

This ethnography is intended not only for an academic readership, but also for the community of practitioners who inform it.

Because this is a study about arts educational work conducted by an arts educational researcher, communities of practice are interpreted with a blending of arts and educational research constructs. I have come to call this an arts-based ethnography only after wrestling with the constructs and my own sense of authority as a researcher. In each chapter of this dissertation I have provided descriptions of my artistic thinking and educational thinking as a way to help future artists who struggle to align their own methods with existing criteria. This is not an attempt to engage in self-reflection or autoethnography (Ellis, 2004; Ellingson & Ellis, 2008). Rather, it is my intention to provide transparency about my position as a researcher who is conscious of truthfully representing the under-represented practices of a community of people with whom I hold deep camaraderie and respectful concern.

Arts-based (Rolling, 2013) educational research and qualitative research methods (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) were conducted as follows:

- *Content analysis* of narratives from teaching artists in national online forums such as blogs, Facebook, and industry websites that provide information about all three constructs in a community of practice (trajectory of learning, nexus of identities, and multi-scale experience). Content analysis is a traditional qualitative approach yet the content in this study includes a range of narratives from teaching artists in real-time, virtual worlds, and publications. Arts-based research (Barone & Eisner, 2012) increasingly defines a narrative as both data and an analytic device (Reissman, 2008). Content in arts-based research can draw from historic and popular culture sources (Bey, 2011), artistic work (Daichendt, 2012), and social media (Smithbell, 2010).

- *Semi-structured interviews and conversations* with teaching artists conducted live, via Skype, and via email deepen details from communities of practice and allow participants who may not identify formally as teaching artists to contribute. Arts-based and critical-activist qualitative research understands the interview to be a co-constructed performance of participant and researcher (Rolling, 2013; Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Wacquant, 2004).

- *Situational analysis of data* during and after collection (Clarke, 2005) requires mapping of information, literature, data, sites, and outcomes in a visual-graphic approach. For this study I organized and analyzed the nexus of identities and multi-scale experiences of teaching artists with situational maps. These provided a visual tool for better understanding the complex narratives and actions among communities and worlds of teaching artist practice. Qualitative research is just beginning to adopt the visual approaches of situational analysis yet it continues to overlap with arts-based research (Perez & Canella, 2011) due to the synthetic interpretations that are designed by the researcher (Rolling, 2013).

This study uses a blend of qualitative and arts-based constructs, but it is not a mixed-methods approach. This is because it exists outside of a canon of commonly named quantitative or qualitative scientific methods. It is scientific because it poses questions and engages in experimentation and identification of empirical evidence to test or form hypotheses and theories. According to Creswell and Clark (2006), mixed-methods research requires a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches in research design. Statistical and quantitative data is referenced from other scholars in the literature review, but no quantitative data was collected for this study. While some structural designs developed for mixed quantitative and qualitative research may be reflected here, this is not a qualitative and arts-based surrogate for qualitative

and quantitative methods. Denzin & Lincoln (2011) have compared such blended approaches to “bricolage, quilt-making, or montage” (p. 4). This research design originates from my own orientation as an artist and researcher who relies on aesthetic and graphic information, physical experience, and depth of trusted literature as data to interpret my understanding and findings.

Some of the content data that I gathered was in photo, video, audio, and other graphic forms due to the virtual community of practice that allows visual and performing teaching artists to relate their stories in multiple online media. I believe that it is logical to study other artists by using the language that they use and by representing their information in a study that can eventually be accessible to them. My field notes are drawn from over three years of specific study and my positionality within a community of practice is founded on over thirty years of life history as a participant in a national culture of teaching artists. The virtual social and political reality of web media has allowed this culture to expand internationally. Some of the data is drawn from up-to-the-moment shifts in policy and information that is available among social media communities of practice in this study. Arts-based research allows for a generative unfolding of aesthetic and artistic findings in real time.

A final, yet overarching element of this ethnography became important only after a few years of immersion with my data. That element was the naming of my analytic methodologies. Due to the multiple analyses that led to findings I was conscious of a specific artistic concept that had been influencing my study at every level. That concept was inherent to Surrealistic *exquisite corpse* artistic practices. The value of identifying and naming this research element at a late stage of the study process is described with increasing detail within each chapter. I introduce the concept of the exquisite corpse in this chapter simply as a method of artistic and social play that has been highly influential in bringing different people into enriching collaborative work.

### *Chapter overview*

The chapters of this dissertation animate my research as follows:

In Chapter Two, I provide a review of literature as it pertains to my study questions. First, I introduce literature that supports evidence of an emergent corps of teaching artists in the United States. Then, I identify literature that situates teaching artist practices in and around public education, along with policy implications that have been raised from their work. I present literature that addresses the roles and voices of teaching artists as advocates for their own career development. Finally, I support the research methodology as arts-based ethnography with historic and contemporary literature.

In Chapter Three, I describe the research methodology that was used to conduct this study. Critical, arts-based, ethnographic development and analysis of data relied on a body of devices that provided theoretical and practical support for the findings. The methodology for the study allowed for two emergent theories to be engaged during the subsequent data analysis.

In Chapter Four, I present data and findings that emerged from the sub-questions of my initial research. The data is presented with a model that accounts for the environments of the teaching artists and learners as well as the aesthetic nature of the data that depicts them.

In Chapter Five, analysis of data and synthesis of findings represents a body of voices that speak to teaching artist career development and the worlds that surround their careers. This chapter reviews aesthetic and social realities of teaching artist practice outside of and in relationship to standardized systems and policies.

In Chapter Six, I conclude by applying findings for teaching artist practice, for education policy, and for arts education research. A summary in this section includes considerations for mentoring future arts-based researchers and teaching artists.

All chapters of this dissertation begin with quotes and vignettes from artists, learners, and teachers whose voices I encountered in the field. I emphasize these voices in order to demonstrate the multiple dimensions of teaching artistry that came into consideration during the study. I also share these voices as essential structural elements of ethnography. They form an intentional blog-like framework for establishing the context of small stories that can be read in varying sequences. Such juxtaposed stories produce data and findings later in the report.

Educational and arts educational literature to date continues to call for data that represents the lived experiences of people, adults and children alike, who participate in the gaps, cracks, and margins of our educational and arts educational ecosystems (Eisner, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Burnaford et al, 2007; Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Rabkin et al, 2011; Meier, 2013). These chapters are intentionally filled with voices of people who have been under-represented and need to be seen and heard and understood so that policies representing their lives and work cease to be exclusive or neglectful. I end this chapter with a story. This is an introduction to the use of vignettes that animate the texture and voices of teaching artistry throughout the study.

*Summary: A legacy of “normal”*

In January 2012, I was putting the oddly-shaped pieces of my thirty-some years as an artist and art teacher into a definable form. I was completing doctoral exams and applying for a college faculty position at Massachusetts College of Art & Design (also known as MassArt). At that same time, on January 27<sup>th</sup>, Hull House, which was founded by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr in 1889, closed its operations in Chicago. This was incredibly touching to me. Hull House held a special place in my heart because it was an enduring model of activism and artistry that I referenced in professional development with both artists and teachers alike. It signaled a

sense of change for me. A place that had hosted a dynamic blend of social, educational, and artistic engagement for 122 years, spanning three centuries was not available anymore. I knew that it was time to envision new resources. I talked about it with Nick Rabkin, the principal researcher for the TARP study, (2011) and found that he too, had a special love for the history of Hull House. He reminded me that Hull House was influential in the development of improvisational comedy through the teaching artistry of actress Viola Spolin. At that time I was just beginning to use exquisite corpse games for improvisational and collaborative play with my students and friends. Something about improvisation and artistic work was compelling to me, but it seemed too unserious to connect to my research. I studied Hull House a bit more.

I begin this research document with a reflection on Hull House because it was the first organization in the United States to hire artists for social change, something beyond teaching others to perform or produce artistic works. I understand from my own teaching artist practice and from this study that social change is still at the heart of a contemporary and oddly-shaped profession or career path of teaching artists. Addams and Starr hired artists to work with people who were struggling with issues of poverty, underrepresentation, and barriers to social progress. They believed that the arts provided methods for developing voice, making informed decisions, and for envisioning new ways to navigate difficult situations. In an 1889 letter to her cousin, Starr wrote that she was “tired to death of art for art’s sake, words for word’s sake, [and] music for music’s sake” (Stankiewicz, 1989, p. 35). At a time when schools and other public institutions were beginning to employ methods of mass production for efficiency, participants of Hull House were expressing individual ideas and questioning authority through improvisational play with professionals like theater artist Viola Spolin. Spolin was one of many artists hired by Addams and Starr when the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was hiring artists, writers,

musicians, and actors from 1935-1943. She would go on to influence the start of improvisational and socially satirical theater at The Second City in Chicago. Similar to Addams and Starr, it appears to be impossible for most teaching artists to separate teaching from learning, artistry from pedagogy, or research from activism.

In my research on Hull House, I began to follow threads of history that linked similar arts educational and social practices. I found excellent accounts about artists as education practitioners that were published by art education historian, Mary Ann Stankiewicz (1989, 2002, 2011). She too, found activist qualities that not only existed at Hull House, but at MassArt where I am proud to be employed as a faculty member. MassArt was once called the Massachusetts Normal Art School (MNAS) and the objectives of that school were, and still are, anything but normal (Figure 1). MNAS emphasized the importance of training female and African American



Figure 1. *Students at Massachusetts Normal Art School, circa 1890. Courtesy of the University Archives & Special Collections Department, Joseph P. Healey Library, University of Massachusetts Boston: Boston State College photograph collection, ca. 1876-1975.*

artists as teachers at a time when the arts belonged only to the upper classes. As with the contemporary conundrum presented by this study, there is a national legacy of artists in places such as Hull House and MassArt choosing to teach outside of what we might consider to be normal or majority situations. Whether they are seeking to be part of an identified collective professional identity or not, findings indicate that they persist in working with learners who need their unique abilities the most. These teaching artists form a considerable corps of practitioners whose voices are just beginning to be heard. This study documents many examples of teaching artists who are driven by such critical and complex practices. It is from their efforts that I propose a theory of *critical community of practice* for consideration by my peers.

## CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

*“Teaching is about communication. You have to see the light in the students’ eyes. When you don’t see the light, you try something else. My art affected my classroom teaching, trying to be inventive there — to teach students how to look. When you’re looking at two things, look between them. The space between is very important.”*

- John Baldessari, *Art21*, 2009

*“All of the things between. All of the people and the cracks in the sidewalk...and even that messed-up stuff on the walls, like that “love me” picture and even my Aunt’s house...all of those things from here to there were like...invisible to me! I was like...wow, now I can see them and so can all the people from TV and stuff because we just held hands and crowded that street? And then all those other people from the neighborhood who, like, I never knew...did too? Go figure.”*

- Third grade student, 2012

### *Introduction: Teaching artistry & in-between identities*

Conceptual artist John Baldessari and the third grade student quoted above both express variations on a theme of in-between-ness that illustrate how the arts in social and educational systems can be helpful, but difficult to explain. Baldessari describes artistic work as something that can help an individual to be more observant and engaged with information that is situated between what is obvious. The student describes artistic work as something that can help groups of people to be more visible, when they are often stereotyped or ignored in media or social institutions. Specifically, the third grade student is referencing the work of a many-years long residency that I had with an urban elementary school and neighborhood in my own teaching artist practices. During that residency, the students of the school were struggling to be heard by adults. They wanted administrators to prioritize building of a safer playground. They wanted to be part of curriculum plans that were designed for them. They wanted neighbors and policymakers surrounding their school to include them on a map that was being used to promote

the interests of a local university. As an activist measure, they organized and staged a human chain of adults and children holding hands and imposing themselves across streets and parking lots of their school neighborhood. Their message was “We are here! See more of us!” Their art



Figure 2. *Students and teachers beginning to form a human chain (2012)*

was a living sculpture (Figures 2 & 3) and many real and paper hands collaged to form a considerable presence for all to see. They were neither gallery artists nor were they formal



Figure 3. *Paper hand chain created as advertisement for the “Hand in Hand” event (2012)*

educators. But they had had media coverage and their parents left work to join them for the event. They were included on the map. State curricula did not change. The playground was only

minimally improved. But for a moment, they had made a difference and had educated a few more people.

I offer a story from my own teaching artist world as an introduction to how I use text in this chapter of literature. The text in this case is not my writing or peer-reviewed research documents. The text is the unique, dimensional, and improvisatory work of the students who found agency through artistic work. I reference it because similar narratives from my own experience provided foundational support as texts for this study. Writing about the experience helped me as an ethnographer and as a teaching artist to better articulate the issues and values that emerged from what looked like a playful and non-curricular adventure with children. It reinforced my sense of belonging to a community of practice that was not distinctly artistic or educational. It was wide-awake and human. The story belonged to others who invited me to learn something with them.

Wacquant (2011) referred to such experiential information as “textual reflexivity” (p. 86) in his own ethnography, which was conducted through the culture of a boxing gym. He found that the empirical structure of his study and the theory that drove his inquiry were revealed when he had his nose broken in a boxing match. He proposed that the human experience of a researcher could be useful as foundational text to hone methodological tools along the way. Wacquant also influenced my use of narrative and poetic text for inquiry throughout fieldwork, analysis, and synthesis in ethnography.

This study began with questions about teaching artist development of professional dispositions in between worlds of the arts and worlds of education. Yet, by delving deeper in between those worlds through literature and through the eyes and voices of teaching artists and their diverse partners, a more critical *wide-awakeness* or provocative “awareness of what it means to be in the world” of teaching artistry emerged (Greene, 1995, p. 35).

In literature to date, teaching artists have been identified as practitioners who are enlisted to tackle challenges that occur under the radar, between teaching and learning, profession and practice, schools and communities, and between individuals and groups (Rabkin et al., 2011). They are also identified as instigators for better or for worse, who tempt learners to imagine yet unconceived and still impossible other worlds (Booth, 2003). During my own tenure as a teaching artist, art teacher, administrator, and arts education advocate, I have seen how teaching artists have disturbed rhythms of artistic instruction in our schools and how they sometimes distract policymakers from efficient system design (Richerme, L. K., Shuler, S. C., McCaffrey, M., Hansen, D., & Tuttle, L., 2012). The persistence of their practices within infamous achievement gaps of education (Ladson-Billings, 2006) has led me to position teaching artists in this study as critical agents who are difficult to identify and organize, yet who provide important counter-narratives to failing educational systems.

This literature review addresses teaching artistry in three ways: first, as an evolving body of practitioners that expanded over the 20<sup>th</sup> century in-between social, educational, and artistic worlds; next, as a provocative political and social movement in contemporary education reform; and finally as a decentralized community of practitioners who wrestle with issues of professionalization. The literature is organized in three central sections around these research themes and preceded by examination of frequently used definitions and concepts. It is concluded with literature that supports the arts-based ethnographic research design.

### *Definitions and concepts*

Writing about education and the arts presents a minefield of terms that can be misunderstood or understood when they are reduced to code for a range of perspectives. These terms are often

used for efficient categorization of vast and complex situations. Some terms are overused and have evolved far away from their original definition. Others are unique and exist in narrowly defined situations. This section introduces a few that are relevant to this study.

### *What is a teaching artist?*

Artists who teach and are known in the United States as *teaching artists* straddle more than two worlds of education and the arts. Artists have been teaching in studios, conservatories, schools, religious, social, community and cultural organizations for centuries. They use music, dance, drama, visual media, literature, and multiple media to do their work. They have organized and have been differentiated by discipline, site, intention, and products of their labor. Quite a bit of research has been completed since the beginning of the 20th century on the pedagogies and methods of artists who teach in schools most commonly as visual art or music teachers, but also as dance, theater, digital media, and creative writing teachers (Burnaford et al, 2007). Since the 1972 (Schubart) publication of a study of performing arts institutions and youth programs titled: *The hunting of the squiggle*, a hybrid generation of artists who teach in multiple situations and especially in partnerships with schools have been identified in the United States as teaching artists and at times, artist-teachers (Booth, 2003; Daichendt, 2010; Rabkin et al., 2011; Tannenbaum, 2011). Teaching artist is the term used in this study because it has been more consistently used in arts education literature across disciplines and at the heart of policy documents and issues.

The unique evolution of teaching artists from multiple spaces and with multiple objectives has made it difficult for a single professional identity to be qualified or quantified to date (Rabkin et al., 2011). Teaching artists have been identified in recent national publications as being of increasing value to the future of U.S. education (PCAH, 2011; Rabkin & Hedberg,

2011) and fields of artistic, social, educational, and even economic advancement (Ayers & Tanner, 2011; Duncan, 2011; Marsalis, 2009; Pink, 2005). There is something that education communities and society want from creative professionals such as teaching artists, and a recent study sets the stage for my own inquiry.

### *The Teaching Artist Research Project (TARP)*

*Teaching Artists and the Future of Education: A Report on the Teaching Artist Research Project* (TARP) was completed in 2011 by principal investigator Nick Rabkin with Michael Reynolds, Eric Hedberg and Justin Shelby. It is the first national, statistical, and qualitative census to provide a substantive portrait of teaching artists. TARP is a central document in this study because it centers the voice and experience of teaching artists as primary sources for data and as players in a critical national conversation about education and civil rights. TARP establishes statistically supported and historically meaningful findings to describe an existing and growing profession of teaching artists. This study uses TARP as a blueprint for situating the practices of teaching artists in three contexts: in their immediate practices, in the environments that propel their professional identities, and in the broader discourses that influence their participation in educational, artistic, and social worlds. The content of the text is introduced in depth later in this chapter.

### *Practice, participation, and profession*

I use the terms practice, profession, and participation frequently to describe the work of teaching artists in this study in alignment with the contexts described above from TARP and in theoretical development of teaching artistry as a “community of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Practice is understood here as actions taken in the course of teaching artist work that not

only get a job done, but that also accumulate learned patterns and systems for informing the quality of outcomes. Practice can describe the creation of art across disciplines so that a dance practice of isolating and combining varied steps into a movement might correspond to an acting practice of differentiating the quality of voices in a monologue. Practice can describe a pedagogical decision to translate artistic terms such as line into a line of speech or a contour line into teaching terms such as a string of words in a sentence or family lineage in history studies.

Participation is understood in this study as applying practices while conscious of belonging to a larger body of practitioners. In qualitative research, participant observation is understood as a method for data collection where the researcher gains deep familiarity with a particular group by spending time in their world (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). As a teaching artist and as an art teacher, I also propose that participation in artistic activity is a way for people to gain access to art worlds that might be perceived as inaccessible due to placement in exclusive institutions.

Profession is understood in two ways: as a declaration of belief and as employment in work that requires specialized education and apprenticeship for service to others, and which requires a degree of shared ethics and self-regulation. In this study, I present teaching artistry more as a declaration of belief, because there is not *yet* any one nationally organized membership body of teaching artists guiding a shared professional definition.

### *Critical community of practice (CoP)*

Cognitive anthropologists Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger introduced *community of practice* (CoP) as a social learning theory with publication of *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (1991). The theory proposes that through shared or “peripheral participation” (p. 29), a group of people can learn from each other and organically form

communities for personal and professional growth. In this study, understanding the world and work of teaching artistry as a community of practice lends structure to the arenas and worlds that teaching artists navigate. Because they do not have a national organization, I have found that there is a wide and shifting community of teaching artists who seek more collegial interactions, but who understand that those collegial groups may not always consist exclusively of teaching artists. The multiple dimensions of their own identities as artists who sometimes teach and who sometimes do other things such as business or social work makes it possible for them to find affinity with more than one group. This study proposes that teaching artists belong to many diverse communities of practice.

By loosely identifying the *ALT/space* teaching artists as one theoretical community of practice, it was possible for me to begin this study with a finite group of participants. By participating within that community of practice, I discovered the porosity of the group and understood the original CoP theory as one of a pedagogical worldview that relied more on the advantages of practices that are shared than on the named profession or on an explicit exchange of knowledge. The teaching artists in *ALT/space* described their artistic practices in the contexts of many communities. Some found that the metrics and movements of dance linked them to mathematical and science communities. Some found that protecting personal identities through puppetry linked them to cultural communities that needed a safe way to resolve conflict.

Over time, structural adaptations of CoP have been applied to economics and management of educational systems as a way to offer workers a positive term for intentionally formed professional consortia (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). This has been problematic, because it involves top-down labeling of participants who may have less power over the direction of their practices (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Duguid, 2005). The economic

approach to intentional communities of practice has also emphasized limited exchanges of expertise within the finite concerns of institutional progress over a more generative outgrowth of individualized practices by participants.

This study rejects over-simplification of knowledge that can happen when the terms “community” and “practice” are used to organize information. Paul Duguid (2005) explained this critical understanding of CoP when he wrote:

Lave and Wenger’s (1991) notion of ‘community of practice’ has developed a remarkably wide following. Its appeal owes a good deal to the seductive character of community, aptly described as a ‘warmly persuasive word’ (Williams, 1976, p. 66). Yet it is practice that makes the CoP, the social locus in which a practice is sustained and reproduced overtime, a distinct type of community. (Duguid, 2005, p. 109)

This study uses community not as a term for tying difficult situations up into harmonic bundles, but as a critical term for describing changeable and incomplete groups of people who increase our awareness of difficult situations. In this case, *critical* community of practice describes teaching artistry as a world of practitioners who resist passive categorization.

### *Criticality*

Critical pedagogy was introduced by Paulo Freire to the world of educational theory in 1970 with the publication of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. While his own writing and practices did not include a formal combination of the words *critical* and *pedagogy*, he did advocate for participant critique of authoritarian approaches to teaching and learning. My use of critical pedagogy in this study is best represented by Freire and pedagogue Ira Shor when they intertwined action, teaching, and learning with this statement:

This is a great discovery, education is politics! After that, when a teacher discovers that he or she is a politician, too, the teacher has to ask, What kind of politics am I doing in the classroom? That is, in favor of whom am I being a teacher? (Shor, 1987, p. 46)

As with terms like *community* and *practice*, a statement or project that hopes to assert political or activist value to a society is commonly categorized as critical. I am highly conscious about possible arguments against positioning teaching artists as a critical group because in much of the literature, they are formally depicted as gap-filling *supplemental* players to existing educational professionals (Burnaford et al., 2007; PCAH, 2011; Richerme et al., 2012). Yet teaching artists are also situated at odds with prevailing educational discourses because they provoke question-asking at times and in places where question-asking may be inconvenient to busy school schedules or focused curricular content. Additionally, their presence has inspired art and music educators along with cultural organization personnel to re-evaluate and defend their own existing practices (Engbretson, 2013; NAEA, 2014).

As a researcher and as a teaching artist I am aware that introducing concepts of critical pedagogy to a community of teaching artists may not increase their popularity or employability. I am also aware that their practices consistently magnify what is problematic about schooling in what Shor (1987) described as the “punitive attitude of curriculum” that “sends messages to students about their worth and place in society” (p. 46). Teaching artists, by way of their questioning and disruptive practices appear to be holding a mirror to our current failing educational systems. For example, when a poet is hired to help parents and teenagers in a school district to express their perspectives of learning during an evening program, it is likely that critical memories and feelings might be described in poetic words. This is because the context is designed for people to use poetry to communicate to one another. If that same poet were asked to

teach poetry during a school day, the participation might include more study of poetic structure and examples of other people's poetry. This context might limit critical expression because poetry is not being created as an immediate communication. In the context of school curriculum the poetry is being crafted as evidence of understanding a structure of communication.

Arts education is in constant play with conflicting education delivery systems. We standardize and limit our own practices at the expense of learner empowerment in lock-step with non-arts education (Catterall, 2012; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Stringer, 2014). Teaching artists operate beyond arts education domains because they are often hired for non-arts programs. By existing as an alternative resource to standardized education practices, teaching artists provide contrasting methods that are not especially better. Rather, they offer educational communities of practice opportunities review their own methods for relevance or as Maxine Greene wrote, "To reflect on things as if they could be otherwise" (2001, p. 98). Thus, the decentralized critical practices of teaching artists are less likely to be visible in one field exclusively.

### *Reform*

I reference reform in this study because there was a marked increase in funding for teaching artists to work in alliance with failing school districts through public and private funds that began with the federal *No Child Left behind Act*, (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002). This act was introduced as an approach to education reform that would assess and reform the way that schools were educating disadvantaged students. Reform, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, has become a complex and exhausted code for action that aims to improve public education or social circumstances. As with *community*, *practice*, and *critical*, reform is so liberally applied across discourses that it is difficult to understand what it means. The seductive

character of reform encourages overuse as a label for some new and improved, yet elusive, added value. This study references education and/or social reform not as a description of the work being done by teaching artists, but as a condition that led to demand for artists who teach in and around schools and communities.

### *Wide-awakeness*

Both education and social research have turned to artistic practices in order to harvest cognitive, social, and practical tools for improvement that have, until now, been difficult to analyze in traditional scientific terms (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). These artistic qualities are difficult to determine with what researchers have prized as quantitative objectivity due to aesthetic and emotional stickiness that holds human thought and action together (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This study intentionally surrounds the situational issues described above with an attitude of “wide-awakeness” that I borrow from educational philosopher, Maxine Greene (1977) who has used the term for many years. Greene used wide-awakeness as a descriptor for complex pedagogy that acknowledges critical educational engagement from Dewey (1916), reflective agency as praxis with Friere (1970), full consciousness from Merleau-Ponty (1962), and whatever else engages human being(s) in learning that is charged with aesthetic depth. Her characterization of aesthetic as the “opposite of anesthetic” (Greene, 2007, p. 8) provides a plain-language understanding for wide-awakeness that has helped me to share it with diverse audiences. In this study, the term is used to provide dimensions to the content of perceived binaries and gaps that surround teaching artist work.

*An evolving professional body: Where does teaching artistry come from?*

Literature on artists who teach and call themselves *teaching artist* is much less common than literature on art teachers, museum educators, or community artists. (Daichendt, 2009; Saraniero, 2008). Direct study of teaching artists and teaching artistry began with the publication of the *Teaching Artist Journal (TAJ)* in 2003. Founding editor, Eric Booth (2003) wrote an introductory essay titled, “Seeking Definition: What is a Teaching Artist?” At the beginning of the essay, he attributed the naming of teaching artists to June Dunbar, who co-founded Lincoln Center Institute in 1972. He acknowledged nineteen arts education professionals for the opinions they shared to help him form the definition. Of those professionals, five were teaching artists. The rest were arts education leaders or people who may have used other descriptors due to the newness of the term. Two chronological histories of teaching artistry followed in *TAJ* with Jane Remer’s *A Brief History of Artists in K-12 American Schooling* (2003) which situated artists in and around schools during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and Judith Tennenbaum’s outline history of the teaching artist field (2011) which situated artists in civic populations with schools as part of a field of teaching artistry that could be traced to 1930’s WPA programs.

A majority of existing studies depict teaching artistry from the perspective of arts education organization leaders (Burnaford et al., 2007). Economically, these leaders have been employing and training teaching artists in roles of increasing responsibility. Some studies provide quotes from teaching artists and data from observing their practices. Only four distinct sources engage large bodies of teaching artists to tell the stories of their own development. I begin here by fully introducing the Teaching Artist Research Project (TARP) study (Rabkin et al., 2011) because it establishes a benchmark in the development of teaching artists by quantitatively and qualitatively engaging voices of teaching artists to tell a story of their own

development as a body of practitioners. TARP reaches back to individual teaching artist examples from the past well as capturing individual and collective projections for their future.

*TARP: Teaching artists and the future of education*

The TARP study begins by establishing two related trends as incentive for further study of teaching artists. With data from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) the first trend showed a decline in student participation in the arts from 1982, with dramatically greater declines in poor, African American, and Hispanic populations than in White, middle class populations. The second trend was a significant increase in independent artists being hired to work in schools over that same thirty years as documented in a compendium of studies compiled by the Arts Education Partnership (Burnaford et al., 2007). Teaching artist practices in and around school-day learning were emerging in promising data cited in education policy literature (Fiske, 1999; Burnaford, Aprill & Weiss, 2001; Deasy, 2002; Perkins, 2010) and providing hybrid methods (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004; Ruppert & Nelson, 2006), that researchers and practitioners were trying to categorize and name (Stevenson & Deasy, 2005; Seidel et al., 2009).

Fallout from both trends has been correlated to publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), which advocated for increased accountability, standardized testing, and political resistance to the economic responsibility of public education during the presidential administration of Ronald Reagan. Because the arts have an appearance of frivolity with their emphasis on reflection, expression, and cognitive complexity there has been a decrease in demand for arts instruction; erosion of time and resources for school arts instruction; and reduction of access to any arts experience for students from low-performing public schools.

The increase of teaching artists during this same time has prompted more curiosity about their participation from critics and advocates alike.

TARP introduces the potency of teaching artists as a subject for further study in the executive summary by stating:

Our purpose was not to test or prove that belief [that there is something in the nature of arts learning itself that has a particular power to drive student development]. Our logic model began with studies that found substantial positive effects from arts education programs and with new cognitive science that suggests the arts have unique power to engage students, commit them to learning, and invoke and develop deep cognitive processes that are essential to thinking and learning in general. Our purpose was to learn more about the artists who are responsible for those effects. If TAs can do all that, all those who care about the education and development of our children need to know more about them and what they know. (p. 7)

TARP goes on to present statistical data that animates qualities of over 3500 teaching artists who were surveyed from a dozen urban, rural, and suburban communities around the United States. The study interviewed over 200 artists and personnel who lead programs involving teaching artists in a range of situations. Surveys gathered information about practices, environments, education, employment, pay, motivations, and challenges of teaching artists. Data revealed detailed descriptions of the terrain that teaching artists navigate and made it clear that there is no one artistic, educational, or social world that is inhabited by teaching artists.

The study challenged the field by posing the question “Are TAs professionals?” (p. 133). The data did not support traditional employment definitions of a profession, but a number of teaching artists could be identified in disconnected situations as having professional qualities

such as: educational rigor, interest in skill development and apprenticeship, commitment to continuous improvement, and organizing pay structures for their work. Without an organizing body for professional leadership and sustainable conditions for employment (only 28% of respondents worked full time as teaching artists, p. 170), it was not possible for TARP to fully define teaching artist practices as an agreed-upon profession.

For my study, employment data that was of great interest was the information about starting points for teaching artistry. None, that is zero percent of respondents, began their careers with an intention of becoming something called a teaching artist. Most came first to teaching artistry through economic need or through social interest. TARP states:

Most TAs indicated that they quickly found that teaching was rewarding emotionally, challenging intellectually, and that it was flexible enough to (usually) permit them to pursue their interest in making their own art work and a career as a professional artist.

TAs consistently responded that they teach because they “want to work in their artistic field” and because they “love teaching.” They find the work rewarding because it enables them to “pass a gift on” to others, “make a contribution to social change,” enables them to “contribute to community,” and because they “learn and grow” from teaching. (p. 137)

This information influenced my final study recommendations because there is growth in graduate and undergraduate arts education institutions toward training artists as teaching artists (Jaffe, Barniskis, & Hackett Cox, 2013). This is one of the small movements that contributed to policy debates about how, when, and why it might be best to promote artist and teacher education with credentialing in mind.

It was teaching artists themselves who resisted definition as part of a profession that should pursue certification or credentialing. Surveyed teaching artists in the TARP study stated

that low pay and inconsistency of work situations made it undesirable to promote. Additionally, because they all came to their work via unique paths that provided hybrid skills that could only come from experience, most teaching artists were wary of the effects that educational standardization might have on the qualities of their work. They were aware that they were already being enlisted to reverse ill-effects of standardization and reform on education.

Rabkin and his fellow researchers (2011) were not the first to notice the values and challenges of teaching artistry, but they were the first to name, measure, and construct a recognizable national portrait for future researchers. Mapping the growth and movement of this teaching artist body as it moves between critical issues of education reform and elusive issues of professional practice provides a foundational resource for this dissertation.

The TARP study is referenced in each chapter of this dissertation as a core text. While my study may appear at times to be a repetition of established findings, in fact, it is a deeper investigation into only a few of the themes and issues raised by the TARP research team. The arts-based and ethnographic approaches of my study also offer fine-grained analyses that respond to a call put forth by the TARP researchers in their primary finding. That finding indicates that now may be the pivotal moment in arts education history to challenge the way we have been doing arts education and education in general.

After three decades of decline, and in the midst of major financial challenges, this may be a turning point for arts education in the US. This is a challenging moment for education in America. After three decades of effort to improve schools, there has been too little serious progress in too few schools, particularly those serving low-income children. The recession has imposed harsh new constraints on school budgets. But critical dissatisfaction with prevailing school reform strategies, the distortions of an over-

abundance of testing, and awareness that school reform has not delivered the improvements it has promised appears to be growing. (Rabkin et al., 2011, p. 190)

Following this finding, TARP goes on to report three more major findings, with three suggested objectives and six specific recommendations. My study responds to a few key recommendations, but the most significant thread that I address here was present in all of the findings and recommendations: TARP consistently advocates for teaching artists themselves, to be seen, to be heard, and to advocate on their own behalf. This study takes to heart the need for more teaching artist voices in the research. The TARP recommendations (pp. 192-199) initiate this emphasis as follows:

- *Recommendation #1: Build demand for arts education.* Teaching artists are a source for advocacy information, stories, and case studies. This study reviews hundreds of stories that were written by over 40 teaching artists in the ALT/space blog.
- *Recommendation #2: Make the field sustainable.* Teaching artists often operate in isolation from other teaching artists. This study delves into communities of teaching artist practice from the perspective of teaching artists.
- *Recommendation #3: Develop arts integration.* While the concept of arts integration may be controversial to dynamics between arts specialists, content teachers, and teaching artists, it is in fact happening in at a highly increasing rate. This study identifies interactions among teaching artists and other participants in their everyday work from individual and combined perspectives.
- *Recommendation #4: Standards and provisions.* Teaching artists are partners in arts education and should be included in crafting the next generation of standards. This study provides examples of teaching artist participation in relation to policy and standards.

- *Recommendation #5: Assessment.* Teaching artists have a negative experience with standardized assessments but their practices suggest that they engage in naturalized assessments in practice. This study investigates teaching artist practices around assessment both from the voices of teaching artists and from teaching artists who have become program administrators.

- *Recommendation #6: Professional development & certification.* Teaching artists are hungry for relevant professional development, but resist certification due to skepticism about benefits and limitations. Teaching artists in this study ultimately provide an activist alternative to certification in the form of communities of practice.

In my own correspondence with principal researcher Nick Rabkin, he noted that it was difficult to gauge the impact of the TARP study on the field. He explained that the historic content was often highly appealing to audiences and the statistical data and recommendations were of value to geographic pockets of practitioners. In my own policy consulting, I have found that the TARP study has provided an essential historic benchmark and a point of valuable controversy to be introduced later in this chapter.

### *The hunting of the squiggle*

An historic study completed earlier in 1973 by Schubart attempted to articulate the elusive nature of arts-based interactions between artists and learners and provided a name for the people who did this work. Schubart co-founded Lincoln Center Institute, which would eventually be known as an institute for aesthetic education, enlisting the voice of Maxine Greene as a central philosopher-in-residence. The study was concerned with a phenomenon in performing arts organizations that involved discrete educational programs that taught not appreciation for the arts, but social, cognitive, and emotional access *through* the arts. Aptly enough, the study was

called, “The Hunting of the Squiggle” because researchers lacked a term that could best describe learning that was rich with what he called “the dimension of aesthetic perception” (Schubart, 1973, p. vii). The squiggle represented a mechanism that was “chaos in its absence of rigid design imposed from above, but organized in its artistic-educational objectives, its working habits, and its seriousness of purpose” (p. 77). The “squiggle” metaphor parallels the generative metaphor of exquisite corpse that is the structure for my analyses.

The name for artists involved in this work began as “resource professionals” as a way to frame their work as not quite about art, and not quite about education, and sort of about social change. By the end of the research, resource professionals had become “teaching artists”, and the squiggle became an inclusive concept for a community that resisted “generic terms such as school, institute, academy, studio, workshop, or laboratory, since its fundamental premise is that it serves some of the functions usually associated with all of these terms without limitation to a single one” (p. 76). This established an in-between characterization of emerging teaching artist work.

The Schubart study used mixed methods of survey, interview, focus group, and collaborative action drawing on five channels for information from 175 performing arts institutions with approximately 1200 teaching artists employed in this hybrid work. These channels included: artists and art institutions, elementary and secondary schools, non-scholastic community agencies, informal community activities, and the media. They surveyed participants from each channel to determine what existed and what was needed in performing arts organizations to better serve public education. The findings established a theory of *aesthetic* education that invited policymakers and practitioners to share their own methods and name a field of arts-based learning, alternately called “arts integration,” “arts in education,” and

“aesthetic education” (Burnaford, et al., 2007). I chose this study as an introductory document because it introduced the named category of teaching artists to contemporary education, and because it was a study that accomplished three things I hope to accomplish in my own exploration. It generated a grammar for describing, and identifying unfixed aesthetic interactions inherent to artistic work, it identified a cast of characters who were doing unique work in a yet-unnamed professional capacity, and it organized a system for a new generation of practitioners and theorists to apply to improvement of social and education learning.

### *Teaching Artist Journal and ALT/space*

In 2003 the first peer-reviewed journal dedicated to a profession of teaching artistry, the *Teaching Artist Journal (TAJ)* was established by Eric Booth with the research center at Columbia College Chicago. While *TAJ* is not a study, it is the largest and longest documentation of teaching artist practices to date. Booth provided a telling story about the un-named professional identity of teaching artistry when he wrote,

As the [first] publishers, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, agreed to attempt the risky venture, they said, "We must tell you, we publish over 70 professional journals, and this is the first one we have ever launched for an audience that has no visible evidence it exists. (Booth, 2003, p. 4)

For over ten years, this quarterly journal has provided a body of experiential narratives written and documented with images contributed by teaching artists and the people who work with them. Each narrative provides a qualitative sample of rich and authentic description of an aspect of teaching artist engagement, with discrete original studies and reviews of quantitative and qualitative studies that are relevant to practicing teaching artists. Paired with the statistical data

from TARP, *TAJ* offers a variety of teaching artist narratives for future ethnographers and a chronological data source for unpacking patterns and issues of “the squiggle” with a finer lens and more current technology than we had in 1973. The existence of the journal as an academic publication has given teaching artists a position in academic and quasi-professional terms, but few teaching artists have easy access to or budgets for any academic publication.

*TAJ* provides ongoing support for a premise proposed in TARP suggesting that teaching artists engage in practices called “good teaching” (2011, p. 10). That is not to say that all teaching artists can be categorized as good teachers; it simply points to the things that most teaching artists from his study were doing, at times without formal training, that pedagogically have been categorized by education researchers as “student centered, cognitive, and social” (Rabkin et. al, p. 10) by numerous studies to date (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Perkins, 2010; Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 2005; Smith, Lee, & Newman, 2001). The articles in *TAJ* read like research field notes describing student centered, cognitive, and social qualities in hundreds of individual situations. Assessing these qualities has been possible within the regularity of school walls (Ruppert & Nelson, 2006) but capturing them among the varied sites of teaching artistry remains a challenge.

*TAJ* is also a parent literature source to the site of my study. *ALT/space* was a blog that I developed with editor Nick Jaffe in 2011 when we were concerned that practicing teaching artists may not have steady access to the journal. Once established, I left the editing of the blog for my doctoral studies and have been an “observant participant” (Abu-Lughod, 1988; Wacquant, 2004) as a researcher who also has existing roots and membership within the population. The site grew with geographically and disciplinarily diverse teaching artists who continue to contribute blog entries and individual voices in a growing community of

autobiographical “pedagogical portraits” (Daichendt, 2010). By visiting the *ALT/space* site at least once each week, I found that the unfolding, sequential entries from each teaching artist formed syncretic patterns of practice among their worlds and across the site. The patterns were rarely about method or technique. They were increasingly about student revelation, relationships, institutional resistance, and professional identity. I had found a data source for this study, close at hand, yet broadly inclusive as a population.

Influential documents for this study, recording original practices of teaching artists by teaching artists, include: *Teaching Artist Research Project*, *Hunting of the Squiggle*, and *ALT/space with Teaching Artist Journal*. The newness and in-between-ness of the named field do not imply that these identities and practices have just emerged in the past quarter-century. The historical roots of teaching in-between artistic, educational, and social spaces are at least 100 years old. A movement of teaching artist practices in recent years in and around schools has triggered interest, controversy, and potential worthy of attention.

*Provocative movement: Why is there increased attention to teaching artist practice?*

A historical pedagogical context for this review of literature begins at the aforementioned Hull House, a settlement house in Chicago founded by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr in 1889. Coming full circle with the closing of that same house in 2012, a history of artists using the elements of their disciplines to teach social, cognitive, and vocational skills can be mapped.

*Hull House: A house built on engagement*

I introduced this study with a reflection on Hull House in Chicago because it was also a historical starting point for teaching artistry that has been reinforced by TARP and has been

documented by art education historian Mary Ann Stankiewicz (1989). TARP relates a history of teaching artists and their value to the future of education from the influential social practices of Hull House. This is presented in a section of TARP that positions teaching artists as moving “across a great divide” (Rabkin et al., 2011, p. 63) between schools and community cultural organizations in the 1950’s but most specifically in the 1970’s. Rabkin reminds us in the TARP chapter titled “Of Settlements and Conservatories” that “[t]here has never been a golden age of arts education in American schools, when they were valued for themselves” (p. 121). At a time when institutions were applying methods of mass production to the classroom (rows, ringing bells, and standardized grade levels) for increased efficiency in learning, residents of Hull House were constructing a space with the arts where underrepresented individuals such as immigrants, women, child-laborers, and other cultural minorities could use their voices in collective action to improve the quality of their lives.

The field of visual art education has mapped situations from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and Hull House specifically, when art education and artists *in* education were engaged both for social advancement and social control of artistic experiences (Stankiewicz, 1989, 2002). Teaching artist voices and pedagogical choices of the artists were very evident and socially far-reaching in the Hull House accounts developed by Stankiewicz.

Founders Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr successfully engaged diverse populations through activities in the arts that addressed social behaviors and work skills, which were far different from those established for exclusive and privileged classes for decoration and leisure. The artistic work at Hull House was designed for improving human potential in everyday life by ensuring participant engagement in everyday work and in large-scale decision-making simultaneously. By 1920 over 500 organizations like Hull House were established in the United

States. In the late 1930's the U.S. Works Progress Administration (WPA) funded artists to expand their work in these settings. As introduced in Chapter One, Viola Spolin is an exemplar of a theater artist who used theater games to improve communication and social identity with inner-city and immigrant youth. In this case, her teaching led her artistry to be more accessible outside of educational or exclusive arts institutions.

### *Identity and teaching artist development*

Artists, such as Spolin, who moved between social and artistic worlds, came to be known as “community artists” in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (Cohen-Cruz, 2002). Individual voice and agency, which TARP situates as an essential theme for teaching artists (Rabkin et al., pp. 4, 70-75) is important to community art (Boal, 1979), yet it also distinguishes teaching artist practice from community artist practice in subtly different ways. In a Community Arts Network essay, Jan Cohen-Cruz wrote:

Community art is that which is rooted in a shared sense of place, tradition, or spirit. Not all community art has an activist agenda; it is as likely to celebrate cultural traditions or provide a space for a community to reflect. But even such community projects share activism's commitment to collective, not strictly individual representation. (2002, p. 1)

TARP suggested that teaching artists are more concerned with heightening the individual identity of art project participants as part of their relationships with schools. The study described voice as a metaphor used by teaching artists in three themes: “Voice in unlikely places; Voice in Schools; and Voice in school Discipline” (see Rabkin et al., 2011, pp. 71, 73, 74). Teaching artists spoke of students, teachers, community members, and artists trying to be understood in a society where grouping individuals can lead to *not* being heard or represented, much like the student statement at the beginning of this chapter. Specifically, TARP stated:

The concept of voice is complex and layered...but the voice metaphor reflects a developmental perspective for most TAs. We are all born with voices, but none of us are born able to speak a language others can understand. We spend our lifetimes struggling to speak clearly, fluently, honestly, accurately, articulately, persuasively, movingly, and expressively. Most artists know well that their own voices are in a constant state of change; they perpetually struggle to find and develop them. It is only on rare occasions that inspiration, ideas, and execution come easily, quickly, consistently, and without interruption. (p. 71)

This is not to say that teaching artists cannot be community artists or vice versa. To the contrary, from the TARP study, teaching artists' wide-awakeness in regards to conflicts of individual and group identity is a strength that many teaching artists call upon intentionally for their best practices. Studies that rigorously address teaching artist identity with attention to the tension between their individual and group practices have been difficult to locate. In the next section, a mixed-methods study by Patty Saraniero (2008) and a study of historic pedagogical portraits by G. James Daichendt (2010) establish a foundation for better understanding teaching artist individual and group identity development.

*I teach what I do, I do what I teach*

*I Teach What I Do, I Do What I Teach: A Study of the experiences and impacts of teaching artists* (Saraniero, 2007) proposed a stage theory for individual teaching artist professional development that begins with an *improvisational* period, progresses through a *growth* stage, to a stage of *experience*. Some artists struggled within a *mismatched* stage, and almost all exhibited an orientation to be either *art-oriented* or *teaching-oriented*. Saraniero began

the abstract to the study with a statement that called for more research on and by teaching artists as a group:

Like many informal or itinerant groups, teaching artists appear to have flown under the research radar. They are hard to categorize as a group or define as a profession. They often work freelance and have no national organizing or governing body. The body of empirical research about them is slim. (p. 1)

Through surveys of 93 teaching artists in San Diego County in 2006, accompanied by surveys of public school principals and interviews with teaching artists, Saraniero set out to explore the impact of teaching artists in public schools. She integrated two sets of data into what she described as a “comprehensive whole that provided a general sense of teaching artists and their impact as well as a more detailed look at particular practitioners and their work in schools” (p. 1). She presented her findings by telescoping *out* to describe a corps of teaching artists with similar statistical demographic qualities as those in the TARP study. She then telescoped *in* to describe individual stories from teaching artists in first-person voice samples. In-between the wide and tight focus, she was able to identify patterns of development in professional growth of teaching artists and then illustrate them by sharing ten teaching artist “mini-biographies” (p. 45) developed from interviews for her dissertation (2007). The voices of teaching artists in the mini-biographies were helpful to my own research because her theories *about* teaching artists were explained *by* teaching artists. My study advances the use of teaching artist voices beyond a stage theory and a single geographic region, toward understanding those stages as part of a large and mobile force of practitioners.

#### *Artist-teacher*

Conflict in artist-teacher identity development is extensively investigated by Daichendt in a book titled, *Artist-Teacher: A Philosophy for Creating and Teaching* (2010). In his dissertation

(Daichendt, 2009) and in an article for *TAJ* (2010), he crafts what he describes as a “pedagogical portrait” (p. iii) of historic figures in the history of visual art education. The primary portrait is of George Wallis, a 19<sup>th</sup> century artist and teacher who applied the term artist-teacher to his life work. The notion of a pedagogical portrait constructed through historical sources was especially compelling to my own research, as I was also reading the words of individual teaching artists and circumstances that surrounded their practices. The quotes from Wallis in Daichendt’s dissertation (2009) showed that Wallis held constant determination to bring art and education together on reciprocal terms. Neither artistic development nor educational development could occur without the other.

In each publication, Daichendt relates an artist-teacher debate in terms of everything from the academy and community learning to public education, and then to past, present, and future artistic, social, economic, and political worlds. When sharing his ideas with an audience of teaching artists in *TAJ*, he wrote,

An increasingly “professional” identity in art and education is currently and increasingly associated with the terms *teaching artist* and *artist-teacher*. In contrast, the characteristics modeled by Wallis, including classrooms modeled after authentic studio life and the application of artistic aptitudes in educational contexts suggest a bridging of the roles of artist and teacher embodied in a philosophy of teaching art rather than that is less concerned with roles and definitions. (2010, p. 225)

His key message promotes placing roles or professional labels aside and acknowledging the philosophical or pedagogical in-between practices that can benefit all perceived “sides.”

*Alphabet soup of arts education policy*

As teaching artist work in schools increases, so does controversy around whether they should be supplementary or alternative arts providers, credentialed or certified, and ultimately whether they present a real threat to existing school arts providers such as art and music teachers. Documents are published each year as advocacy tools for or against measures in arts-based education reform efforts. Three have singled out the role of teaching artists in larger discourses about the arts and education. These reports were introduced in Chapter One, and here I provide a sequence of events to situate their relevance to my research.

In 2008, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA, 2009) conducted a Survey for Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA). This is a census that is conducted every ten years to monitor all areas of U.S. artistic engagement, in and outside of public education. The arts education data indicated decreases in arts education that began in 1983, when coincidentally, the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) published *A Nation At Risk*, and education reform was formally and federally enacted.

In 2010, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) shared preliminary data showing only a slight decrease in instruction for all in-school arts education (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012). NCES had also introduced a new survey at this time creating a baseline for schools that engaged outside artistic partners. Thirty-one percent of schools indicated partnerships with teaching artists. The combined impact on education described in the NCES and NEA reports was published by the NEA in a report titled: *Arts Education in America: What the Declines Mean for Participation* (Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011). The combined data provided a startling message when reviewed for access to the arts in low-achieving schools where students came from low socio-economic circumstances and where there were high populations of African-American and Hispanic students. A significant gap in arts education availability was

evident (Figure 4) and especially problematic because it proved that students who might benefit from the dimensional qualities of artistic learning were losing arts-learning experiences more each year. As my study was being prepared for completion, new data from the NEA was being gathered to show that the racial and socio-economic gaps were still increasing (NEA, 2013). Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan (2012) introduced this data to the public by saying, “The arts opportunity gap is widest for children in high-poverty schools. This is absolutely an equity issue and a civil rights issue.”

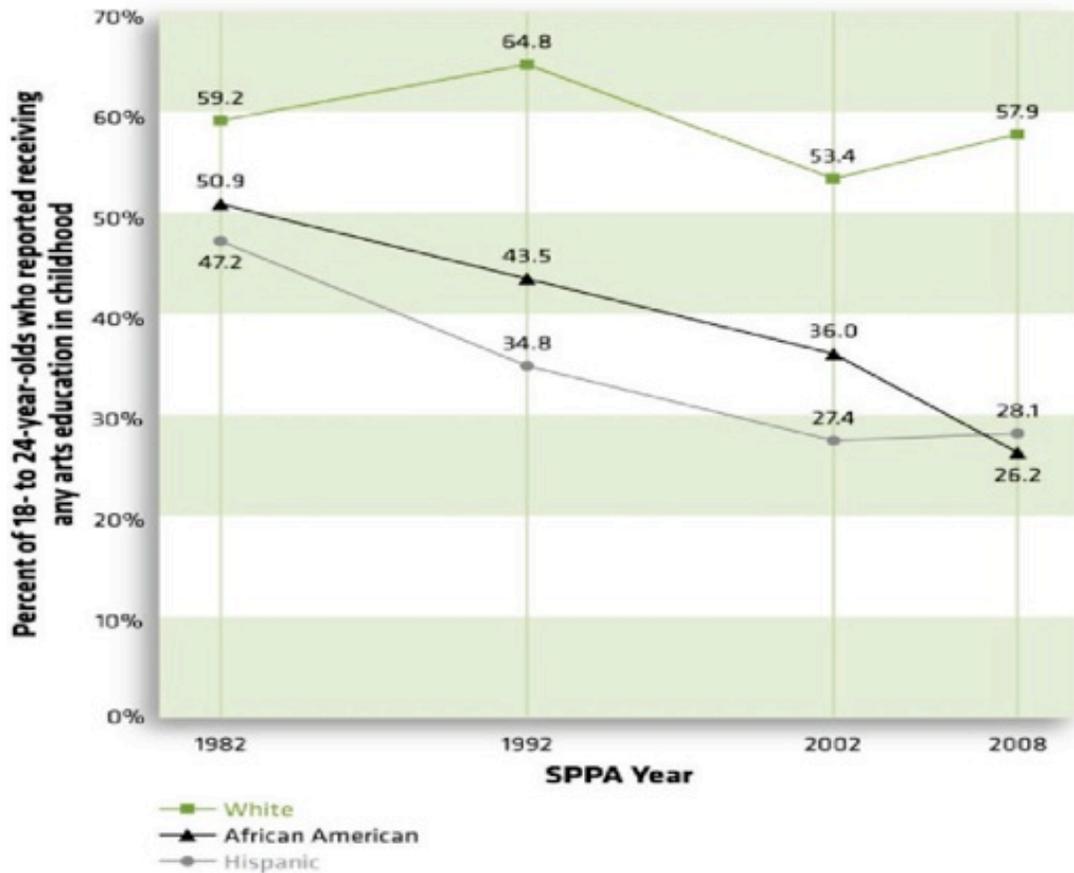


Figure 4. *Rate of childhood arts education by race, 1982-2008*

In the fall of 2011, the President’s Committee on Arts & Humanities (PCAH) recommended that American schools take advantage of expanding opportunities to enlist a “hybrid” (p. 41) profession of teaching artists as allies for education reform that will prepare students for careers and citizenship in global 21<sup>st</sup> century society. PCAH noted that teaching artists performed functions that differed significantly from the school arts curriculum that was the charge of certified art, music, theater, and dance specialists. Teaching artists were framed as underutilized allies for linking classroom learning with relevant life situations outside of school. The report also noted that the profession of teaching artists would require further attention to preparation due to inconsistency in their teaching expertise.

In 2012, the State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education (SEADAE) published their responding white paper titled, “Promoting Universal Access To High-Quality Arts Education: Roles of Certified Arts Educators, Certified Non-Arts Educators, & Providers of Supplemental Arts Instruction” (Richerme et al., 2012). This paper emphasized the risk of hiring teaching artists as replacements for certified arts educators. It advocated collaborative relationships among arts teachers, classroom teachers, and teaching artists as the ideal, with no one profession replacing the other. It defended the central value and qualifications of certified arts educators to uphold a rigorous curriculum of arts learning in partnership with certified classroom teachers. Teaching artists were identified as “supplemental” (pp. 5-6) providers of arts instruction whose role was as partner to certified personnel.

This alphabet soup of policy information: PCAH, NCES, and SEADAE, in addition to SPPA was informed by certified arts educators, leaders of cultural institutions, and general education specialists. Teaching artists, because they had not formed any national professional organization, continued to be missing from the policymaking discourses.

Finally, an additional federal resource based on information culled from their Arts Education Model Development and Dissemination (AEMDD) grant funding program has begun to provide some reliable research on the practices of teaching artists, and within a few years will likely have a body of data to contribute to this dialogue. Most AEMDD studies emphasize instructional practices as they relate to standardized assessment scores and student learning outcomes that are not likely to show a causal relationship to teaching artist practice. A growing body of results from these studies includes qualitative analyses about teacher and teaching artist dynamics that can be of value to future researchers. Yet, few teaching artist voices are represented in investigations, analysis of data, or publication of conclusions in these documents. The documents are reliable, but for this study, it is meaningful to note the policy situation surrounding teaching artist representation. They are named, examined, and increasingly legislated by policymakers, but they are not identified, consulted, or represented by teaching artists themselves.

### *Qualities and third spaces*

Literature on situations that shape teaching artist practice is focused on fields and worlds in which teaching artists are identified as architects of hybrid pedagogies. The first is a study titled, *The Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education* (Seidel, Tischman, Winner, Hetland, & Palmer, 2009). While the title suggests that it is a report on ways to improve arts education, the study actually identifies collaborative qualities of human interaction that emerge from artistic or aesthetically rich experience. The literature is drawn from research in cognitive science, social justice, cultural development, curriculum and education leadership, and aesthetic education. The study includes teaching artists as supplemental partners to arts educators who co-create unique qualities for meaningful education by making decisions with learners,

parents, administrators, policymakers. It places an emphasis on the qualities of *teaching* and *learning* as opposed to *teachers* and *learners* inside a metaphorical “room” where artistic learning is performed (p. 62). This reflects a shift in teacher education research toward viewing arts teachers and learners as collaborative investigators as opposed to being investigated by the distant eye of researchers and policymakers (Boykin & Noguera, 2011).

The *Qualities* framework is about non-hierarchical, social, and aesthetic relationships among people and institutions simultaneously and it presents a situational analysis instrument that sparked my use of situational mapping in the design for this study. A similar framework for understanding radical changes in environments for a contemporary “thinking curriculum” was introduced by Lauren Resnick (2010) using a metaphor of, “nested learning systems” (p. 183). These researchers were situating the *teacher* as just one participant in the system of *teaching*.

Finally, a study titled, *Third Space: When Learning Matters* (Deasy and Stevenson, 2005), provided a theory that situated artistic work in an interpretive or dialogic *third space* between learning (first space) and teaching (second space). Third space is also a socio-critical education theory proposed by Kris Gutierrez (Gutierrez, 2008) that proposes actions and products of art or literature can be mediating spaces for co-creating cultural and academic literacies among learners, teachers, and artists. Third space is similar to the *Qualities* metaphor of a room in which decisions are made, yet it has greater emphasis on that co-constructed space through collective agency of all participants. In the foreword for the Stevenson and Deasy study, Steve Seidel from the *Qualities* study aligns third space with wide-awakeness when he writes:

This book suggests that the “third space” created through the study of the arts, when taught well, is a space in which students and teachers not only can, but must, be awake

and in touch with one's humanity, including one's complex emotions and identities. (p. viii)

The study began as a review for arts education strategies of ten case study schools across the U.S. but, it emerged as a complex portrait of ways that artistic practices changed school cultures. The methods, metaphor, and eventual message from this study of third space lend descriptive terms to the "arts teaching ecosystem" (Booth, 2009, p. 18) that the teaching artists traverse.

*Community of Practice: How does teaching artistry progress without organizing?*

This section serves as literature review for the question that ultimately inspired this study. I queried: How do teaching artists navigate and communicate their own career development across social, educational, and artistic situations? I was seeking evidence from teaching artists as participants in developing their field. This section also serves as an introduction to the research design that will be fully detailed in Chapter Three. Here, I make distinctions between professional and pedagogical systems that teaching artists engage when they seek to be identified as part of a group or community of practice.

*TARP: Organizing and the geography of teaching artistry*

TARP provides an inventory of six organizations dedicated to teaching artist professional advancement in the U.S. with emphasis on those established *by* teaching artists. They are clustered around areas of higher population such as New England, New York State, Chicago, and Alameda County and Los Angeles, and Washington State. Communication among these regional organizations often moves along existing arts education advocacy networks, and the Association of Teaching Artists in New York State (<http://www.teachingartists.com>) has made excellent use of social-networking sites to exchange information among teaching artists across the United

States. In all cases, content of teaching artist exchanges had to do with qualities of professional development and practices that include engagement strategies, education standards and assessment, partnership dynamics, compensation, and mentorship. Conversations about organization for credentialing, certification, and advocacy do occur within these groups, but TARP did not find “compelling interest” (p. 140) from teaching artists in a formation of a larger organization.

The virtual *ALT/space* site ([www.tajalt.space.com](http://www.tajalt.space.com)) for my study is also a hybrid literature source that emerged from the de-centralized landscape of teaching artist interactions. It will be described in greater detail in Chapter Three but it is important to note that it provides regular authorship of hundreds of stories from the field of teaching artistry. It is a formidable text in the making at this time. The blog is a departure from research literature, yet it provides some of the most consistent and fine-focused details about the daily experience of teaching artistry from the perspective of teaching artists. It is not a site for an exchange of information. Rather, it is a space where practices are described and communities develop.

#### *Common ground and persistence of demand*

With inconsistent interest expressed by teaching artists for formalizing their practices, it is difficult to identify their work as part of a recognized profession. Yet the demand for their work continues to expand as large-scale urban reform initiatives such as *Big Thought* in Dallas, Texas or the *Arts Expansion Initiative* in Boston, Massachusetts emphasize 21<sup>st</sup> century skill gains from whole-community artistic engagement (Bodilly, Augustine, & Zakaras, 2009). These whole-city projects emerged as community organizing efforts during the past ten years in response to widening racial and socio-economic gaps in student achievement in schools. Such

projects have enlisted teaching artists as allies to raise access to artistic learning for learners who do not have benefits of middle-class lifestyles. Those lifestyles commonly include the social and cognitive gains that come from ballet or piano lessons, or trips to live performances and museums (Lackey, 2011). With stated missions that expose inequity and propose development of essential civic skills, they have been funded through diverse relationships among public and private sources as a way to avoid over-reliance on weakening systems and contribute to a perceived greater good for employment and economy. In the next ten years, data from these partnerships is likely to be captured in the aforementioned NEA studies.

The instrumental value of such initiatives comes from acknowledging that artistic teaching and learning happens in and out of school time, thus community arts partners become part of a concerted curricular effort with art and music specialists. These initiatives resist descriptors such as “project” or “program” and even wrestle with their own institutional identities as “reform” movements because they claim that the strength of their work comes from encouraging common ground among communities of learners, educators, artists, and policymakers (Wolf, Bransom, & Denson, 2007). Within these movements, teaching artists are paid well, and required to attend professional development along with partner classroom and arts teachers.

### *Study Design*

This study of teaching artistry relies on traditions of ethnography as developed by Geertz (1973), and grounded theory as introduced by Glaser & Strauss (1967). As ethnography, it illuminates worldviews from a culture of artists who teach through membership and “observant participation” (Abu-Lughod, 1988; Wacquant, 2009) in the *ALT/space* site and in broader or

more geographically diverse communities of practice that overlap with teaching artistry. Ethnography allows for deep engagement with participants and with data. In this study, data includes processes and products of teaching artist work that include their own artistic practices, interactions and outcomes with students, and professional development and engagement with other adults. Ethnography, at the heart of this study is defined through the original premise from Geertz (1973) that proposes multiple dimensions for describing a culture. His definition of a culture is "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which [men] communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (p. 89). Teaching artists, while not formally organized as corporate group, are indeed linked in a system of inherited ideas about art and education (Rabkin et al., 2011; Booth, 2009). From my own interactions among other teaching artists, I have found affinities in attitudes toward life that are resonated in descriptions of what teaching artists say and do by other researchers (Seidel et al., 2009). The objective of the descriptive process in this ethnography is deeper understanding of the origin, development, and direction of a teaching artist culture during a period of increased political attention. At the same time, by learning more about ethnography, I began to find that poetic and narrative inquiry were also increasing in use for representation of cultural contexts and interactions. Artistic considerations for this ethnography are described with greater detail in the next section of this review.

Literature on ethnography that influenced this study included Laurel Richardson's publication on evaluating ethnography (2000) and an ongoing "conversation" of publications on qualitative inquiry and social justice between scholars Norman Denzin and Michael Giardina (2006 - 2011). Many scholars provided insight to develop my ethnographic expertise, but these influences provided substantive support to the arts-based and critical aspects of this ethnography.

In her article titled *Evaluating Ethnography* (2000), Richardson wrote, “The ethnographic life is not separable from the self. Who we are and what we can be—what we can study, how we can write about that which we study—is tied to how a discipline disciplines itself and its members, its methods for claiming authority over both the subject matter and its members” (p. 253). In this document, she argued that ethnography can be evaluated through lenses of science and the arts by applying high and difficult standards that embrace both changeable and established criteria. She proposed a highly wide-awake and artistically aware stance through ensuring:

1. Substantive contribution: Does this piece contribute to our understanding of social-life? Does the writer demonstrate a deeply grounded (if embedded) human-world understanding and perspective? How has this perspective informed the construction of the text?
2. Aesthetic merit: Does this piece succeed aesthetically? Does the use of creative analytical practices open up the text, invite interpretive responses? Is the text artistically shaped, satisfying, complex, and not boring?
3. Reflexivity: How did the author come to write this text? How was the information gathered? Ethical issues? How has the author’s subjectivity been both a producer and a product of this text? Is there adequate self-awareness and self-exposure for the reader to make judgments about the point of view? Do authors hold themselves accountable to the standards of knowing and telling of the people they have studied?
4. Impact: Does this affect me? Emotionally? Intellectually? Generate new questions? Move me to write? Move me to try new research practices? Move me to action?

5. Expresses a reality: Does this text embody a fleshed out, embodied sense of lived-experience? Does it seem “true”—a credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the “real”? (p. 254)

Richardson introduced the language of artistic practice into a field of ethnography without naming it “arts-based.” This provided a way for researchers to conduct their studies without having to wrestle with political binaries of either artist or researcher. This invited a both/and stance that did not privilege either. While this might be perceived as a way to avoid confrontation, it can also be perceived as a way to redefine ethnography for a wider world.

In their 2011 anthology *Qualitative Inquiry and Global Crises*, Denzin and Giardina uphold a principle of activism as an essential part of qualitative inquiry with individual emphases on their own experience as ethnographers. The 2011 volume is the sixth in a series of volumes which they co-edited gathering essays by researchers from the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry beginning in 2006. It is the form of the literature that makes it especially influential to this study. Ethnography, within the six volumes is exemplified by a wide range of scholars. It was the ongoing and changeable variations on the idea of ethnographic research that helped me to see the multiple domains in my study as valuable as opposed to unwieldy. It also sparked my awareness of the influence of art practices that I had been exploring in my own work. Similar to Richardson, Denzin and Giardina (2011) crafted a five-item lens for seeing qualitative inquiry, and ethnography, as belonging to a critical theoretical sphere. They proposed in their introduction (p. 14) that:

1. “It can help identify different definitions of a problem and/or a situation that is being evaluated with some agreement that change is required...through personal experience narratives.”
2. Assumptions “held by various interested parties - policy makers, clients, welfare workers, or online professionals - can be located and shown to be correct or incorrect (Becker, 1967, p. 23).”
3. “Strategic points of intervention into social situations can be identified. Thus, the services of an agency and a program can be improved and evaluated.”
4. It is possible to suggest alternative points of view for assessment with interpretation from the perspective of persons most directly affected.
5. “The limits of statistics and statistical evaluations can be exposed” due to inherent emphases on uniqueness of individuals in qualitative and ethnographic inquiry.

It was evident to me that ethnography was a necessary method for this study because I needed a way to better understand a culture of teaching artistry that I already belonged to in multiple situations and in multiple artistic disciplines. I was also seeking a method that was understood and applicable across diverse fields of practice.

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) wrote, “The interpretative practice of making sense of one’s own findings is both artistic and political. Multiple criteria for evaluating qualitative research now exist, and those that we emphasize stress the situated, relational, and textual structures of the ethnographic experience” (p. 15). This quote was helpful because it allowed me to see ways that arts-based research, like artistic practices in education could offer dimensions for understanding

human experiences that can be difficult to categorize. The Denzin and Lincoln quote also increased my sensitivity to the potential political implications of my own research.

### *Aesthetic data*

Teaching artists make pedagogical decisions from their artistic practices (Rabkin et al., 2011). I know from my own teaching artistic experience that I can be a more authentic representative to the community of practitioners in this study if I maintain that clear position. Because arts-based research is not yet dominant in a world of education research, I considered cleansing my constructs of any artistic orientation. Isn't ethnography just a very thorough description? Why complicate it with an added layer of artistic translation? In this section, arts-based literature is presented in the form of texts and images. The images, works of visual art, have as much historic empirical relevance to this study as many books and articles might have.

This study relies heavily on what I call aesthetic data. Aesthetic data, such as layered perceptions, emotional ranges, sensual understanding, and personal preference are often at the heart of arts and educational experiences (Bresler, 2006; Eisner, 1997). This includes works of art, but it is necessary to note that the artistic projects of teaching artists often seek to teach beyond formal elements of an artistic discipline. Eisner (1997) once described the difference between aesthetic information and formal notions of data when he wrote, "we report the temperature when we are interested in the heat" (p. 7). Arts education researchers have found it challenging to reduce such experiences to clean codes and themes in traditional scientific and quantitative research methodologies (Eisner, 2006; Hetland & Winner, 2000). This ethnography embraces analytic instruments that allow for expansion of aesthetic information as a way to construct new understandings. In grounded theory and ethnographic traditions this might be

described as open or axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Even so, such methods eventually led to software and spreadsheets as analytic devices and were not logical for my own artistic meaning making. Maxine Greene (1995) wrote, “Mastery of a range of languages is necessary if communication is to take place beyond small enclosures within the culture; without multiple languages, it is extremely difficult to chart the lived landscape” (p. 57). I found it difficult to chart the teaching artist worlds and arts education ecosystem in any one language. Thus, this study uses many languages.

Ethnographer, Loic Wacquant established for me a hybrid approach to gathering and analyzing aesthetic data that was emerging in from my field notes and from the content of teaching artist narratives and images on *ALT/space*. Wacquant proposed a model of “carnal sociology” that could capture what he described as the “taste and ache of action” in his ethnographic study of black American ghetto life through the culture of a boxing gym. Wacquant was a student of Pierre Bourdieu and eventually a co-collaborator in crafting new approaches to understanding Bourdieu’s social, mind-body theory of habitus (Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In his signal ethnography which he aptly titled *Body & Soul* (2006), he gathered data by becoming a boxer in a ghetto neighborhood gym. He analyzed his own and his shared practices with the regular boxers over many years, and eventually presented it in a three part text that included a fictional novella. By creating the novella to be read as one might read a storybook, Wacquant offered aesthetic data as dialogue, perceptions, and grainy photos that appear to be mementos instead of evidence. He created data in the form of appropriated and scrapbook-style photo-montages and mini-narratives juxtaposed with dialogues (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Reading Wacquant's *Body & Soul* (2009) as a novel with photo mementos

This audacious break with sociological convention was inspiring to me, because as I studied narrative and arts-based research there was significant controversy in my own educational branch of human science around the legitimacy of data that was manufactured or even altered by researcher and participants. Yet, Wacquant defied tradition in his field both in this “carnal” methodology and in his semi-fictionalized findings. He proposed that carnal approaches privileged information that is understood through a body, both physical and metaphorical. He pushed a reality in ethnographic representation by applying images from his fieldwork, not as data samples, but as illustrations and mementos with the graphic framing of film negative borders. Wacquant worried that his alternative presentation of the study would be

misread as “literary embellishment” (Eakin, 2003), instead it launched his career with a MacArthur Fellowship because his method allowed him to expose how racism continued to be researched from external and relatively exclusive stances.

He further criticized fellow researchers for ignoring racism and using their research to craft sanitized images of poverty instead of rigorously interrogating the social structures that lead to injustices. Wacquant’s overarching methodology was ethnographic, and he did not name it as arts-based research. But, I found significant aesthetic meaning within Wacquant’s carnal and narrative approach especially in relation to my own artistic practices with word and image juxtaposition. *Body & Soul* offered a theoretical and methodological opening for me to see validity in the aesthetic constructs of my own research.

#### *Unfolding an arts-based worldview*

As I was beginning my fieldwork for this study, I acted as assistant to James H. Rolling Jr., EdD as he wrote the *Arts-Based Research Primer*, (2013). The primer became a significant literature source for this study because it organized the tools of arts-based research that I had been struggling to own. The artistic concepts that I was using within established ethnographic traditions frequently warranted my own reflection on whether I was breaking a rule or doing ethnography in a way that would not be validated by qualitative research peers. I was dealing with the same identity issues that teaching artists had been navigating for years. Artistic approaches to teaching were just not the same as those used by teachers who were required to emphasize standardized content and instructional practices.

In the primer, Rolling established a “flexible theory-building architecture for arts-based research” (p. 39) that helped me to see the working parts of my own artistic teaching and research methodologies as legitimate and supportable. He wrote:

[E]pistemologies constructed within an arts-based ontology, or worldview, tend to approach knowledge acquisition as occurring within a changing world where persons and phenomena do not always follow the rules. Research necessarily involves a researcher’s intervention into that world—digging out connective elements, casting models, and constructing assemblies that shape the flux and chaos of each day’s perceptions into a patterned reality we can comprehend and correlate. (p. 7)

By attending reflexively to my own researcher’s stance as a teaching artist I was able to overcome a tendency to try to fit my approaches into a standardized box. Specifically, I have found that of the four arts-based practices of *analytic, synthetic, critical-activist, and improvisatory* research proposed by Rolling in this flexible architecture, my study is emerging as a critical-activist practice.

Critical-activist qualities proposed by Rolling include acknowledging that the researcher stance and the stance of the study participants are ex-centric. That is,

Critical-activist inquiry is “research that seeks not to prove or disprove, but rather to create movement, to displace, to pull apart and allow for resettlement; it is research that seeks what is possible and made manifest when our taken-for-taxonomic certainties are intentionally shaken. (Rolling, 2013, p. 108)

My interest in career pathways of teaching artists shifted from observation to instigation as their stories exposed so many peripheral problems and oversights of public education. This study is

wide-awake to the in-between lives of teaching artists and the *Arts-Based Research Primer* confirmed the value of bringing the voices of many teaching artists into critical light by acknowledging their artistic and activist orientations.

The tendency in public art educators toward standardizing their practices led to historic and problematic limitations of the “school art” (Efland, 1976) phenomenon. School art practices have led to reduced emphasis on the benefits of artistic thinking for the very under-served students that the alphabet soup of policy proposals (PCAH, NCES, & SEADAE) are attempting to overcome. An essential premise in grounded theory asserts that validity emerges from working and reworking concepts until they “fit” in a way that is relevant to participants and can be interpreted in a meaningful way for a range of situations (Denzin & Giardina, 2011). This is also true of artistic methods. A sculptor works and reworks her medium by calibrating her choices with the limitations of materials, time, experience, and concept until the sculptural product satisfies her intentions, but is also relevant to other artists and non-arts audiences at the same time. One of the earliest texts on arts integration and the role of teaching artists in education, also referenced in the TARP study, described a similar reworking of concepts between artistic and academic as an “elegant fit” (Burnaford, et al., 2001). This study seeks to be relevant to teaching artists by working toward that artistic, elegant fit in research.

*A/r/tography as a stream of practice*

A methodological “stream of practice” called a/r/tography (Irwin, 2004) that engages visual, literary, and performative arts, emerged early in the 21<sup>st</sup> century from grass-roots practices in arts-based education scholarship. The principles of a/r/tography are meaningful to me in this study, but the explicit naming of an arts-based methodology presented me with many

challenges. I appreciated finding a unifying body of research that embraced the ever-emerging nature of aesthetic and educational experience, “inquiry-laden processes, searching for meaning, and interpreting for understanding” that were published in a compendium of a/r/tographic dissertations (Sinner, Leggo, Irwin, Gouzouasis, & Grauer, 2006). This helped me to compare and contrast my own artistic inquiry processes in alignment with a range of research methods written by other emerging arts-minded researchers. But then, I worried that the postmodern artist/researcher/teacher acronym excluded the importance of learners and reinforced exclusivity and privilege of researchers in higher education over students and practitioners in the field. My dissertation advisor reminded me of the term “methodolatry” which was used in art education research by Kenneth Beittel in 1973 as he began to resist the limitations of positivist research approaches that he had been trained to use. Was I losing a degree of criticality by aligning my research with a finite philosophical community such as a/r/tography? Eventually, I was able to acknowledge that the naming of methodology, or pedagogy, or artistic concept is valuable for organizing purposes. But, I also recognized the transient and flexible nature of codifying practices so that they were more meaningful than just their name. With a spirit of naming and un-naming methods in mind, I was able to move forward and explore the nimble nature of artistic approaches to this study as arts-based, but not within a defining methodology of a/r/tography.

### *Exquisite corpse process*

Literature on arts-based research methodologies has emerged within the last fifty years. Literature on artistic methods that have led to greater understanding of the world has existed for millennia. Early on in the data collection for this study, it became evident that I was relating my findings to an artistic practice called “exquisite corpse” developed by Surrealist artists (Breton, 1948/1972). This practice was not named historically as arts-based research. But it was artistic

practice that illuminated differences and social agreements because it required multiple participants who adhered to a minimal rule or form. At the same time it was provocative because it suggested outrageous new ways of seeing something familiar, most commonly a human figure.

Exquisite corpse is a parlor game developed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by Surrealist artists (Figure 6). The selected example appears to use a female figure. As the community of Surrealist artists included a majority of men, it may be construed as a misogynistic image. It is likely that a byproduct of the exquisite corps process will reflect critical qualities of the culture that are playing. It is not an intention of the game design to single out any individual themes.

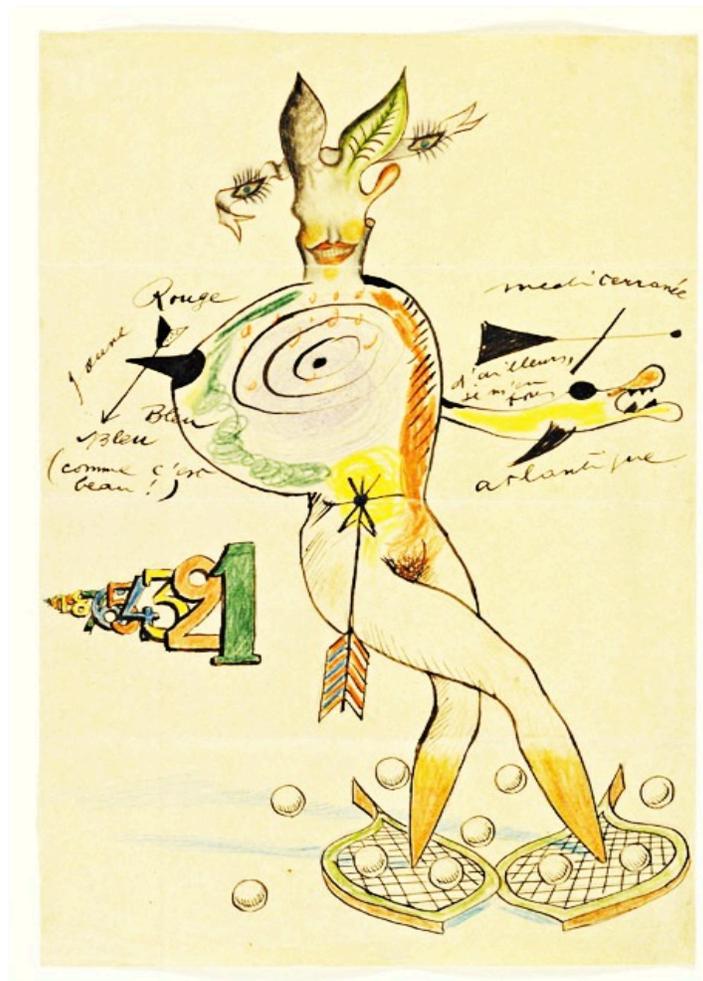


Figure 6. *Cadavre Exquis*. Yves Tanguy, Joan Miro, Max Morise, and Man Ray, 1927

The game involved players contributing words or images to a composition or narrative by following either a basic agreement on form (head, torso, legs, feet), or by beginning from a previously contributed element (last word of a previous sentence, mark on a piece of paper, etc.). The push and pull of juxtaposition between the inventiveness of playfulness and structure of rule-following allowed for diverse ideas to come together in a form that was unique and disjunctive, yet recognizable as a body of familiar elements. The Surrealists found this to be a metaphoric exercise that advanced their own socio-political questions about human response to existing institutional structures. In the first *Manifesto of Surrealism*, artist Andre Breton (1969) described central tasks of Surrealist art as first: becoming responsible for increasing awareness about things that we overlook with,

...a desire to deepen the foundations of the real, to bring about an even clearer and at the same time ever more passionate consciousness of the world perceived by the senses. (p. 49)

and then: confronting multiple social realities at one time,

...acting on these two realities not both at once, then, but one after the other, in a systematic manner, allowing us to observe their reciprocal attraction and interpenetration and to give to this interplay of forces all the extension necessary for the trend of these two adjoining realities to become one and the same thing. (p. 50)

As I systematically (by chronological entry or by individual voice) read the body of teaching narratives on *ALT/space*, it became evident that every entry and every cluster of entries emphasized the two concepts of: increasing awareness about things we overlook and confronting multiple social understandings at one time, over and over again.

This ethnography is arts-based because it uses narrative and visual juxtaposition as analytic instruments in what I call an *exquisite corpse* analytic method for the purposes of this study. The concept of exquisite corpse as a method for arts-based research resonates with Garoian's (in Denzin & Giardina, 2011) premise that exquisite corpse is a process, described below, that offers "significant possibilities for engaging in democratic discourse, understanding alterity, and respect for cultural differences and peculiarities" (p. 158) in an opening or unfolding form.

Garoian (2011) proposed that this form of artmaking corresponded with "Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of assemblage – a gathering of disparate elements in a single context that resist condescence and interpretation" (p. 173). This new form valued the input of various artists but also adhered to a structure that was recognizable to people who were not artists or who needed direction for channeling their multiple ideas. Additionally, Garoian and Deleuze and Guattari theorized that assemblage of this nature provided a "deterritorializing machine" (Deleuze & Guattari, p 4, in Garoian p.173) that extended a generative web of association across communities.

At the outset of this study, I had been using this artistic method as an instructional tool for helping new teachers to understand qualities of their own identity development that could provide generative themes for teaching within standardized situations. In one case, at Syracuse University, education students were trying to let go of fears about creativity and picture making. The final corps of corpses, or body of bodies, was thrilling because each individual was off the hook for creating something perfect on their own. The emphasis moved from their individual abilities or perceived disabilities and toward their shared roles in the work. Each individual was

hunting actively for the parts that they contributed to different bodies. They could not believe that they created something so unique in fifteen-short minutes. Figure 7 shows an example of a

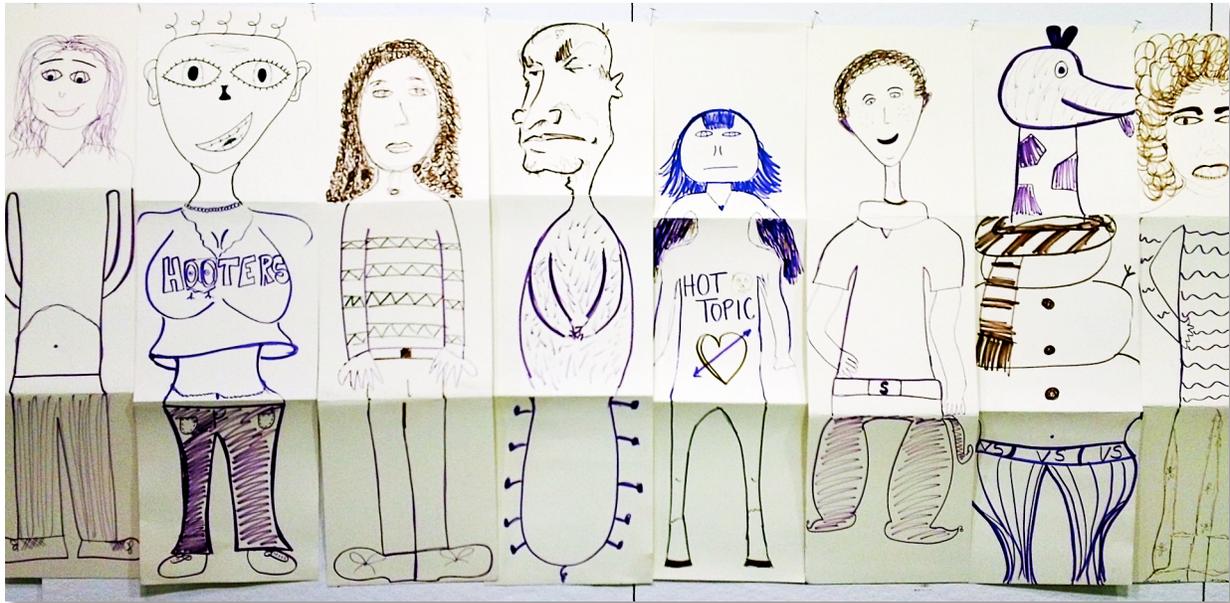


Figure 7. Educator identity analysis, Syracuse University pre-service teachers, 2011

corps of exquisite corpses developed by those students. At first, they found that the method was challenging because they had to draw and could not be in full control of the outcome. This example does not show the surprise and excitement that the adult students found on completion of the project when they unfolded the final *corpses* and discovered entirely new ways of understanding a simple body form (head, torso, legs). This exercise opened the door for a semester filled with questions about their own creativity and ability to guide their future students through the kind of generative thinking demanded by 21<sup>st</sup> century educational issues (Boykin & Noguera, 2011).

My curiosity about the metaphoric relationship between what was happening in my studio, in my teaching practices, and in my research led me to further study and conversation with Charles Garoian about the context of exquisite corpse as research methodology. Figure 8

illustrates a metaphoric exquisite corpse that I developed as a model to capture my own understandings about history, identity development, and the tension between academic and artistic methods. In this study of teaching artists, I found it helpful to assemble similar models for organizing the complex relational data of artist, learner, teacher, researcher, and social contexts.

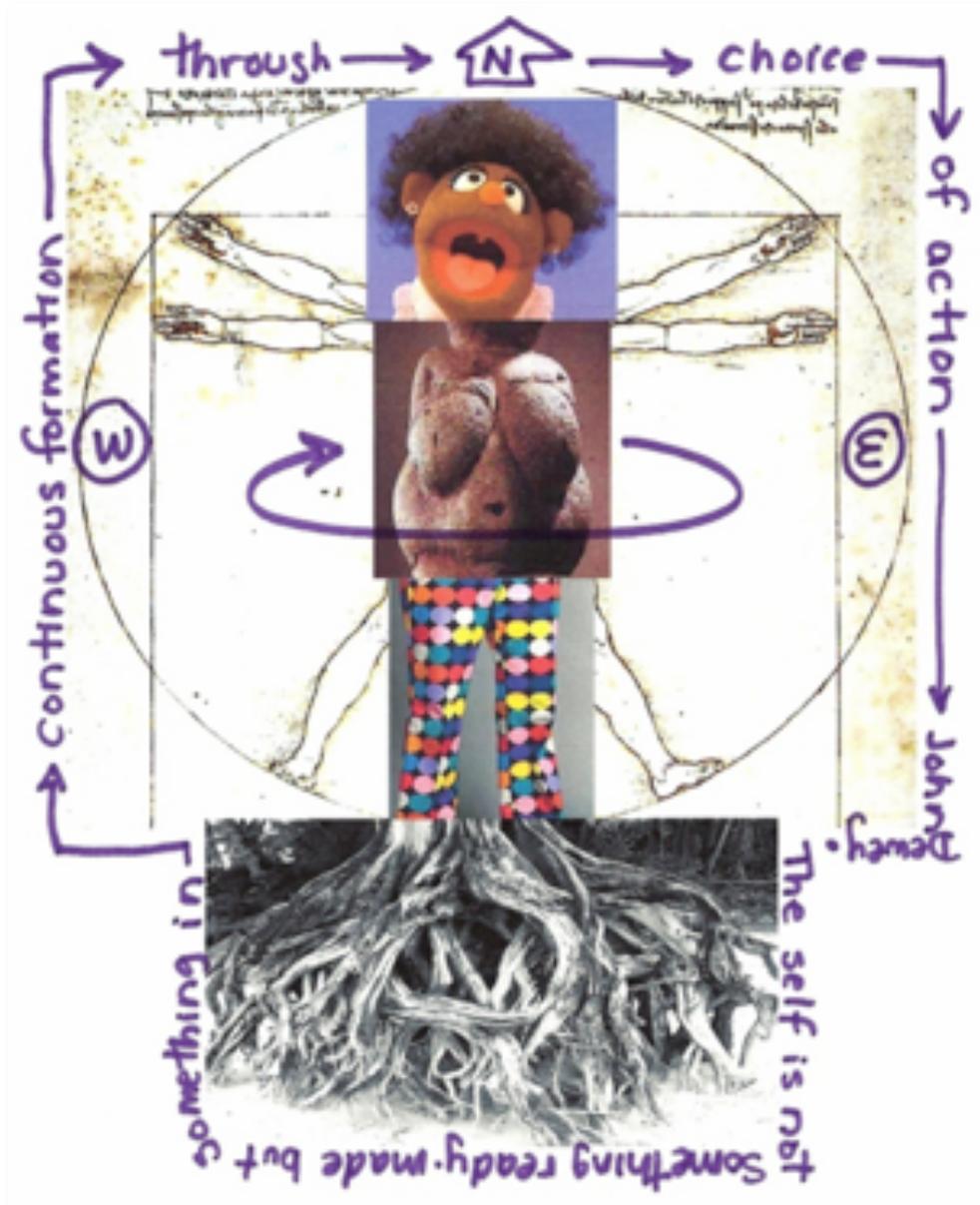


Figure 8. *Researcher as teaching artist, habitus self-portrait, 2011*

An exquisite corpse process, according to Garoian encouraged an outgrowth of ideas and ways to challenge existing systems. He proposed that the metaphor of exquisite corpse art practice and research could be found in an adjacent metaphor of prosthesis (2011). Prosthesis, he described in terms of critical theory as research, practice, and learning in artistic work that provided space for social or cultural outgrowth and challenge through “prosthetic visuality” (2010, p. 179).

From my research on exquisite corpse as both artistic and research processes I also found that the link between words and images in chance or rule-driven bodies was increasingly documented in fields of narrative and poetic research. When people make poetry and tell stories, they are able to express layered meaning through exquisite layering of language and at times in a poetic economy of carefully selected information. In their handbook on qualitative inquiry, editors Denzin and Lincoln (2011) validated the approaches of many researchers whose methods emphasized aesthetic and material tools of poetic, textual, collaged, and even jazz-structured inquiry (p. 4). Similarly, in *Poetic Inquiry: Vibrant Voices in the Social Sciences* (Prendergast, M., Leggo, C., & Samashima, P., 2009), poetic is presented as an important approach to mining the complexities of both researcher and participant experience for understanding. In chapter 3, I outline my own attempts at understanding the relationship between an artistic process, a pedagogical technique, and a research methodology. But, it is evident from historic information, that this is also a place of meaningful praxis for previous artists and researchers.

### *Situational analysis*

The social and educational actions of individual artists and their work among institutions of professional practice have been studied using many existing quantitative and qualitative

research methodologies. But, understanding the actions of individual artists from an artistic perspective is not as easy when a repertoire of artistic tools remains underutilized in academic research terms (Denzin, 2012). Situational analysis (Clarke, 2005) was not developed as an arts-based concept, yet in this study, I used it within a context of arts-based research (Knowles & Cole, 2008) to explore the in-between-ness of teaching artistry. Teaching artist communities of practice were examined in this study with visual mapping strategies of *situational analysis* developed by Adele Clarke (2005) as way to animate grounded theory and ethnographic study as relevant to the study participants. Situational analysis was introduced to grounded theory by Clarke as a way to make data visible to a diversity of readers. She proposed a method that accounts not only for the words or actions of participants in a study, but emphasizes the situational data: buildings, communities, political forces, and most importantly, the interactions among them.

In Figure 9, an example of a situational analysis “abstract map” allows a reader to identify overlapping movement and boundaries among individuals as participants in groups and subgroups, or “worlds and subworlds” (p. 111). The complexities of a social world and institutions are revealed with a few simple lines and shapes to indicate key elements. Line qualities, locations, shapes, and sizes of elements have codified meaning to the researcher. In this example, organizations are indicated by rectangles and the spaces between them are fields where negotiations occur. Smaller circles indicate social worlds that link the organizations in shared subcultures of practice or interest. Large circles indicate arenas of social or political action.

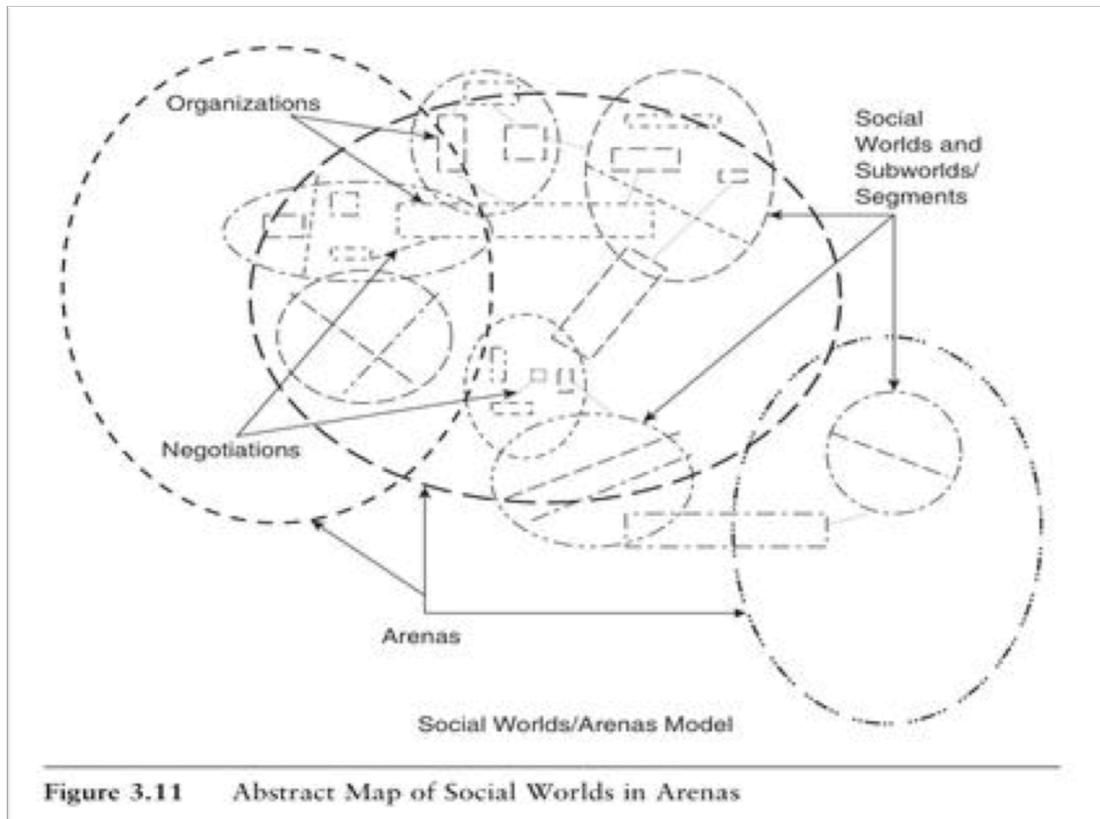


Figure 3.11 Abstract Map of Social Worlds in Arenas

Figure 9. *Abstract Map of Social Worlds in Arenas*, Clarke (2005, p. 111)

This use of the map is not especially meaningful to external viewers or to write up findings, but because it provided the researcher, and in some cases the participants, with a language for explaining difficult relational concepts, the map itself became both an analytic device and at times it became data. Clarke proposes that situational maps “reveal the stunning messiness of social life” (Clarke & Friese, 2007, p. 370). The messiness of ethnography and art came together for me within this approach. As with Wacquant, Clarke does not name her methodology within an arts-based canon. And as with Wacquant, her development of this methodology provided a bridge for me to use my visual artistic skills in preliminary analysis of the situations of teaching artists in histories and contemporary discourses.

As an artist, I know that when I am engaged in a drawing or painting, I organize, compose, revise, and reflect with a virtuosity that allows me to see relationships between lines and shapes, and between concepts and the marks that represent them. In Figure 10, a painting that I created in 2012 provides an example of ways that shape, line, and color depict variations on a theme of balance. The rounded shapes are teetering on the point of a grounded house shape, while the lines both bisect the frame and provide unifying texture to the objects. A saturated central color provides a pivotal point for wedges of color that radiate outward as high, medium, and low intensity information. At the same time, the process and product of this painting provided me with a set of metaphors for reflecting on life and work balances.



Figure 10. *Researching Balance*, 2012

In this way, the study of situational analysis mapping allowed me to step back and view a world that I had inhabited in many ways and for many years. This made it possible to understand my own position and the contexts of individual teaching artists and their students in larger systems. Most importantly, it offered a meaningful vocabulary for an artist, who is also a researcher, to analyze constructs and data with greater fluency.

### *Validity in arts-based research*

What is validity in this context? Arts-based research was quantified and qualified in traditional research terms until 1993 when the AERA supported a research institute that gave a name and subtle distinction to the idea of research that requires a new artistic dimension of methodology (Eisner & Barone, 2011).

The ultimate measure of research validity to date has been generalizability, yet this often promotes clumsy application of research and demands what the TARP study referenced from arts integration practices as “a search for an elegant fit” (April, Burnaford, & Weiss, 2001). Rolling (2013) suggests, “[a]n arts-based research ontology accepts universal laws as they emerge yet does not *presume* them, and does not promote the validity of outcomes on their ability to be replicated without significant variance in other contexts” (p. 7).

This means that arts-based research could be validated in a community of research practice if it held meaning or value not as a replicable intervention, but as an idea that provides generative and flexible new ways to grow through and beyond a problem.

A volume of arts-based research examples (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008) begins to poke holes in the constraints of qualitative research. One reviewer positioned the shift from studying arts-based pedagogies used by teaching artists to arts-based research by writing:

I struggled to clearly conceive how art and research intersect. Is art the data? The data collecting instrument? The analysis? What is the difference between art that stimulates awareness or teaches and art that researches? After all, there must be tremendous overlap in formats: performance, film, poetry, painting, sculpture and so on. Clearly, ABER could adapt to almost any qualitative methodology. Narrative inquiry, ethnography,

phenomenology and action research are obvious fits. But can a poem be a dissertation?  
(Smithbell, 2010, p. 1597)

Within the young field of arts-based research methods, there are already distinctions being made to sort arts practices that constitute research (Sullivan, 2010), arts-based education practices as research (Sinner, Leggo, Irwin, Gouzouasis, Grauer, 2006), and arts-based research practices that are understood as social activism incorporating art, education, and research collectively (Rolling, 2009, Cohen-Cruz, 2011).

A study of teaching artist pedagogy was conducted in the United Kingdom (Denmead, 2011) in response to a similar call from economic and educational reports to “expand and professionalise the engagement of creative practitioners” and that “greater attention must be given to how they themselves view and describe their pedagogies.” The recommendations made by Denmead also sparked my belief in arts-based research as a necessary category that has yet to be fully understood in education research. He closed his report by saying,

Research and policy makers might support that aim [of creating a creative workforce and promoting social inclusion] by seeking to describe and re-describe pedagogies rather than predict, control and measure. Moreover, research and policy might move away from considering who creative practitioners are, how they are different, and how we professionalise/accredit them to the more elusive, complex, and fundamental considerations of how we educate today and why. (p. 65)

By fixing a critical lens on arts-based practices in this study, I was able to develop better understanding of relationships that bind and liberate learners, artists, and teachers in a complex network of practices. By using a vocabulary of artistic practices as part of the research design, it

was possible to validate the findings within the academy, and more importantly within communities of teaching artist practice.

### *Summary*

The literature assembled in this chapter emphasizes foundational elements for my study of teaching artists and their navigation of complex worlds. The information here provides a launching pad for envisioning the work of teaching artists in dynamic spaces that are not in-between mainstream careers of education and art. The literature begins to build a case for becoming alert to the multiple communities of practice that are navigated by teaching artists as they collaborate with learners who continue to be marginalized. It synthesizes my original concern with the in-between-ness of teaching artistry not as a gap to be navigated or bridged, but as wide-awakeness to interactive and yet-uncodified communities of practice. Rautins and Ibrahim (2011) suggest that it is a form of critical pedagogy to expand awareness in this way. They wrote:

[A]s we conceive it, a critical pedagogy of wide-awakeness empowers learners to be mindful of oneself and others, opening up space for conscious deliberation of how the world is constructed in terms of knowledge, power, and inequality. (2011, p. 26)

By using wide-awakeness as an overarching term to bundle, but not ignore, the possibilities of a teaching artist worldview, I was able enact this dissertation as a critical-activist (Rolling, 2013) arts-based ethnography. The activist nature of research is difficult to believe in if its purpose is to inform other researchers alone. If this study was conducted without significant attention to the

improvement of teaching and learning through artistic practices, then it may rest in dusty ranks of unused literature that has been developed in the name of reform (Ravitch, 2011).

Lara Lackey (2003) proposed that we re-conceive research to support a complex network of art(s) education practices that extend beyond binary contexts of “school” and “other” (p. 114). To do so, she recommends examination of the range of arts education workers with Bourdieu’s (1993) theory of cultural production which uses *habitus* and *fields* to (1993) to understand the reflexive tension between individual identity formation and the situations in which it develops. In her research she then positions these workers using Lave and Wenger’s (1998/1999) *communities of practice* to examine their actions as “reification” of institutional agreements. Those agreements could be following a specific lesson plan, or “participation” within an organized social group. She regards those actions as “interpretation of the reifications in terms of their meanings and possibilities for day-to-day activity” (p. 109). I regard such actions as extensions of meaningful research. This literature offers an opening to a study, but it hopefully offers an opening to practices as well.

As a transition to methodology, I offer a final unit of literature that comes from my own repertoire of research publication. Within ethnography, this unit can be understood as many things: as literary reference, as field note, or as preliminary analytic device. *Conspiracy Theories at the Normal School* (Reeder, 2013) is an *ALT/space* blog entry that I posted in the winter of 2013. It exemplifies the weaving of research with practice that has interrupted and extended this study with what Wacquant might call observant participation, Garoian might call prosthetic visibility, with what Maxine Greene might call wide-awakeness, and what Rabkin or Weiss might call an elegant fit. It provides a lift-off to methodology by introducing the reader to my own researcher-as-teaching artist voice:

### *Conspiracy theories at the “normal” school*

When I am not on the road engaged in professional development with teachers and teaching artists, I am at a state-funded art school in Boston, Massachusetts, training people who aspire to careers as teaching artists. They also aspire to be art teachers, community artists, museum educators, artist-educators, engaged artists, artist/researcher/teachers, and artist-activists, but there is no regular label for what they will be called when they leave our program.

Last semester, after an especially inventive series of workshops on teaching strategies we studied literacy development through playacting elements in a story. We studied collaborative learning through choreography and dance. Some of my students expressed concern that these playful methods might be too weird (Figure 11) to convince parents



Figure 11. *Art and human development students at MassArt, 2013.*

and administrators that this was effective teaching. This led to a conversation about their identities as artists who teach. They were frustrated with what they perceived as an art school resistance to labels and titles for the work they were hoping to do. They wanted to know when it was right to legally call themselves artists, or teachers. They were hoping that a degree in art education could help them to be valued in the world with greater clarity. I told them that after years of living and studying the career lives of artists who teach, I was still undecided about the effectiveness of standard titles that we apply to what we do. But, sharing my own comfort with the ambiguity of teaching artistry was not very helpful. I shared theories and quotes from leaders in the field of arts education with them. This quote from Eric Booth, had a similar effect:

The TA takes on a variety of roles in leading a group, including facilitator of group process, as well as the roles of designer, leader, colleague, teacher, and witness. Good TAs are nimble in changing their role relationships to learners, enjoying each role, and modeling the multiplicity of roles that artistry requires. (Booth, 2012)

To them, it just sounded like more academic justification for the fuzziness and open-ended difficulties of the arts. Fortunately, we study at a school with some history in this area. So we turned to our own foundations for some insight.

Our college is Massachusetts College of Art & Design (aka MassArt). But, it was founded as the Massachusetts Normal Art School in 1873. *Normal*, at that time, indicated that this school would establish standards or *norms* for teaching art to working class students.

At the time it was an extraordinary organization, because it also proposed to teach not-so-normal folks to use artistic concepts in their everyday work and lives. It was not normal for working class, female, immigrant, or brown-skinned people to be included in the privilege of artistic activity. It was not normal for people who had little money or privilege and who had few choices about career paths to be invited into the exclusive world of art. But, even then, the students must have held similar questions about their future lives. Even then, they must have hoped that there was some guidebook or standard label for sharing their unique work with the real world.

So, when I shared a photograph of Normal School students [see Chapter 1, Figure 2] from 1890 engaged in some wacky airplane-angle-exercise it was impossible to ignore the similarities to the methods we were studying in our own class in 2013. My students were amused to imagine that it was some sort of not-so-normal conspiracy theory against standardization of teaching artist careers. Since the word conspiracy comes from the Latin *conspirare* which means “to breath [the spirit] together”, it was completely fitting that they should be suspicious.

I wrote the blog entry for *ALT/space* after two years of reading other teaching artist stories with full consciousness of my role as an ethnographer in a world of teaching artists. I knew that by describing my expanding role as a teacher of future teaching artists I had formally positioned myself as an observant participant in the *ALT/space* community. When I linked a historic body of artists-who-teach with an emerging body of artists-who-teach, it helped me to bracket teaching artistry as a tangible practice within a relatively finite period of time. Finally, by paying attention to the concerns expressed by my students, I was able to see the value in pursuing research that might help them to navigate their own career pathways for the future.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

*“I saw a young gang leader, notorious in the city of Louisville, stand side by side with a young man from the mountains who couldn’t read, write or barely speak intelligibly, and help him record a “song” by writing down what he wanted to say and whispering the words to him line by line for him to repeat as I recorded his efforts. That day I saw the arts cross cultural and racial barriers, spit in the face of peer pressure and give voice to those from whom silence had been demanded and I knew that whatever I was doing was actually reaching them”*

- Allison, 2013

*“What most captured my attention is the implication that creativity plays no role in the daily classroom and that these students recognized that fact. Creativity related to any subject, in any form, for any purpose whatsoever. It strikes me as odd that with all of the education ‘reform’ that continually happens, embedded with words such as ‘creativity’ and ‘innovation,’ that students apparently do not benefit from such ‘reform’ efforts.”*

- Daniel, 2013

### *Introduction: Voices in the data*

The quote above by Allison, a teaching artist in the *ALT/space* blog, provides an example of information that informed the direction of my methodology. This study was designed to better understand:

*How do teaching artists navigate and communicate their own career development across social, educational, and artistic situations?*

In that quote, Allison did not directly describe the steps she took to become and sustain a career as a teaching artist. Instead, she described a moment of learning between students with an emphasis on finding voice through artistic work. She then described her own awareness of ways that this learning actively changed the social reality of the students and her own practices. Early in the preparation for this study, it was evident that teaching artists such as Allison prioritized the importance of students developing “voice” (Rabkin et al., 2011, p. 70) as a key motivator in naming teaching artistry as their career identity. The second quote by Daniel, another *ALT/space*

contributor exemplified how teaching artists overwhelmingly listened to the voices of their students to better understand the working parts of a teaching and learning situation in their work.

The inquiry for this study was embedded in these examples. When Daniel wrote about classroom life it resonated with my first question:

*- What is or is not happening in and around education and arts education specifically to engender increased interest in teaching artistry?*

When Allison described the specific actions of writing and whispering between boys as they recorded a song and overcame social challenges it was a glimpse into the potential of the second question:

*- What do teaching artists do that differentiates their practices from school arts instruction, from regular classroom instruction, or from existing social and cultural and standards-based services?*

When both teaching artists expressed consciousness of their work in relation to a larger world it helped me to know that they were making intentional observations about their career choices:

*- How do teaching artists identify and extend their own career communities?*

The inquiry for this study guided me in myriad ways, not as a quest that would reveal answers, but as a steady set of voices that would reveal variegated qualities of teaching artist practices.

In my own career as a teaching artist, such moments of voice development were meaningful because they provided me with evidence that my teaching was somehow making a difference. Yet, it was difficult to explain to my principal or peers that our lesson for the day was about voice. It was also difficult to advocate for my own voice. It was not a content topic like sentence structure or color mixing. It was not a defining element in my professional evaluation. It was not especially measurable in prevailing standardized terms. I was reluctant to delimit the

emotional and cognitive possibilities of the work within a finite standard such as direct alignment with literacy skills or a history topic. But voice development was assessable, and the students and I knew when they had developed meaningful messages, unique concepts, individualized perspectives, collaborative actions, and so forth. We found reciprocal and changing agreement about success in our three-dimensional engagement. But categorizing those successes in order to justify standardized curricula often reduced them to criteria that lacked depth. This is why Maxine Greene argued to the American Education Research Association for the arts as a humanizing force for a new era of multiple literacies and “realities” (Suppes et al., 1998, p. 36). This is why Boykin and Noguera argued for more “asset-focused” (2011, p. 41) engagement in education more recently with the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. This appears to be why so many teaching artists have persisted in using voice as the descriptor for the aims of their work (Rabkin et al., 2011). Because voice cannot be quantified or standardized (yet), it continues to hold unique value in teaching and learning.

In written and spoken words, photographs, and audio-video content, teaching artists who contributed to the *ALT/space* site emphasized not only instructional or artistic skills and knowledge but, more commonly social, cultural, and aesthetic information that shaped pedagogical contexts for their teaching artist work. The TARP study (Rabkin et al., 2011) called for further investigation of teaching artist assessment practices that are arts-based, distinctive, and aligned with contemporary education emphases on critical thinking. Yet, the intersubjective qualities of those practices were often at odds with mainstream assessments that strayed far from the site of learning engagement in an attempt to be efficient (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). Mainstream assessments in this case include measuring devices for transforming things that learners do to demonstrate their understanding into numerical systems that can then be compared

for high or low levels of achievement. While these are assessments that can provide information about broad educational gains, literature shows that such measures favor White learners and that individuals with unique needs become excluded from consideration (Ravitch, 2010; 2013).

### *Critical, arts-based ethnography*

This study began as an investigation into career choices of teaching artists. But because I was unable to separate my own artistic ontology from the process, and because the data was rich with artistic practices, the study unfolded and became a multi-layered understanding of artistic resistance to standardizing measures. In order to best accommodate the multiple voices of a teaching artist culture across artistic disciplines and educational situations, the methodology is a critical, arts-based ethnography.

The methodology is considered critical because the researcher and the participants actively challenge the criteria that public education in the United States has used to determine what successful teaching and learning look like. The new Common Core standards for schools describe successful teaching and learning beyond literacy and math as college and career-ready skills (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). Yet, the assessments for those skills only measure student ability to demonstrate literacy and mathematical knowledge (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). My preliminary data collection showed 100% of teaching artists, their partner teachers, and students questioning the validity of such limited systems.

This study is arts-based because it follows an exquisite corpse artistic practice or “worldview” (Rolling, 2013) that I, as the researcher have found to be meaningful and highly informative. My own membership in a world of artists and artistic thinkers has made it

impossible to separate the terms and actions of research from artistic practice. It is also arts-based because the data and analyses emerged from uniquely arts-based qualities of teaching artist and learner practices. Specifically, this methodology follows a juxtaposed and sequential organization of information using what Garoian (2011) poses as “exquisite corpse folding of complex and contradictory narratives into and through each other offer[ing] significant possibilities for engaging in democratic discourse, understanding alterity, and respect for cultural differences and peculiarities” (p.158). This means that the central structure for organizing data collection, analyses of data, and reporting findings unfolded into a cohesive theory that was only evident after each construct was assembled into a collective body.

This study is ethnographic because it examines and describes pedagogies and policies that are navigated by a culture of teaching artists through the reflections and actions of those teaching artists and the collaborating learners and partners in their work. Loic Wacquant, in his unique and controversial ethnographic study: *Body and soul: notebooks of an apprentice boxer* (2009) which translates *Corps et âme: notes ethnographiques d'un apprenti-boxeur*, describes a form of ethnography which is only possible when the researcher “takes pains to get close enough to [the subject of boxing] to grasp it with one’s body, in a quasi-experimental situation” (2009, p. 7). He describes his ethnography as a juxtaposition of research and artistic elements that “display and demonstrate” sensual and social information in a way that was not quite understood in quantitative or qualitative research at the time.

I have found that ethnography can be conducted within an arts-based ontology as a way to demonstrate the social and sensual qualities of difficult-to-describe teaching artist practices. I believe that to date, teaching artists have remained under-researched (as indicated in Chapter Two) largely due to the methods used for studying their culture. This study was able to get closer

to representing a culture of arts-based teaching artist practices through my own ethnographic immersion and in the active juxtaposition of fieldwork vignettes with the content of this text. Thus, the compilation of voices, images, and words in this text may break with some conventions of dissertation writing as a demonstration of fine-grained ethnographic methodology. Van Maanen (2011) in his book *Tales of the Field: On writing ethnography* wrote, “An ethnography is a means of representation” (p. 7). He prefaced this statement by reminding readers that ethnography is not “a straightforward matter, however, because a culture or a cultural practice is as much created by the writing (i.e., it is intangible and can only be put into words) as it determines the writing itself (Wagner, 1981). To suggest otherwise reduces ethnography to method” (p. 6). My ethnographic research methodology is presented here as representation by and about teaching artist practices.

I chose to use critical, arts-based ethnography as a methodology in recognition of three constructs that were central to this study:

- An influential culture of teaching artists was developing in the United States and many practitioners, researchers, and policymakers were expressing anxiety about the role of this group of practitioners in public education. Very little research had yet been done to capture the interests and collective actions of career teaching artists by including their voices in studies (Rabkin et al., 2011). Ethnography is a method that encourages holistic study of the interactions and contexts that distinguish the culture of a group of people from within that group’s own environment (Deveault, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

- I was conscious of my own membership in the field of teaching artistry and knew that I shared some of the anxieties that shaped and limited teaching artist work. Ethnography allows

the researcher to be situated as a participant within a culture so that researcher experiences and biases are included as information that affect data analysis (Abu-Lughod, 2000).

- Artistic practices are so deeply intertwined with cognitive, social, and physical actions that telling a story about a culture of teaching artists utilizing a strictly qualitative or quantitative research voice would present artificial structures for study. Arts-based ethnography allows for a multiplicity of aesthetically unique voices and actions that exist in this area of study, with teaching artists as subject and teaching artist as researcher (Richardson, 2000; Wacquant, 2004; Rolling, 2013).

### *Conscious criticality*

During data collection and preliminary analysis, it became evident that this was indeed a *critical* arts-based ethnography. I had set out to better understand a cultural phenomenon, but through my own reflections as a teaching artist, it was evident that I had a personal desire to address the controversial positioning of teaching artists in an unfair situation that was prompting a flurry of policy action. The unfair situation emerged with the 2012 publication of the SEADAE (Richerme et al, 2012) white paper that proposed highly defined and regulated roles for teaching artists, certified arts educators, and classroom teachers. While such publications usually have little impact on the everyday work of teaching artists, this one sparked some concern in the field due to statements in the paper that cast teaching artists as inexpensive and unregulated alternatives to sequential arts instruction. While the SEADAE paper did not explicitly say that this was the fault of teaching artists, it provoked concern in the field from other policymakers and individual teaching artists (Gibas, 2012).

Then, in the winter of 2012, as part of my regular data-collection on *ALT/space*, I read this blog entry by a theater and writing teaching artist:

I write about this multi-tiered relationship, as I have been thinking a lot about a recently released nationally-focused white paper which defines a partnership triad that includes arts educators (part- to full-time faculty or staff in a school setting), classroom teachers and visiting teaching artists. As it defines and triumphs the skills and expertise that each of these roles brings to the various possible partnership permutations, the paper also broadly devalues the role of the teaching artist in a classroom setting. The core argument, as I read it, being that the teaching artist potentially provides schools/districts a cheaper alternative to the arts educator yet lacks the training and comprehensive programming that is necessary in school settings.

My question is, why the divisiveness? Why not champion the myriad of possibilities of partnerships? To date there is no clear, large-scale commitment to arts education in our country. We, the arts educators and teaching artists, need to define and promote how individually and collectively these roles can enhance the school experience of students, not in preference to one another, but how each can accomplish the desired outcomes of quality arts learning experiences. (Daniel, 2012)

This teaching artist lived on the other side of the continent from me. He worked with students both in and outside of schools. He helped me to understand three things: first, I recognized my own agreement with the tone of the white paper and knew that I could not be a completely objective researcher in this community; second, I understood the great value of having a network such as *ALT/space* where isolated practitioners could share their concerns; third, I knew that the voices on *ALT/space* were not especially going to do much about the policy implications because their primary concerns in the blog appeared to be about students and less about their own career advancement. This was not good or bad. It was simply what I understood from the data.

It seemed that the white paper positioned the work of teaching artists as a threat to the success of public education in the arts, but it ignored the dire problem of public arts education serving only a small percentage of overall learners. Teaching artists in the *ALT/space* blog and in the field data that I had been gathering over the years did not appear to care about getting into schools where their work would serve students who already had an abundance of experiences. In my early attempts to maintain a balanced perspective and to avoid positioning teaching artists as victims or marginalized people, I ignored the highly documented (Rabkin et al., 2011; PCAH,

2012) borderlands that teaching artists inhabited. In sitting beside my teaching artist colleagues as an ethnographic friend, I realized that telling their story was impossible unless I told it as a story that was indeed from the margins “as a space of “radical openness” (hooks, 1990, p. 145). Teaching artists in this study have described challenges and benefits that come from a conflicted social space where they have limited privilege because they are neither artist nor teacher. As in the statement from bell hooks above, they have each expressed understanding of their identities as inhabiting more fluid and transformational spaces than policy makers have cast for them in white papers and standards. They understood as she did, that the “power of art resides in its potential to transgress boundaries” (p. 109).

As a researcher I agree that, “critical ethnography begins with an ethical responsibility to address processes of unfairness or injustice within a particular lived domain” (Madison, 2012, p. 5). A critical ethnographer is conscious of such responsibilities. Again, I recall hooks (1990):

Turned off by culture vultures who want me to talk “race only,” “gender only,” who want to confine and limit the scope of my voice, I am turned on by subjectivity that is formed in the embrace of all the quirky conflicting dimensions of our reality. I am turned on by identity that resists repression and closure. This interview is a site where I could transgress boundaries with no fear of policing—a space of radical openness on the margins, where identity that is fluid, multiple, always in process could speak and be heard. (p.244)

These words fueled an understanding about my research that I had been struggling to own for many years. I had been documenting the work of teaching artists at a polite distance as a way to ensure that they had a place at some perceived and agreed-upon table. Yet I realized that the messiness of my own voice and those of my teaching artist peers were forming a radical presence of their own. Perhaps it was not a table or a room or a policy platform. Perhaps it was some other

form of collective space. For the purposes of this study, the critical, arts-based ethnographic consciousness of this researcher takes responsibility for the critical corps of voices that follow.

### *Procedures of the study*

A *critical* community of practice theory (Duguid, 2011) has emerged in this study through content analysis of narratives and images, unstructured interviews, situational analysis (Clarke, 2005), and an “exquisite corpse” (Garoian, 2011) arts-based analysis of more than forty teaching artists who wrote about their practices with the *Teaching Artist Journal* “*ALT/space*” blog. Because this study is about artists who begin with aesthetic knowledge and work to interpret it socially, artistically, and pedagogically across multiple contexts, I present this research design in alignment with the arts-based characteristics that make their work distinctive and at times provocative. These characteristics embrace artistic practice as intentionally cultural. While many of the *ALT/space* narratives describe familiar artistic lessons in color mixing or puppet performance, all of the stories situate lessons in a context of interrogating the influences of the learning situations.

It was helpful for me to account for the nuances of those pedagogical situations because they presented an overwhelmingly political message aimed at disrupting the way we educate in the United States. Each teaching artist voice and each data set in this study promoted new approaches. This is not to say that the *ALT/space* teaching artists were organized in revolution. They were quite disorganized in that they rarely commented on other blogs and their individual entries over time did not maintain sequenced storylines. But the authority of their collective voices evidenced potential for disruption of standardized teaching and learning. Rolling (2011) addressed a similar phenomenon that occurred when he was developing an arts education program within a bureaucracy that “misunderstood the purpose of art education (p. 99). He wrote

about teaching and learning as an opportunity for resistance and for reclaiming the space of learning:

To do so is not a petulant swipe at persons or institutions in power, but rather a necessary ontological choice in the process of revisioning oppressive epistemologies that preempt the nucleation or preclude the existence of counterdiscourses and ways of knowing.

Hence, this story is the byproduct of a resistance narrative—once again, defined here as a critical, local, and antioppressive methodology. (p. 101)

I introduce my critical arts-based stance with a degree of over-sensitivity to the possibility that this might appear as a portrayal of teaching artists as rogues who want to infiltrate and disrupt educational systems with some degree of carelessness. That is not the case because teaching artists in this study show that they spend extensive time in empathetic consideration of their choices. This is often to their disadvantage because it reduces the cost-effectiveness of their economic reality by taking more time than they are paid for. Additionally, teaching artists are not unique in their practices. Their stories reflect collegial respect for, and mentoring from, certified arts educators, classroom teachers, parents, policymakers, and of course the students with whom they implement their work. In their book *Educational Courage: Resisting the Ambush of Public Education*, Nancy Schniedewind and Mara Sapon Shevin (2012) advocate for teachers and folks engaged in education to use narratives of resistance for “working in the cracks” (p. 85) of market-driven educational policies. *The ALT/space* teaching artists appear to be doing just that, working those cracks, in solidarity with their school-based peers.

A critical community of practice theory has helped me to engage with finer fieldwork instruments to analyze a phenomenon of professional teaching artist practice that has expanded (Lackey, 2009) during a time when social equity in education (Boykin & Noguera, 2011) and

institutional support for arts education have decreased (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012). This was done by documenting teaching artist practices in their contemporary contexts, investigating the relationships between policy and practice in teaching artist work, and interrogating a critical standpoint that was revealed in data collection and analysis.

### *Study phases overview*

This study was conducted in four phases:

- Phase One: In summer 2012, I decided to use the *ALT/space* weblog ([www.tajalt.space.com](http://www.tajalt.space.com)) for content data collection after consideration of live and virtual sites in the United States that presented a diversity of teaching artist disciplines, experience, and cultural profiles. *ALT/space* appeared to be an optimal site where teaching artists came together from wide geographic and practical situations to describe the in-between experiences of their work. The commentary that happened in a virtual community allowed me to have real-time access to the voices of participating teaching artists while I was reviewing content data from the year before. My participation during this phase was as a reader. I had familiarity with about half of the artists from my work as a founder of the site. I did not contribute to *ALT/space* at that time because I was still trying to maintain an observant distance.

- Phase Two: In 2012, I began to formally study every blog entry for image and textual content. This required that I go back and re-read the earliest entries from late 2011 for analyzable content and continue to make weekly website visits through the winter of 2013. Development of instruments for transcription and organization of data began in the winter of 2012 to 2013. The instruments are fully described later in this chapter. My participation during this phase was as a

distant reader, engaged in transitioning to a faculty position in Boston and leaving my community-based teaching artist work in Syracuse. Content data profiles can be found in Appendix C of this study.

- Phase 3: I began to treat the content analysis of blog entries more like virtual site visits. The virtual site visits included: reading blog entries and clicking on embedded links to follow the teaching artists into their lived worlds. I was discovering conversations among teaching artists and other visitors in the way they chose photos, videos, and links. While I first read the blog entries in chronological order of publication, I then began to follow them in a chance pattern based on a new comment, an embedded link, or reference to the content of a photo. I analyzed and organized incoming data by compiling field notes as journal entries using a physical “exquisite corpse” (Garoian, 2011) structure. This structure allowed for comparative analysis of emerging “pedagogical portraits” (Daichendt, 2010) of individual teaching artist situations.

I interviewed eight *ALT/space* teaching artist blog contributors via phone and video calls in semi-structured, dialogic interviews in late January and early February of 2013. These were conducted as a way to gain deeper understanding of the actions that I had seen in blog entries. Question prompts for these interviews can be found in Appendix B. Preliminary “messy” (Clarke, 2009) situational analysis maps of broad themes were drafted by hand as a way to visualize gaps and areas of emphasis for further data collection. I mapped the experiences described by each teaching artist to illustrate relationships among teaching artists, students, peer-professionals, and worlds that they navigated in their practices. My participation during this phase also involved introducing teaching artists in my professional development practices, arts integration consulting, and art education students at MassArt to the *ALT/space* blog entries. A

few of them made comments that became part of the data content. It was during this phase that I recognized my own inextricable role as a participant in a national culture of teaching artists, and in this community of teaching artist practice.

- Phase 4: I engaged in reflexive analysis of content, interviews, researcher participation, and policy studies from September 2013 through June 2014. This included findings that emerged through re-organizing data with visual and thematic tools that I eventually embraced as a better-defined exquisite corpse methodology. This also included returning to *ALT/space* as a contributing author. This final step prolonged writing of the methodology and findings chapters, yet it provided valuable closure to the procedure. My participation during this period also involved a return to more engagement in policy work at the national level. My own entries were not included in this study as part of the 2011-2013 content analysis. But, my participation as a contributor informed my arts-based analysis and synthesis of findings.

#### PHASE ONE: Samples and sites

##### *Study sample: Teaching artists*

Sampling for the study was dictated by the organizing structure of the *ALT/space* weblog. Forty teaching artists who contributed to the blog from August 2011 until February 2013 were included formally as participants of the study cohort for gathering content data. All of the cohort participants were self-identified teaching artists who had contributed at least one entry to the blog reflecting their own experiences as a teaching artist. The teaching artists selected for interviews in January 2013 had published a minimum of three blog entries at a time between summer 2011 and winter 2013. They were also selected because their entries reflected the study

focus areas of this dissertation including text and images that documented: their own professional development and identification as a teaching artist over a period of time; observations on their working relationships with students, teachers, artists, policymakers, cultural workers, and community partners; and vignettes that illustrated the intentions and outcomes of their work with learners.

*Study site: ALT/space*

Initially I researched a number of potential sites, both live and virtual, where I was situated as an authentic participant. I needed a site where teaching artist practices could be observed and understood from a range of perspectives, at varying times, and in formal and informal moments. Ultimately, the selected *ALT/space* site provided a virtual portal to a wide and diverse network of live communities that are described by the contributing teaching artists. The collective intention of this virtual community is to illuminate what teaching artists do. My own teaching artist membership existed in this, and other live and virtual communities, so it was possible to narrow my choices down to a few sites with research criteria in mind.

*The two live sites that I considered included:*

- *Syracuse, New York:* As a resident from 1990-2012, I had developed working and long-term relationships with teaching artists as an art teacher in a K-8 public school, as a leader for arts educational resources, and as a multi-media teaching artist for preK- college sites in a 9-county region surrounding Syracuse. Potential for this site existed in the longevity of my face-to-face participation with other teaching artists and complete understanding of the terrain.

Challenges existed in limited geographic reach, and in the logistics of observing unobtrusively.

- *Empire State Partnerships, New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA):* As a funder and trainer for teaching artists and their partner teachers and cultural partners, I had developed

working and long-term relationships with teaching artists across the state and within all boroughs of New York City. Ultimately, the arts education community of New York State was not a logical site, due to my history and status as a policymaker. Site participants would be more inclined to invite observation of successful and more carefully staged sites in the hopes of furthering their resources.

*Virtual communities were considered as follows:*

Across the United States, the greatest teaching artist representation tends to be centered upon affiliations with regional institutions (Rabkin et al., 2011). Nationally, the most prominent clusters of general teaching artist convergence include formal and ad hoc virtual communities growing outward from two sets of online sites hosted by the Association of Teaching Artists (ATA) and the *Teaching Artist Journal (TAJ)*. In the past, I was an editor for the *Teaching Artist Journal*, and a web group member of the Association of Teaching Artists. Virtual communication has been a notable means of growth in most fields, but to the teaching artist field it is still one of the only ways to identify with a wider geographic cohort.

The Association of Teaching Artists (ATA) was formed in 1998 by artists in New York State who convened at state-funded arts education conferences. The ATA virtual community included a Facebook page, a website with links to individual blog pages, and a membership listserv. It collectively broadcasts events, employment opportunities, relevant news, and inquiries among teaching artists. I determined that the ATA cluster of sites was less optimal for this study as they were primarily concerned with teaching artist employment and general advocacy messaging. It would be difficult to discern the differences between teaching artist practices that were edited for advocacy and practices that were polished in the hopes of employment opportunity.

The online presence of the *Teaching Artist Journal (TAJ)* began with a Facebook page in 2008, and in 2011 with a blog publication titled *ALT/space*, to encourage real-time dialogue among teaching artists. I was the original designer of the *ALT/space* blog and once it was developed as a forum for varied teaching artist narratives, I was able to step away. All *TAJ* sites collectively broadcast narratives from the field, illustrating the day-to-day dynamics of teaching artist work. The print publication provides peer-reviewed and edited information that could limit teaching artist voices within editorial and institutional goals for the field. The Facebook site allows for commentary and advocacy on *TAJ* and *ALT/space* publications. The *ALT/space* blog is managed by an editor and has no peer-review requirements for publication. It functions as an archive of real-time journal entries from teaching artists in a national, diverse, network of situations.

Both virtual communities of ATA and *TAJ* offered an essential quality that is not readily available in physical and regional situations. That quality is *freedom of teaching artist voice*, to question and address issues of teaching artist professional practice across disciplines without contractual responsibility to any one employer or client. Much like the web pages of the National Art Education Association (NAEA) and the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the ATA and *TAJ* websites offer current information to a wider community of practitioners. However, unlike the NAEA and AERA, the ATA and *TAJ* web communities provide no policymaking or institutional authority over the careers of teaching artists.

## PHASE TWO: Data collection and content analysis

### *Primary sources*

The primary sources for content analysis data were the 188 *ALT/space* blog entries written between August, 2011 and December, 2013. I read, documented, and organized textual, photographic, and audio-visual information from those entries with sensitivity to the diversity of aesthetic choices made by the authoring teaching artists. General demographic and thematic information can be found in Appendix C. Figure 12 provides a sample of visual content to demonstrate how teaching artists used images to depict environmental contexts, illustrate curriculum and instructional values, and exemplify specific pedagogical structures and choices that they developed with students. The first sample (a) is from a teaching artist who was enlisted to bridge community and classroom barriers in rural Alaska. By providing images of the frozen natural environment, he was able to inform readers about the isolation and vastness that may have influenced a greater need for closeness and understanding among adults and children in the community. Sample (b) shows how teaching artists justified the value of their work and student learning in alignment with the standardized assessments. Sample (c) exemplifies individualized pedagogical methods that a teaching artist developed from collaborative action with her students.

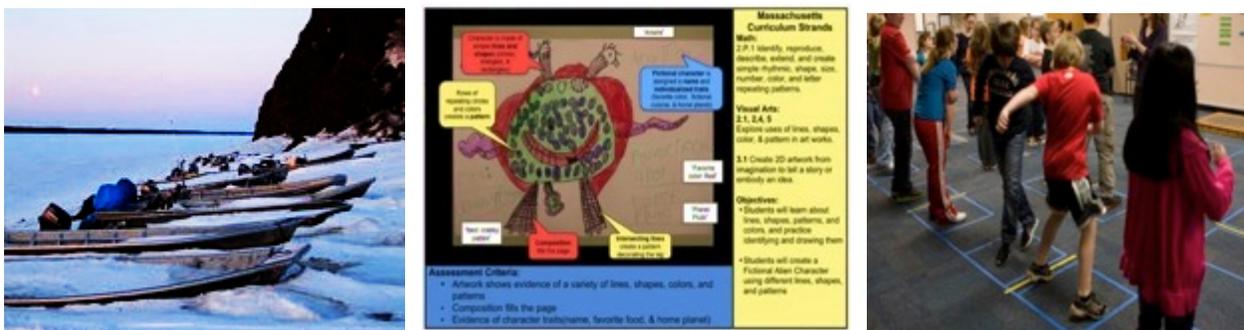


Figure 13.

*Image samples about (a) social space, (b) instructional practice, and (c) collaborative action*

I reviewed and documented the textual and visual blog content of all 40 teaching artists in three different ways:

- *Entering the blog from the front page, chronologically by date with most recent blog posts at the top of the web page:* This was done to access the breadth of 7-10 teaching artist blog entries that would be published in each one-month period. Much like stepping into a monthly meeting of practitioners, it captured narratives that aligned with current events, seasonal issues, school year cycles of testing, teaching, and professional development. This was an excellent way for an ethnographer to sit in on a virtual space and it reinforced emerging community of practice themes.

- *Individual teaching artist blog entries, chronologically from earliest and oldest entries to the most recent:* Reading each of the forty teaching artist blog entries as part of a set or body of events provided longitudinal data that followed individual teaching artist experiences as growing and unfolding individual narrative portraits. Some had provided as many as eleven entries while others had provided only one. The posts often progressed from an introductory entry, to entries that described issues of importance to the teaching artist, to diary-like discussions of developing shifts and “aha” moments in their work. This was an entrée to using exquisite corpse analysis.

- *Following themes and issues that resonated among entries, in no specific chronological order:* This was difficult due to a navigational design issue that only allowed readers to follow one teaching artist backwards in time due to a moving index system. Traditional content analysis with thematic coding became less logical as I tried to capture themes and use them to navigate the content. This was the second indication that I might need to consider an exquisite corpse

analysis as a flexible structure for organizing textual and visual information that had the appearance of being juxtaposed.

It may sound like a study in semantics to describe these approaches to gathering data, but I present it here as the impetus for designing data collection and analysis tools that could illustrate the data in more dimensional ways. I found that reading blog entries in these varying ways revealed different understandings. The inconsistency of the understandings was not yet revealing patterns that could be coded in meaningful ways. This meant that collection tools needed to be more aesthetically sensitive than a spreadsheet because none of the portraits and relationships that were emerging could be captured in abstracted alpha-numeric codes alone. The discourses that connected and distinguished this cohort of practitioners were complex, social, and open-ended. Qualitative researchers have many systems for “working with data, organizing it, breaking it down into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 145). I knew that I was doing what many qualitative researchers had done before me, as Bogdan and Biklen later wrote, “learning to do qualitative research means unlearning this social construction of ‘research,’ and opening oneself to the possibility of employing a different vocabulary and way of structuring the research process” (2007, p. 4). Yet, somehow, the process felt infinitely more like the preparatory work that I did as an artist. As an artist, I often knew that I needed to dive deeply into messy explorations of material and meaning for long periods of engagement before I could find and follow clear themes or methods for presenting ideas.

Exploring the ideas (research themes) and materials (data) that I would synthesize into a work of art required the same process of trial and error, or application of media and then editing and refining into more intentional form. I was also fully aware that the visual nature of web

content was somehow at play in my analyses. The way a designer had organized text on a web page, the decisions that a teaching artist made to determine which image told the story best, these were decisions that felt like my own artistic process. They were decisions that were not always about analyzing data, but decisions that were more about expressing a concept or drawing attention to essential ideas.

I began to do what many teaching artists did when they had to convey and interpret multiple meanings somewhere between education and art. I used my own visual artistic language, first by sketching and graphic organization of dates and titles on a piece of paper, then by physical manipulation of the texts and images into folds. This allowed me to “read” the data as independent entries, and at the same time I could see how each entry expressed an idea that was connected or not to the previous and following entries. I could re-fold the pages to analyze ideas in different, but always connected, combinations. I attempted to cut the images and text and rearrange them into clusters. But then the nature of the entries as sequenced journal reflections was lost. The hidden data, in the folds, was temporarily and visually eliminated but my awareness of that content remained present. When it was not in view and I was scanning titles or icons, it helped me to replicate the experience of being drawn to blog entries by visual or thematic content.

Visual interpretation from photos, web media, posters, and other visual technologies is not new to the social sciences (Hall, 1997a: 2). But, as an artist doing social science research, I found that the visuality of the data was of great interest to me. Visuality is a term that is used in visual culture studies to explain how we understand things that we see (Foster, 1988; Rose, 2012). I was reminded of Garoian’s “prosthetic visuality” (2010, p. 179) as a way to describe the generative nature of experiences that brought our bodies into contact with words and ideas. I was

seeing data, but I was also trying to physically engage with the data as a way to find even more meaning. I was also hearing voices, but those voices were not audible, they were developed by a combination of senses and I was learning a lot from those juxtaposed qualities.

I was also conscious of mediating internet spaces as part of the visuality and another kind of prosthesis in my study. I was interacting with teaching artists and they were interacting with each other and with others in a medium that provided unique sensory qualities. We were making discoveries because we were artists, but also because we were teaching artists within a highly generative medium. Elizabeth Ellsworth (2005) whose research and practices center on new media has explained that art is in fact pedagogical, offering important learning experience that comes from the places between thinking and feeling. She wrote,

The qualities and design elements that seem to constitute their pedagogical force invite sensations of being somewhere in between thinking and feeling of being in motion through space and time between knowing and not knowing, in the space and time of learning as lived experience with an open, unforeseeable future. (p. 17)

This quote reminded me that Maxine Greene in one of her many descriptions of embodied learning wrote,

It is clear to many of us by now that involvement with aesthetic questioning heightens awareness of what is demanded of us as listeners, as beholders. Such involvement heightens our consciousness of the mystery as well, as it discloses possibilities we could not have anticipated before” (2001, pp. 20-21).

This offered a way to explain how I could listen to voices from the field and be conscious of my researcher stance as both an artist and as a learner.

### *Preliminary analytic devices*

In Figure 13, I offer three examples of a tool that I developed to follow individual teaching artist blog entries over a series of months. I attempted to gain a more complete portrait of individual teaching artists by creating a visual/textual outline of their blog titles and photos. The earliest blog title and an image from that blog were pasted (digitally) into a document. Then, a running sequence of months between blog titles showed the length of time that passed between teaching artist observations. These outlines were useful for capturing the diversity of experiences that a teaching artist might have over the course of one or more years. I could collapse the accordion and see how themes endured or reconnected over time. It also captured varied themes that were emerging over time as different situations were juxtaposed.



Figure 13. *Analysis tool for individual teaching artist blog series*

I got into the habit of printing these pages and lining them up beside each other so that I could compare individual and shared themes emerging across individual blogs. I found that if I folded the pages just at the title of each new blog entry, then I was able to better recall what

might or might not have happened in the gaps of time between entries. In some cases this was many months or just a few weeks. I knew that the teaching artists were not waiting for an artful period to pass between entries. I knew that there was an abundance of lived experience that was occurring to bring the next entry to life. The folds of the paper allowed me to bookmark those periods of time as physical transitional place-holders. When they returned to their computers to tap out their narratives for the next entry, they were synthesizing their lives into select samples of their own choosing. I wondered what happened during those periods that compelled the choices they made when they finally committed to words and images that they would share with an audience. Where would the next image begin after the fold? Were they aware that the entry might reveal something about their identity that readers would share or respond to? Were they hoping to promote or advocate for some action or issue? Were they seeking response or was writing a process for reflection alone? In most cases it was a degree of all of these things. In most cases it was also amazing to find that the new entry took up a thread or starting point that was relatively different from the last entry. Unique juxtapositions were forming.

#### *Data collection doubts*

The organic development of the folded-paper data collection tool was troubling to me. First, it was beginning to feel like the exquisite corpse artmaking exercise that I used in my studio and in my classroom to organize and gather ideas that were somehow connected, but not yet obvious. This did not feel to me like the kind of research that would be respected by learned researchers whose findings changed worlds. Second, I was aware that my data collection was also becoming data analysis. I understood that ethnography, and many other grounded theory methods of qualitative research invited ongoing analysis (Charmaz, 2000), but the collection-

analysis tool was also becoming another form of data unto itself. This made it difficult to contain the data collection and analysis in ways that could be supported by traditions of qualitative research alone.

I could not find established qualitative research methods that supported the validity of folding words, images, and paper as a coding structure for theme identification in ethnography. I was also feeling like a research fraud because I knew that my own artistic and pedagogical practices over the past few years had included exploring an exquisite corpse artistic method that involved putting together varied images and ideas in a similar structure. Because the exquisite corpse method was historically known as a parlor game - or in the case of the Surrealists, a drinking game - I worried that I could not cast the messy tools of my artistic and teaching work aside to adopt the fine and focused tools developed by generations of researchers before me. I searched even harder for tools that could help me to make sense of information that was so aesthetically informative, yet so difficult for me to organize.

### PHASE THREE: Observant participation in a community of practice

#### *Data collection with the arts in mind*

The turn in data collection from reading and organizing published web content toward interview conversations and translating discourses came during my first semester as a faculty member in a new college and new geographic place during the winter of 2012-13. I left a home in Syracuse, NY where I had been an art teacher and teaching artist as well as a community organizer and policymaker for state and national arts resources. My practices as an artist became less collaborative with community practitioners and more academic through predetermined course syllabi at my new home on the campus of Massachusetts College of Art & Design

(MassArt) in Boston, MA. During that time, *ALT/space* became a bridge for me. It was a place where a familiar community continued to expand, but where many of the original participants were still available. I was still just a reader, but now I was engaging in interviews and ongoing conversations with the teaching artists. I was also in more consistent contact with Malke Rosenfeld, the editor of *ALT/space*, with Nick Jaffe, the editor of the *Teaching Artist Journal*, and with Nick Rabkin, the principal researcher for the TARP study. I peppered them with questions about history and processes that influenced their responsibilities. I assigned their publications to my students and gathered anecdotes from the student responses.

Formal data were gathered through phone and video-conference interviews with eight *ALT/space* blog authors. These interviews were recorded, reviewed, and partially transcribed for content that related to emerging themes. I included fieldnotes in the transcription documents to maintain my own reflections as well as other information that I may have gleaned about the participants from their personal or professional websites. I followed them and in some cases “friended” them on Facebook and Linked-In social media sites. Ethnography is concerned with construction of understanding versus reduction of understanding to casual or simplified symbol systems. I embraced the messiness of the varied data sources, but was lost in ways to document or organize all of these points of contact.

By returning to the work of sociologist Loic Wacquant, I was able to reassure myself that there was value in a growing body of aesthetic data that all seemed relevant to the study. Personal relationships with *ALT/space* teaching artists offered me more insight as to what was really happening in those periods between the folds. I was forming new vocabularies of artistic solidarity with students and colleagues at MassArt who situated artistic process as a primary source for their pedagogies. New vocabularies kept me artistically alert to the diverse work of

*ALT/space* artists. I was feeling uncomfortably untethered as many teaching artists do when they are not consistently operating in any one place. This was because I continued to keep a social and political life in Syracuse, and an increasingly exciting curriculum and research project with elementary schools on Long Island. Support for incorporating lived experience into ethnography exists with a variety of research experts, but most meaningfully for me from Wacquant.

Wacquant (2011) was a student and eventual collaborator with Pierre Bourdieu (1992), most notably on concepts of habitus and reflexive methods of sociology. From that influence he developed a critical voice against research that did not account for the position of the researcher and a clear understanding of the fields and worlds of practice that influenced social interaction. His own ethnographic methodologies broke the boundaries of traditional sociological research by advancing fieldwork as a blend of aesthetic and pedagogical experiences that *become* data. He eventually adopted an arts-based (novella) method for documenting, analyzing, and reporting his fieldwork. His approach was controversial (Eakin, 2003) and it provoked significant debate in his field. It led to increased consciousness about dominant research methods that may exclude under-represented cultural populations. He wrote:

[I] argue for the use of fieldwork as an instrument of theoretical construction, the potency of carnal knowledge, and the imperative of epistemic reflexivity. I also stress the need to expand the textual genres and styles of ethnography so as to better capture the Sturm und Drang of social action as it is manufactured and lived. (Wacquant, 2011, p. 81)

This argument helped me to understand that data that is “manufactured” as an aesthetic expression of findings could be accepted in a qualitative research field. This also confirmed that it was not always logical to use simple coding systems to reduce and organize what he called the “carnal” (Wacquant, 2004, p. vii) experience of learning through aesthetic experience.

### *Situational analysis as a transition*

During this phase of data collection I used situational analysis (Clarke, 2005) mapping techniques to organize interview data within the range of contexts that were revealed in teaching artist blog entries. Situational analysis incorporates visual organization of discourses that, in this study, affect the professional development of an individual teaching artist. This analytic approach uses a form of diagram that situational analysis presents as a map, that exposes relationships between individuals and the world they navigate, indicated by overlapping and connecting shapes and symbols with text. Clarke's situational analysis (2005), as described in the literature review is a way to push grounded theory around the postmodern turn with "method assemblage" (Law, 2004, p. 14). This means that grounded, qualitative research constructs such as: systematic comparisons and sampling, open, axial, theoretical coding, and memoing techniques can be brought together within one body of methods to show the complexity of data and situations being examined. Law's version of assemblage in this case is "a combination of reality detector and reality amplifier" (p. 14). This allows for ethnographers to avoid traps of oversimplification and elimination of valuable details. It also offered a place for including other anecdotal information that was coming into my analysis through lived experience.

The process of analyzing discourses by juxtaposing worlds and movement between those worlds in a drawing was highly informative. My artistic reflexes were piqued because I was able to draw and I was able to make sense of information that I struggled to understand in words and text alone. This was meaningful on two levels. On the first level, I was able to see individual teaching artists as part of larger communities of social practice. On the second level, I was able to empathize with those teaching artists who struggled to translate their pedagogical practices into standardized educational terms.



The first map (Figure 14) was sketched to indicate how teaching artists described significant working relationships with students and with other teachers. Within and around that triad of relationships, they also described relationships, indicated by stars, that emerged when they worked with school arts teachers, artists, professional (cultural) and advocacy organization personnel, and with higher education personnel. The map also included symbol systems of arrows and lines to indicate larger social, educational, economic, and political issues that teaching artists navigated and expressed awareness of in their writing or in interviews.



Figure 15. *Messy situational analysis map of arts education policy debate discourses*

The second map (Fig. 15) used a limited set of symbolic shapes composed in a way to show how teaching artists understood political influences that surrounded the quality of teaching and learning in their practices. In this case, the squares contained terms that were raised in debates between participating interest groups represented in ovals. Delivery of arts instruction

by teachers, arts teachers, teaching artists, or artists was influenced by policy (acronym clusters) groups. Debates about qualities of instruction were expressed as being between teachers and arts teachers, arts teachers and teaching artists, and teaching artists and artists. The teaching artists also indicated that learners (at the center of the debates) described qualities of learning differently from teachers or artists.

The third map (Figure 16) used more simplified shapes and text to map the terms and limitations that surrounded teaching artistry as a career path. The ovals indicate what teaching



Figure 16. Messy situational analysis map of teaching artist profession discourses

artists described as the nature of the content that they provided *not to learners*, but to a world of institutions that have attempted to categorize their work. The text indicates prevalent critiques described by teaching artists on those provisions. In this map I used the term profession because many of the participants used the term themselves. Yet, in my own analysis it is still uncertain if

the definition of profession applies to the field of teaching artists in the U.S (See Chapter 2, p. 29). This map became problematic for me because as I refined it to be more legible and to give the shapes multiple nuanced meanings, I found that I was becoming more focused on the composition as a harmonious graphic and less confident about the quality of the information that it represented to an outside viewer. Clarke discussed how such visual work could tease out information by reconstructing and understanding figure/ground (individual/world) relations. She noted what seemed like “slippery” work, offered opportunity for “multiple legitimate analyses at the same time” (p. 124-125). While I found this to be true for my maps, I was now aware of their use strictly as an analytic device. Up to this moment, I had hoped that they could double as reporting tools. Ways to communicate findings to many audiences. In fact, these were personal and possibly “slippery” analyses because their nuances were not especially visible to others.

This exercise provoked my internal debate about whether these methods were arts-based or qualitative. Situational analysis was introduced as a postmodern, grounded theory approach. This was a qualitative method in the world of researchers. But I was an artist, studying artists, using drawing methods that were historically and personally understood as artistic. I was beginning to find subtle distinctions between working through an epistemology and naming or applying a methodology. Situational analysis was a theoretical tool that I was using within my own arts-based research paradigm.

I continued to use situational analysis to make sense of data gathered from individual teaching artists in the blogs and in interviews because it provided me with a way to use my artistic sensibilities in a comfortable way. I was less concerned with sharing the maps, and more concerned with the familiar reflective visual language. In *Qualitative Inquiry and Global Crises*, (Denzin & Giardina, 2011), the same text that introduced Garoian’s exquisite corpse as a process

for contemporary critical research, Perez & Cannella (2011) introduced the use of situational analysis as a method for meaningful analysis and for construction of new data. They wrote,

As data are collected, situational, social spheres/power arenas, and positional maps are created resulting in new construction of data (as the body of maps) and continued analysis and revision. Further, the method is fluid, allowing for new visions of map components and even new conceptualizations of new types of maps. (p. 106)

I was enjoying the mapping process so much that I was beginning again to doubt the validity of the method. As with a Surrealist drinking game, how could abstract drawings of lines and shapes reveal anything of value to my field? I continued to use the maps because they were helping me to internalize and make sense of power structures, individual teaching artists and their career development within those power structures. I was beginning to see the importance of student success to each teaching artist, and I was beginning to see that the teaching artists had a universally benign neglect of their own financial success when confronted with the choice between making money and changing a world. Who will believe that I know all of this from a drawing and a drinking game? I continued to do the work, but struggled with validity.

#### *Constructing individual worlds*

Figure 17 is a relational map that draws on the data from one teaching artist interview coupled with the content data from her blogs, and my fieldnotes. With the teaching artist (TA6) as a starting point, it documents how discourses of reform, policy debate, and teaching artist professional practice were relational and inseparable in her work. Her identifying circle is not completely linked to any one organization or practice, but her practices are almost exclusively encompassing of social work in organizations, galleries, and museums. She also has a large and

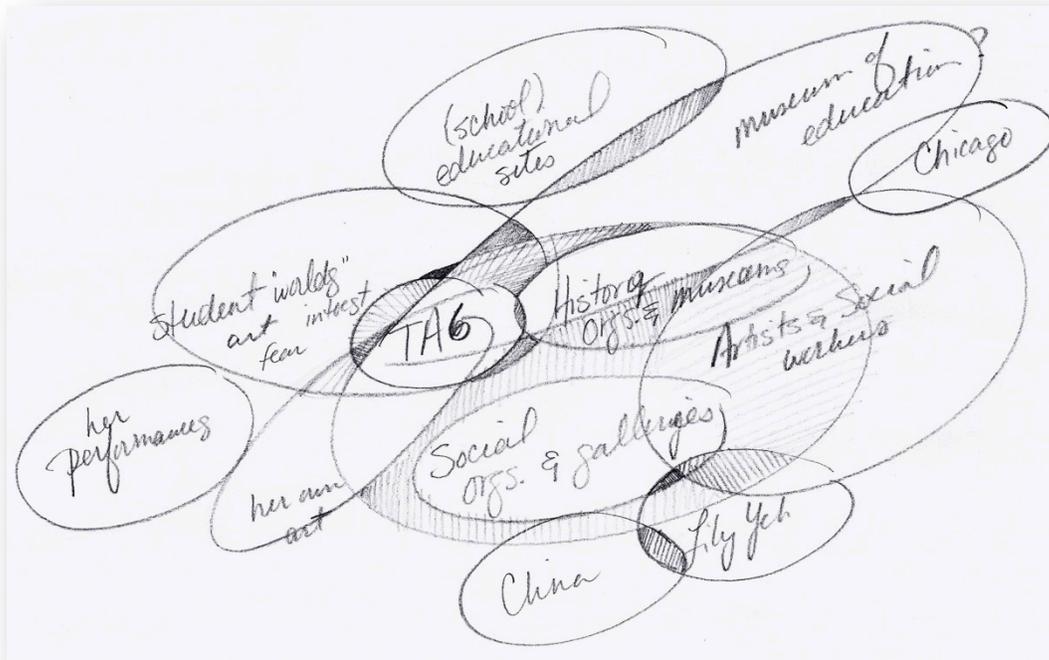


Figure 17. *Relational map of overlapping teaching artist (TA6) situations*

encompassing vision of developing a museum of education. The map also begins to indicate ways that a teaching artist identity, or as Wacquant and Bourdieu (1992) might say, her teaching artist “habitus” is shaped by so many other discourses and influences. Instead of following institutionalized pathways of educational training or artistic practice, this teaching artist found that her career development hinged on a moving body of student interests, organizational priorities (galleries and museums), and her own artistic work.

The situational analysis maps were not revealing much new information to me about teaching artists, but they were illuminating ways that each individual teaching artist had formed a diversity of relationships and communities that were intrinsic parts of their identities. The maps were also indicating the highly social and responsive nature of those identities. The maps were

allowing me to think through, and analyze, situations in a language that was highly subjective, yet highly demonstrative of my own artistic identity.

*The community work of art*

After analyzing data from the eight interviewed teaching artists with situational maps (See Appendix D for complete set), I found that each map was unique in the visuality of the relationships that they formed. By removing the words and emphasizing areas of overlap that resonated with me in our interviews and from the blog content, I was able to see the voices (or hear the shapes) that characterized the pedagogical and political qualities of each individual teaching artist career. This was not quite a deductive process because it was more about intensifying or layering more information. It was a generative and always moving process of understanding the working parts of a teaching artist career captured at one fleeting moment in time. By the time of this writing, over a year or more has passed and the relational elements of these situations have likely shifted to re-form new shapes. This became the point of the situational analysis to me. It was an indicator of the changeability of the life and work of teaching artists. If I were to draw those maps again, they would certainly be different, simply because the paper or pencil might lead me to craft different lines. Fluidity and an unfolding understanding about my own artistic practice as research were emerging through this process.

The two samples below (Figures 18 & 19) show abstracted maps of teaching artists who navigated geographically and organizationally different worlds in their practices. While TA6, from above, appeared to have a highly focused social mission, she had relationships with fewer organizations than some of the others. TA9 had a similarly strong social mission, yet his relationships were divided by his geographic location and by the balance of activity in one region versus the other. The drawings themselves began to take on a collective personality from what

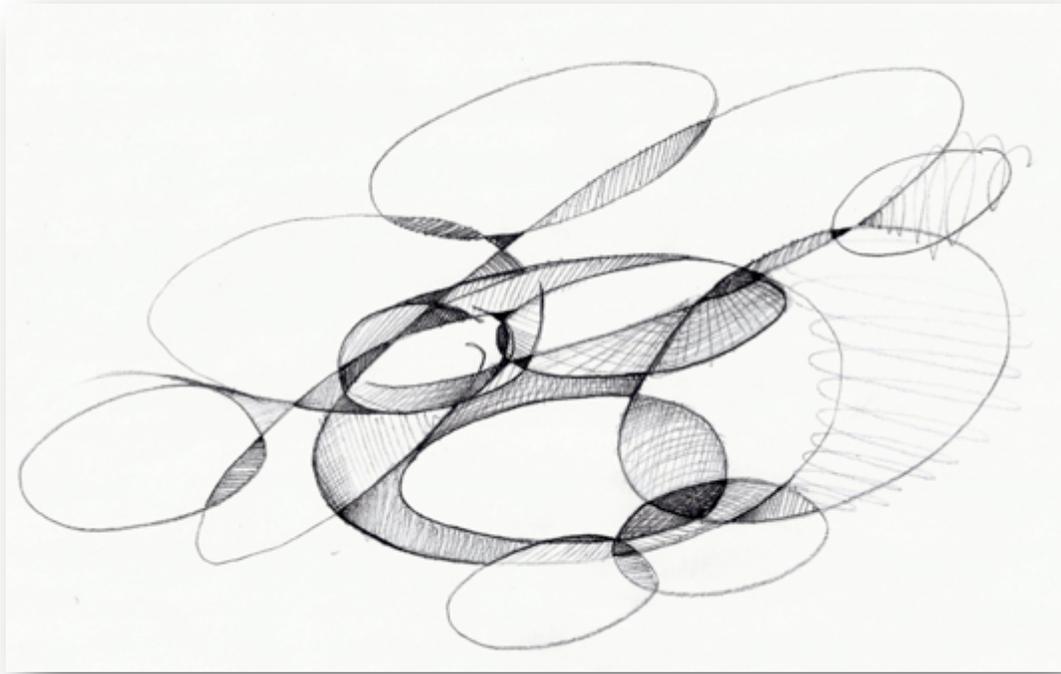


Figure 18. *Abstract map of teaching artist (TA6) relational emphases*

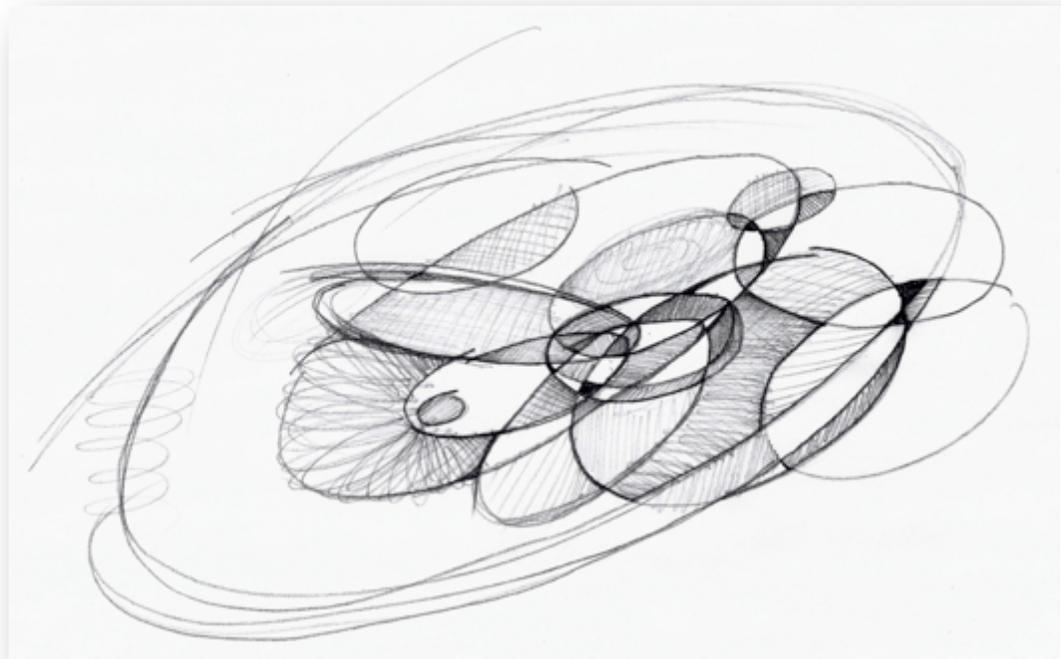


Figure 19. *Abstract map of teaching artist (TA9) relational emphases*

might be called researcher voice in written analysis. In this case it was researcher *hand*. The maps together formed an undulating community of emphasis, overlap, balance, inclusion, space, tension, variation, and other terms emerged for describing both artistic concepts and social concepts at the same time. At this level of abstraction, the maps were not giving me new information about the teaching artists. Rather, they were giving me new information about how a researcher gathers and then makes sense of data.

James Rolling, in the *Arts Based Research Primer* (2013) calls this creation and use of artistic work “synthetic inquiry” (p. 10) within the structure of research design. This allows a researcher to synthesize information by thinking in a language, which he describes as “dialectically navigating shared symbolic and problem-solving systems” (p. 52). In this case I was thinking and learning in an artistic language in the same way that a teaching artist *teaches* through an artistic medium, and their students, in turn *think* through an artistic medium (Eisner, 2002). At this point in the study, I was concerned that no significant conclusions about teaching artists and their critical communities of practice could be drawn from this analysis. I was documenting and organizing concepts about teaching artists that I had generally known. But, there was something about the act of pausing and giving myself the luxury to pay careful attention to individual teaching artist lives and differences and similarities that was becoming fruitful. It was evident that meaningful ethnographic data about my researcher relationship to the collected data could be made visible, but this was not intended as an auto-ethnography. I persevered and paid greater attention to the relationships between communities of teaching artists and the larger and smaller worlds in their practices.

## PHASE FOUR: Reflexive Engagement

### *Arts-based research embraced*

Qualitative and arts-based educational research both support theories and methodologies that embrace artistic work *as* research. Since teaching artist work, as described by the participants was always understood through their artistic lives, it became evident to me that this study firmly rests in the domain of an arts-based research paradigm and that an intentionally arts-based component to its methodology was warranted. When I refer to a paradigm of arts-based research, I am echoing the words of many researchers before me who have noted that there is increased use of artistic practices in social science research (Rolling, 2010; Leavy, 2009; Eisner, 2006; Sinner et al, 2006; Sullivan, 2005). Those researchers are artists who, like me, have found that there is more to be gained by conducting our studies within our own aesthetically sound languages. Additionally, we have found that the *hominological* (Steiner 1988), or combined human and social gains of arts-based work are part of educational practices too. Patricia Leavy (2009) explained this as follows:

Although the arts are most typically associated in social science research with the representation stage of research, the arts are being used during all phases of the research endeavor from data collection to analysis and representation, as well as continuing to serve as a subject of inquiry and a pedagogical tool. (p. 4)

Arts-based methodology influenced the data collection and simultaneous analysis of all texts. It substantiated my own teaching artist researcher identity in concert with the multiple identities that were performed by participant teaching artists. On this subject of multiple and in-between voices and genres in artistic or arts-based research, Sullivan wrote:

[A] broader interpretation of intersubjectivity, which places the construction of meaning in a liminal or “in-between” space, instead of within a dichotomy, opens up possibilities whereby plural views, ambiguous notions, and uncertain outcomes become opportunities to help see things differently. This is similar to the theory of third space used in sociocultural texts to describe places that individuals and communities create to make sense of the different worlds we inhabit. (Sullivan, 2010, p. 40)

It was increasingly evident during the data collection phase, that the in-between qualities of this research required hybrid tools for data collection, analysis, and for validating findings. When I first proposed the development of an online *ALT/space* blog to the *TAJ* editor, Nick Jaffe, it was out of frustration with the academic print publishing model as a communication device for practicing teaching artists. I knew that most teaching artists struggled with memberships and subscriptions because they were unsure about the best possible investments to make toward their undefined profession. I also knew that the six to nine months from submission to publication prevented an exchange of real-time practices. Thus, *ALT/space* was conceived as a flexible tool for field practices. I contributed one blog of introduction among the first entries and stepped away to get to work on my research.

I eventually dove back into the classroom, the studio, and the field to engage in the work that I had been observing from a distance. Two and a half years after my first *ALT/space* blog, I returned to contribute four more blog entries from my own practices. It was the active work of artistic practice – making art, teaching through artistry, juxtaposing content data in folded sculptural form, drawing interview data in complex compositions, and analyzing relationships between method and concept - that led to my ability to recognize and name the core analytic and arts-based instrument that was used for this ethnography.

### *Exquisite Corpse as layered analysis*

This study has been conducted as a critical, arts-based ethnography using an exquisite corpse method for data collection, analysis, and presentation of findings. Introducing an artistic process as a method at this place in a study may appear to be unorthodox to traditional dissertation formats because it requires some introduction of findings. It is typical for a dissertation to present methodology as an overarching concept, then to introduce research methods and finally findings from those methods. Yet, in this case, exquisite corpse artistic process as an analytic method was in fact, a *finding* from deeply reflexive data collection, analysis, and development. Qualitative, ethnographic, and arts-based dissertations often upset traditions of data presentation due to this very notion of reflexive discovery that occurs in data collection (Biklen & Casella, 2007; Meloy, 2008; Sinner, et al., 2006).

The unfolding form that held together the conception of need, design of study, collection and analysis of data, and presentation of findings has revealed a body of critical practices. The defining characteristic of exquisite corpse artistic work is evident to me in the delay of discovery. There is a moment when the parts that have been connected bit by bit are finally opened up and revealed as one body of ideas. Formally, this study began with an academic structure that required a beginning, middle, and end, much like the folded piece of paper or exquisite corpse head, body, and feet. Metaphorically, it resembled the complex questions and revelations that emerged when many participants contributed to collaged images and text as parts of an unfolding body. Artistically, this study traced individual and communal aesthetic choices made by participants as they constructed interconnected bodies of understanding. Finally, this study named a critical community of practice theory as the “flexible architecture” (Rolling, 2013) for

empirically representing and interrogating the career development of teaching artists as individuals and as a corps of practitioners.

It is the final naming that most resembles the original exquisite corpse artistic work. In the Surrealist game of exquisite corpse, the name of the game emerged not as a description of a collaged paper form, which would aptly be revealed as a body or corpse. Rather, the name “exquisite corpse” emerged from a textual version of the game where words were linked in a sentence that only allowed participants to see the previous word. The original Surrealist players appreciated the resonance of one such sentence: “Le cadavre exquis boira le vin nouveau.” This translated as, “The exquisite corpse shall drink the new wine” (Breton, 1948). Through social and artistic learning, the concept came to have meaningful form for the artists as players.

The challenge that exquisite corpse artistic process presented to established artistic structures at the time of Surrealism also resonated with my emerging awareness of a challenge that teaching artistry presented to established structures of arts education. Teaching artists, whose career choices resisted normative practices would be difficult to retain in educational systems that relied on economically efficient approaches. Yet, they were indeed working in and around schools and developing customized practices with students on the fringes of larger systems. Such political challenges are addressed with greater detail in Chapter Six of this study. In Chapter Four, I describe exquisite corpse as a finding when in fact it might also be understood as a research construct. In Chapter Five, I present a greater body of findings as part of the analysis because the exquisite corpse analytic form provides realistic structure to the data. Data-findings-analysis-synthesis become evident as inextricably joined. In her book on qualitative dissertations, Meloy (2008) wrote:

I remain convinced that explicating the simultaneous and multifaceted processes of inquiry, that is, the conscious and tacit learning-thinking-researching-feeling-interpreting-knowing-writing, ensures our ability to do qualitative research better. The complexity of the researcher as the human instrument has only begun to be explicated. Indeed, that is why I separated the actions in the previous sentence with hyphens instead of commas; the workings are connected and multiple rather than discrete and linear. They imply more than one level of processing at a time. (p. xiii)

This form of word and graphic interplay is provided here as affirmation of the structure that this study follows at the close of the methodology chapter. I adhere to traditions of dissertation research presented with ethnographic sincerity to the artistic reality of the research participants.

#### *Credibility & validity*

Collecting data, while paying attention to the relationships among in-between situations and aesthetic information presents challenges to any research design. To ensure that this study was trustworthy to fellow researchers and to a field of teaching artists, I drew on criteria from qualitative and arts-based ethnographic methodologies. Qualitative research has been evaluated in many cases by criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Variations on these terms have evolved over the years to accommodate a complex and growing array of methods. Arts-based research may never have a static rubric for validity because the very nature of artistic work is intentionally open-ended. It was important to me that my research be considered trustworthy to the communities that may use the findings to improve the way we teach and learn through art. I questioned how ethnographic data, collection, analysis, and findings could be found valid if the aesthetic nature of human interaction and artistic work presented a constantly moving target?

I returned to the criteria for evaluating ethnography in a language of artistic practice proposed by Richardson (2000) that I introduced in Chapter Two, to understand how I might bridge my own qualitative and arts-based domains. Richardson wrote that “[c]reative arts is one lens through which to view the world; analytical/science is another. We see better with two lenses. We see best with both lenses focused and magnified.” (p. 254). Her criteria now had greater meaning:

- *Substantive Contribution*: “Does the piece contribute to our understanding of social-life?” (Richardson, 2000, p. 254). The *ALT/space* blog itself offered a portal into understanding the social work of teaching artists. This study of a teaching artist community of practice expanded that understanding into a critical theory. Additionally, the social contribution of research in a virtual space presented both credibility as a contemporary reality and limitation as a relatively new variation what might be considered a valid ethnographic site.

- *Aesthetic Merit*: “Does this piece succeed aesthetically?” (Richardson, 2000, p. 254). The exquisite corpse analysis of data was aesthetically successful to me as a researcher because it allowed me to juxtapose and unfold new narratives with holistic form. It is my hope that the corps of corpses will be aesthetically meaningful to audiences of teaching artists and scholars. Aesthetic information as data may also provide opportunity for contesting validity. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) wrote that qualitative research using aesthetic, interpretive, and ethnographic data has been criticized for having a “political orientation that is radical, democratic, and interventionist” (p. 10). It is true, that this dissertation understands these three qualities to be inductive assets that bring the report

closer to revealing aspects of teaching artist culture that to date are still not evident literature.

- *Reflexivity*: “How did the author come to write this text...is there adequate self-awareness and self-exposure for the reader to make judgments about the point of view?” (Richardson, 2000, p. 254). This reflexivity has been the nimble core of my study. At times, it impeded my progress because I was unable to step away and differentiate my own perspective from the data. But, this very process of slowing down became essential to paying closer attention to the details of the data.

- *Impact*: “Does this affect me? Emotionally? Intellectually? Does it move me?” (Richardson, 2000, p. 254). Each of the readers for this study, before publication, has an artistic life view. After publication, that will not be a controlled reality. As a participant researcher, I have been moved by the depth and breadth of teaching artist communities of practice and the critical voice that they offer to a future of education. This ethnography has been developed with an audience of participants and partners in mind. I can only hope that it moves them in some way.

- *Expresses a Reality*: “Does it seem ‘true’—a credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the ‘real’?” (Richardson, 2000, p. 254). By sharing the actual voices and images of teaching artists from the ALT/space community of practice, the realities of their differences and shared experiences are experienced firsthand. The

reality that is constructed by presenting the findings in an exquisite corpse form connects multiple teaching artist voices with a researcher lens.

While these criteria do not provide a finite rubric for external determination of credibility, I share them as a set of considerations that reassured me in the process.

### *Limitations*

Limitation in ethnography and in this specific study includes an inability to generalize findings due to the thick and complex nature of the data. Ethnography is rarely conducted for the purpose of generalizing beyond the study participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 119), thus this study may have resonance to teaching artists beyond the *ALT/space* blog, but this study can make no generalizable claims beyond that distinct community of practice. With this ethnography, I proposed to bring the practical actions of a number of teaching artists from broad geographic and disciplinary communities into higher visibility for representation in policies that relate to their work. Increased visibility of teaching artist work in this study revealed the infinite communities of practice that may claim their membership. Yet, by increasing awareness of the portal community of *ALT/space*, my research could appear as a promotion of the affiliated *Teaching Artist Journal*.

Primary data drawn from a culture of teaching artists are presented here as voices in text and image. Voices drawn from written and blogged information may exclude representation of teaching artists who were uncomfortable with writing. Demographic sampling included participants who were pre-disposed to share their stories, which might skew their information in a positive light. This ethnography relied on photos, hyperlinks, researcher field notes, and synthesized data that I selected or developed during participation. The selection of data may also appear to exclude representation of teaching artists who only provided text.

I present data here as my own observations of interactions among teaching artists and the wide range of communities that they inhabit. Observations were made through my own researcher fieldnotes. This means that that data include evidence of bias that is supported with disclosure and understanding of the intention of ethnography. Ethnography has been described as methodology that requires reflexive representation of data as a way to bring a reader into a culture (Richardson, 2000; McGranahan, 2012; Wacquant, 2011). In this study, the limitation of my own position as a founder of the *ALT/space* blog and as a social participant in arts education policy worlds held me back at the outset from interacting in the blog commentary. As I developed trust and familiarity with the field of teaching artists and with my own understanding of ethnographic and arts-based methodologies, my own voice became an intentional part of the data. At the same time, it was important to me to build trust with readers and participants by demonstrating sincerity and empathy (Abu-Lughod, 1988) as a critical researcher. This means that my bias, while intentional, may be subject to scrutiny by both participants and readers of the study alike.

My decision to conduct arts-based research was determined by my consideration of participant and reader communities alike and presents further limitations to this study. I sought to expand my inquiry at a level of human understanding that might be understood beyond any one audience. The very broadness and inclusivity of humanness as a consideration might reduce some perception of precision in this study. Rolling wrote that an objective in publishing a primer on arts-based research was:

[T]o mark the distinctions of arts-based approaches to knowledge creation in the address of urgent questions about critical aspects of the human experience and our varying lifeworlds—in particular, those aspects that can neither be measured with exactitude nor

generalized as universally applicable or meaningful in all contexts. (p. 7)

My use of arts-based methodology may appear to be inexact, yet the layers of aesthetic information that informed the study also offered fine-grained representations of an under-represented world.

Arts-based research as a recognized approach is limiting, due to the relative newness of defined arts-based ontologies in education and social science fields (Canhmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008; Rolling 2013). More specifically, by naming an exquisite corpse analysis process within an arts-based approach, this study may be perceived by readers as confined by preferences and rules that were established Surrealist artists who named the process. Naming an exquisite corpse theory also presents some assumptions that I am advancing that theory for use beyond the study, when in fact, I believe that it is the uniqueness of the art form to my own artistic and life experience that made it such an exquisite tool for my research. The tension between new research methodology that is grounded in ancient social practice requires a reader to accept the premise that artistic practices are research. In a world that relies heavily on statistical data to clear away distractions toward deductive findings, the inductive and highly layered findings of arts-based ethnography may present a challenge.

#### *Ethical considerations*

I am aware of the ethical and ethnographic limitations of virtual-versus-live relationships that come into play when using web content as a site for researching a culture of people. Early on in the study, I discussed how the virtual content analysis made me feel like I was stalking the artists. It felt voyeuristic because I was not yet interacting with the participants. I wondered, “How real or true can this ethnography be if it uses website content as core data?” In *ALT/space* participants describe themselves and their situations with a great degree of subjectivity because

the editorial process does not use an academic review board. The comments are only lightly mediated on *ALT/space* or on accompanying Facebook sites. The subjectivity of identity and community development is part of the uniqueness of teaching artist work and content. It was not the success or positive-negative perspective of *ALT/space* as a community of practice that I was investigating. Rather, it was the resonance *between* voices of teaching artists, their students, and professional partners that provided the operative and “real” data for this study. The community of practice was not a website. Communities of practice became visible through interconnected narratives that originate in very real places with very real people.

In order to protect the identities of participants, I have adhered to Syracuse University Institutional Review Board criteria, which included filing and approval of the research design and use of informed consent documents for interviews and for some of the web content. Through this process participants were informed of possible risks and benefits and they signed consent forms indicating their understanding. This consent form is available in Appendix A.

There is a challenge to maintaining the confidentiality and reality of participant identities because their names are published for public access along with their blog entries. In the case of the three administrative participants: TARP principal, *TAJ* editor, and *ALT/space* editor, I have tried to use quotes and statements in writing this dissertation that resonate with their published words. Their private interview responses remain unattributed. In all cases, interview participants were confident that their language was revealing information that would not be harmful to them or to the people and situations they describe. Permissions and credit for publication of any visual information that is not part of the public domain have been obtained and cited.

Images, hyperlinks, screenshots, poetry, appropriated text and photography, and video are all part of the mediating culture of the Internet where a significant amount of the *ALT/space*

community of practice is played out. In this study, there are poetic and ethnographic instances where the data are not presented using style formatting as recommended by *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2010). This is also known as “APA” style. While APA is a format that allows for minimal bias in social science reporting, I was also determined to represent the subjectivity of artistic and humanistic content by closely following the lead of *ALT/space* teaching artists and the artists and researchers whose work has inspired my methodology. While the inclusion of hyperlinks and other aesthetic data may present a distraction to the reader, it is also an attempt to fulfill one of the criteria presented by Richardson (2000) and presenting an ethnographic and artistic reality or truth. These links invite readers to follow the prosthetic pathways that add layers of aesthetic information: sounds, histories, memories, marketing, pop culture, and more that are navigated by contemporary teaching artists.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

*“I have learned from these experiences that it is as important to listen well to a person’s story, as it is to tell them my stories. I have begun to call myself a story-listener as well as a story-teller.”*

Kali, 2012

*“I try to apply colors like words that shape poems, like notes that shape music.”*

Joan Miró, n.d.

### *Introduction: Artistic & pedagogical data*

The quotes that introduce this chapter demonstrate ways that visual, textual, and performative data came into play in this study. They also demonstrate how teaching artists in the study and artists who influenced the study understood normative structures that relate to their artistic and pedagogical practices. Teaching artists like Kali (above) in the *ALT/space* blog and in interviews and conversation, frequently affirmed that they understood norms and traditions of their work while simultaneously inventing new theories and approaches to those traditions. Kali identified artistically as a storyteller. She identified pedagogically as a story-listener. Her identification came about only through the blended experience of teaching artistry. Surrealist artist Joan Miró (above) expresses transferrability of visual arts concepts among artistic methods such as poetry and music. In each case, the artists express allegiance to their own aesthetic form with understanding of ways that it might be useful to others. The reciprocal nature of the above examples provides an entrée to my data and finding of exquisite corpse as an analytic device. This chapter introduces data, initial findings, and a model for understanding the relationship between data collection, development, and analysis.

The most dimensional data in this study came from the words and images that teaching artists chose to share in a public forum. These were conscious identities that they were presenting to an open-ended group of peers. While only 3-5 teaching artists were posting new blogs at any one period of time, the posts lived on in time and provoked multiple direct responses in addition to links to their blogs from readers who re-posted their voices in FaceBook or other social media sites. Their identities expanded and shifted with input from people that they knew, from strangers, and from the contexts that shifted according to time and perspective of the reader.

Additional data from interviews and from my own teaching artist practices was developed from talk and action into fieldnotes and what social science researchers might understand as coded memos. I say that data was developed because it was not cleanly harvested in objective sampling. Interactions were recorded as drawings that led to situational analysis of relationships. Events were photographed from my own teaching artist practices. Ultimately, words and images were collaged into an exquisite corpse process leading to further findings.

### *Exquisite corpse in my classroom*

The reciprocal relationship between data collection and data analysis became messy and difficult during various phases of this study. I stopped formal collection of content data in the summer of 2013, but I did not stop my habit of reading the *ALT/space* entries that continued to come to the blog each week. I continued to be in dialogue with the editor, with some of the *ALT/space* contributors, and with other teaching artists in the field. Furthermore, I had begun to introduce *ALT/space* as a text to my graduate and undergraduate students. This prompted rich and reflective conversations that entered into my analysis. I could not stop seeing these interactions as data. There was something about the live and virtual social interaction among

learners and artists that was compounding my understanding of their work. One graduate student response to an entry on the *ALT/space* blog gave me a mantra for continuing to experiment with exquisite corpse as an artistic process, as a pedagogical process and as a research construct. She responded to a project described by a teaching artist named Chio. Chio had written about a Facebook project she did with art history students in a high school.

I introduce her response in a text and graphic form that also includes mediating elements of arrows, dots, varying fonts, and occasional hypertext to represent the way that a voice is sometimes translated into pictorial elements on a blog. Those quirky symbols indicate that there is another layer of virtual reality that affects the voices in correspondence. In this document some of the hyperlinks may now be closed due to a change in *ALT/space* formatting that occurred after completion of the study. This virtual aesthetic form is used in findings and analysis from here through the end of the manuscript to maintain a realistic portrait of the voices.

The student responded as follows:



**ErikaR**

As an artist and aspiring teacher in training, I am always trying to think of new ways I can make learning in the classroom meaningful, exciting, and relevant to my students' lives. Because our students are living in such a digital era, I found your social media approach in the classroom to be both meaningful and applicable to your students, and it is clear that their enthusiasm for their research was reflected into the final "Facebook page" product. Teenagers are especially familiar with Facebook as most of them believe that their identity on Facebook is what really counts when presented to their peers.

Since Facebook has become so centralized in their lives, your activity became exciting, familiar, and important. This activity really allowed your students to become genuinely excited and interested about art history and the background of their artist through their

interactions on Facebook and made their learning experience a positive one. I genuinely enjoyed reading your article and loved the Facebook picture examples that came with it!

- 
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The student (*ALT/space*, 2012) said that this teaching artist engaged students in work that was “exciting, familiar, and important.” That was my finding too. I felt that teaching artist work was exciting, familiar, and important. I found that parallels among artistic and pedagogical methods were truly important too. The degree of importance was still situated in my own small world. Would it be of any value to others? I proceeded with an even higher degree of alertness for clues.

I used exquisite corpse process in my Long Island research project at the Parrish Art Museum as an analytic exercise in reflective and critical thinking with elementary teachers and teaching artists. We slowed down the process and used it to reflect on a day of study in an art museum (Figure 21).



Figure 21. *Veteran teacher and teaching artist “corps of critical corpses”, Parrish Art Museum*

The conversations that took place during each of the twenty-minute collage sections and the final critique were about frustrations teachers and teaching artists felt with school systems that did not allow them to work and play deeply with their students. Critical conversations emerged about using exquisite corpse as an instructional method for reading concepts, mathematical skills, and human ideals. The process became a possible tool for instruction, but the pace and depth of thinking became a pedagogical objective for stretching rich ideas across tight schedules.

During summer institutes in Connecticut, Long Island, Florida, and Merida, Yucatan, where I was hired to train folks in artistic approaches to learning, the combination of participants was so diverse and there were so many individual needs to address, it was hard to invigorate everyone in the room around any single artistic method. At those times, exquisite corpse



Figure 21. *Mixed “corps of corpses”, Habla Center for Language & Culture*

became a metaphor for examining our own identities and understanding ways that we might communicate and collaborate in diverse learning communities (Figure 21). Whether it was due to

the summer “school’s out” atmosphere or to the intense commitment of teachers, artists, administrators, and cultural workers to figuring out new ways to improve their work, this approach always became a fine-grained conversational celebration of practices.

While folks sat around tables, swapping images and chatting about their work, they formed a vocabulary of shapes, metaphors, and symbols. Strangers found common ground. Buddies imitated each other or played off of differences. When we unfolded our final corpses and put them together into a corps of ideas, it was impossible to find a way to end a critique. So many connections to life and work and each other emerged that we often need to sit together at lunch or head off to a local pub to finish those conversations. The old Surrealist drinking game had taken root and emerged as praxis for me, and for the people in my work. We emerged with a nimble method for tackling unfolding issues in our work. We emerged – minds and bodies linked as a more determined critical, creative, communicative, and collaborative *corps*.

#### *Exquisite corpse in my studio*

My own studio practices also involved an exquisite corpse process as a way to connect multiple ideas in one cohesive body. I was making small paintings and collages and incorporating them into larger assemblages. I was returning to older works and rejuvenating them as they became relevant to newer paintings. They were juxtaposed in oddly organized products that emerged from the exquisite corpse logic of following one thread or one clue to start the next piece. Heads, torsos, legs, and other parts connected in a logic that exceeded three sections. In this work, I was reminded of the literary version of exquisite corpse, where multiple folds were used to accommodate the number of participants in constructing poetic language, one line at a time. Spaces between canvases became my folds.

In Figure 22, I show two exquisite corpse assemblages that I completed during the summer of 2013. The assemblage on the left followed a thematic rule and stacked three paintings with similar content produced at different chronological times in 2001, 2006, and 2010 to form one new body of ideas (each painting was about my own responses to being in lower Manhattan on September 11, 2001 during the World Trade Tower attacks). The assemblage on the right began with the large square painting, a copy of Goya's (1920) *El tío Paquete*, that I had completed as part of a freshman college studio in 1981 and re-painted in 2013 with the devices that I had been using in my situational analysis maps. The other paintings were assembled one at a time into the eventual body according to layered visual and social concepts such as: the diagrammatic, arrow-like resonance of the house-shapes to the right; the repetition of circular objects above that evoked landscapes, everyday objects, and eventually, balancing rocks and burdens above and below.



*Figure 22. Exquisite corpse process assemblages*

I was still not able to sort out a clean way to write up data without accommodating such peripheral and expanding ideas. Waquant (2004) organized his ongoing ethnographic work into a three-part novel. Garoian (2011) wrote a poetic story as prelude to his chapter (pp. 155-56) in the Denzin and Giardina (2011) qualitative anthology and as a bridge between his exquisite corpse theory and a forthcoming book on prosthetic pedagogy. I was aware that my own teaching artist mind was at work, but I did not yet see it as part of my research. I needed another synthetic experience for bridging back to the study. I decided to approach the editor of *ALT/space* and ask

if I might contribute a few blog entries as a way to organize some of my own experiences.

According to Rolling (2013):

Epistemologies constructed within an arts-based ontology, or worldview, tend to approach knowledge acquisition as occurring within a changing world where persons and phenomena do not always follow the rules. Research necessarily involves a researcher's intervention into that world—digging out connective elements, casting models, and constructing assemblies that shape the flux and chaos of each day's perceptions into a patterned reality we can comprehend and correlate. (p. 7)

It may be difficult to calibrate and organize data within a fluctuating methodology, but it is also more reflective of the contexts that produce the data. Specifically, this study engages exquisite corpse analysis to intentionally engage my own wide-awakeness to the contexts of research, art making, or teaching and learning in the constructs. This awareness of context is also present in the work of teaching artists and their students in the *ALT/space* blog. It is a characteristic of teaching artist work that is reinforced as metacognition in education research (Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 2005; Perkins, 2010) and proposed by data in the TARP study:

The art making [and learning] process consistently demands reflection and assessment of the work in progress, a capacity to step back and examine one's own thoughts and creations, a key metacognitive capacity. (Rabkin et al, 2011, p. 43)

In an effort to clearly organize the elements of this study, I found that it was necessary to frequently step back and examine the data and my researcher role in crafting much of that data. Data collection using exquisite corpse analysis emerged through a process that was a constant dance of deep engaging with data, and then stepping back to determine the next steps. I offer the following sequence of events as a demonstration for naming this method.

This demonstration is a highly detailed walk through the juxtaposed and synthesizing analysis that resembled exquisite corpse artistic process to me. In following chapters, data and findings are presented using refined variations of this exquisite corpse approach. In this demonstration, the minimal three-fold corpse is exceeded. Multiple entries follow hyperlinks and images until a concluding moment of understanding is reached.

*Exquisite corpse in my research: a demonstration*

[Amphi Mural Design: Reaching Community Consensus](#)

*“Our theme today is gesture. After looking at some slides of gesture drawings and paintings we launched right into a journal assignment where one student became the eyes, the other the hand, and we drew a simple still life. This is a really fun and simple icebreaker assignment, and fits well into a discussion about hand eye coordination, and the tension created between the hand and eye as we create art”* Michael, (June, 2013).

The data sample above illustrates a type of dual voice that was used by all forty teaching artists in the *ALT/space* cohort to describe the relationship between artistic and social concepts in their work. This sample is one of eight blog entries written by Michael, a visual teaching artist. The entry describes a mural project that engaged urban youth in addressing crime reduction and leadership development in a neighborhood with a history of violent crime. In this case, Michael used a form of metaphoric double-speak to address a traditional art curriculum topic of gesture in still-life drawing along with an added layer of consciousness about tension and coordination between two parts or parties that must work together toward a common goal.

His description of “the tension created between the hand and eye as we create art” helped students to pay closer attention to the relationship issues that arose when a hand and eye are physically coordinated to re-present an image. This same description became a metaphor to call attention to student relationship issues as collaborators who must choreograph their differences in approaching a mutually beneficial outcome. A drawing was developed using the physical and

formal qualities of artistic practice. At the same time, social awareness among the students was deepened with fine sensitivity toward what they saw and said, how they listened and perceived, and how they demonstrated understanding through their actions with others in the world.

This sample of my content analysis is from the last blog entry written by Michael in the summer of 2013. I began a formal analysis of the content data from the *ALT/space* blog in the winter of 2013, but had been reading and documenting the entries of teaching artists since I began the ALT/space project in 2011. The persistent presence of hyperlinked text in all of the content data presented a prosthetic visuality that expanded the data in directions that I had to choose to follow or ignore as I read for meaningful content. In this section I include live hyperlinks as a way to intentionally represent the layered nature of web-mediated voices. It is possible that following that link may bring a reader to a new place of understanding or that it will merely be visual element that is a familiar part of contemporary text.

For over one and a half years, beginning with Michael's first entry in the summer of 2011, I would wait, sometimes many weeks, until his next entry was posted and then I would click on a new link to see what he had to share. Over time, I understood that Michael was an intentional social activist who worked for a community arts organization. His blog entries were consistently descriptive of community visual arts projects. He was well-versed in the language of critical pedagogy and he contributed to other arts activist blogs. This was evident when his entries described specific activist methods and practices such as:

The concept of restorative design and arts resonates with the neighborhood leaders and activists I work with. Restorative Community Arts programs are a powerful opportunity for dialogue and foster a sense of stewardship through collaborative beautification. In areas where people feel as though they don't have a voice or say in community affairs, these projects become a place to practice democracy, validate ideas, passions and talents (Michael, September, 2011).

A few teaching artists in the *ALT/space* blog explained such specific social justice concepts in their narratives. In the findings chapter of this study, I share the range of teaching artist voices and how those voices offered similar information. Many of the *ALT/space* teaching artist narratives extended only to the walls of their classrooms or to the pages of their personal journals. They indicated similar interests in critical actions, but Michael's entries were the first to alert me to the difference between intentional or unintentional critical awareness of the practices that I was studying.

I found that instead of reading Michael's entries to understand teaching artist career choices, I was reading them to understand how and why he was engaging with school populations from an inside-outside perspective. This encouraged me to return to the situational analysis mapping process so that I could determine the qualities and complexities of the relationships that he had with school communities. He was not hired as a replacement to art teachers. He was often called in to address issues that were not being addressed in a regular school curriculum such as dealing with community violence and being better neighbors. He straddled the school curriculum in addition to the worlds that his students inhabited when they left the school each day.

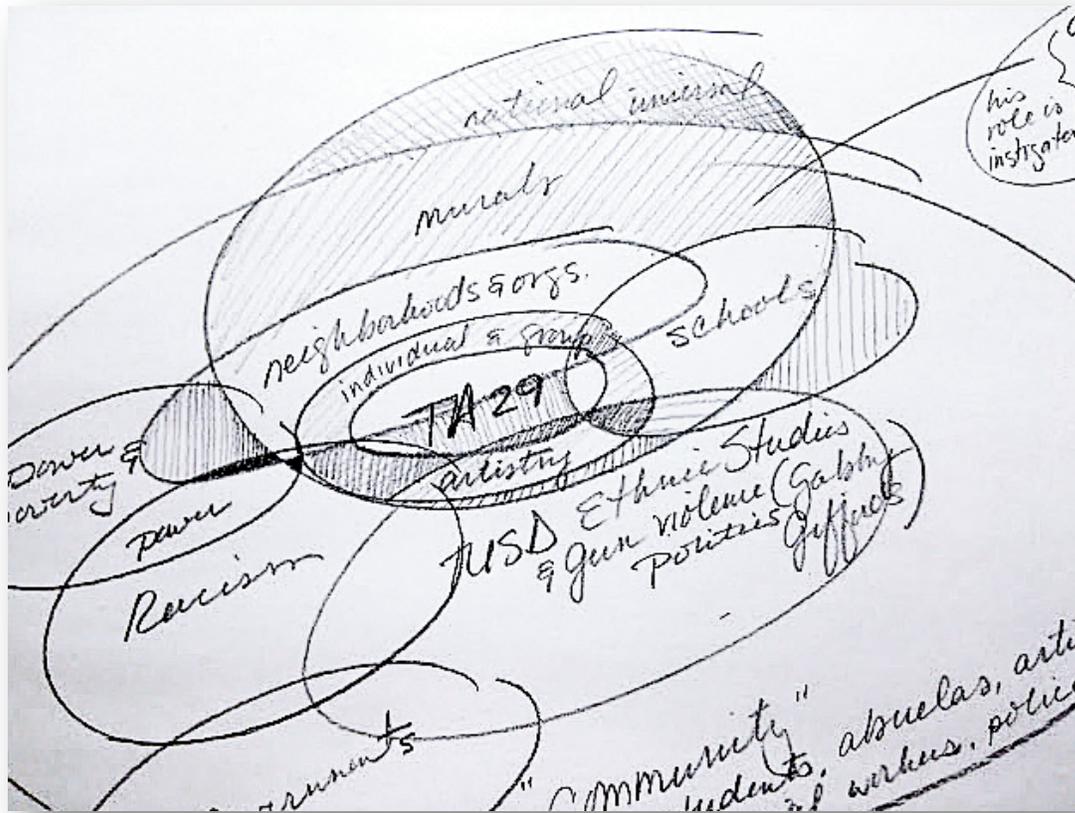
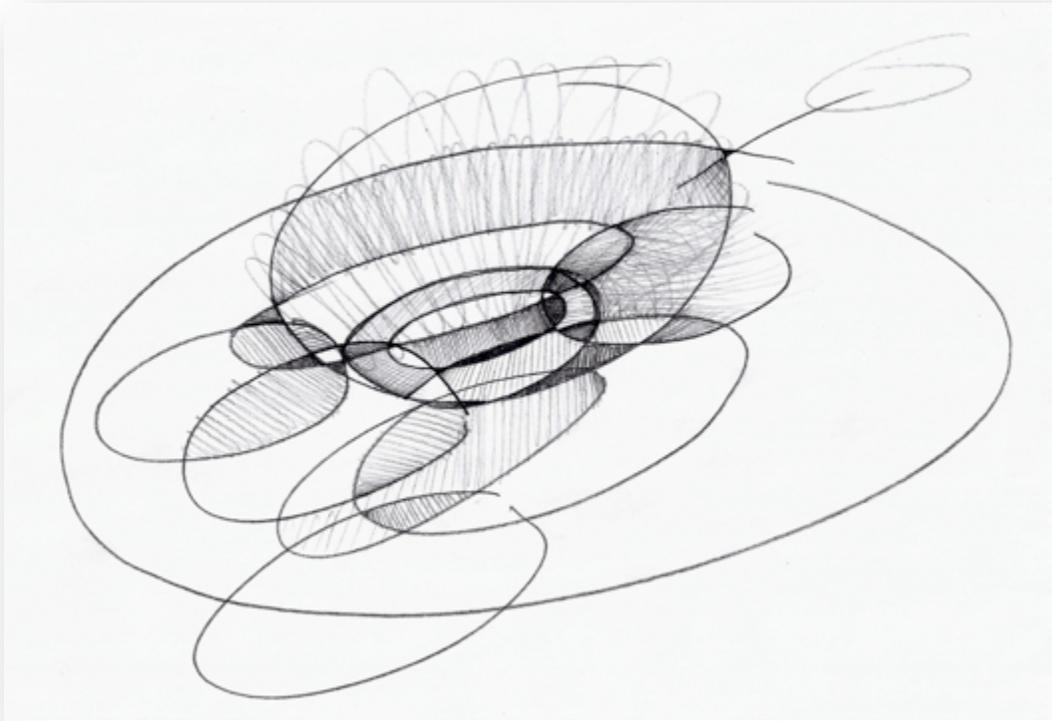


Figure 23. Relational map of overlapping teaching artist (TA29) situations

In Figure 23, I crafted and consulted a situational analysis map to understand how Michael (as TA 29) in the central circle, worked first as an artist with individuals and groups regardless of their school or neighborhood affiliations. In doing so his practices overlapped with institutional or organizational issues that required him to accommodate elements of their worlds. In this case his community was urban Tucson, Arizona. Significant racial and economic turbulence existed in the schools due to legislation that excluded study of Mexican and other ethnic cultural lives, gun violence that had expanded to a national arena with the shooting of U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords, and inequalities that came with high poverty and standardized schooling. His texts and photo choices were filled with images of people making art together,

meetings with plenty of chart paper and neighbors, children and adults of many ethnicities and ages posing before finished murals and individual projects.



*Figure 24. Abstract map of overlapping teaching artist (TA29) situations*

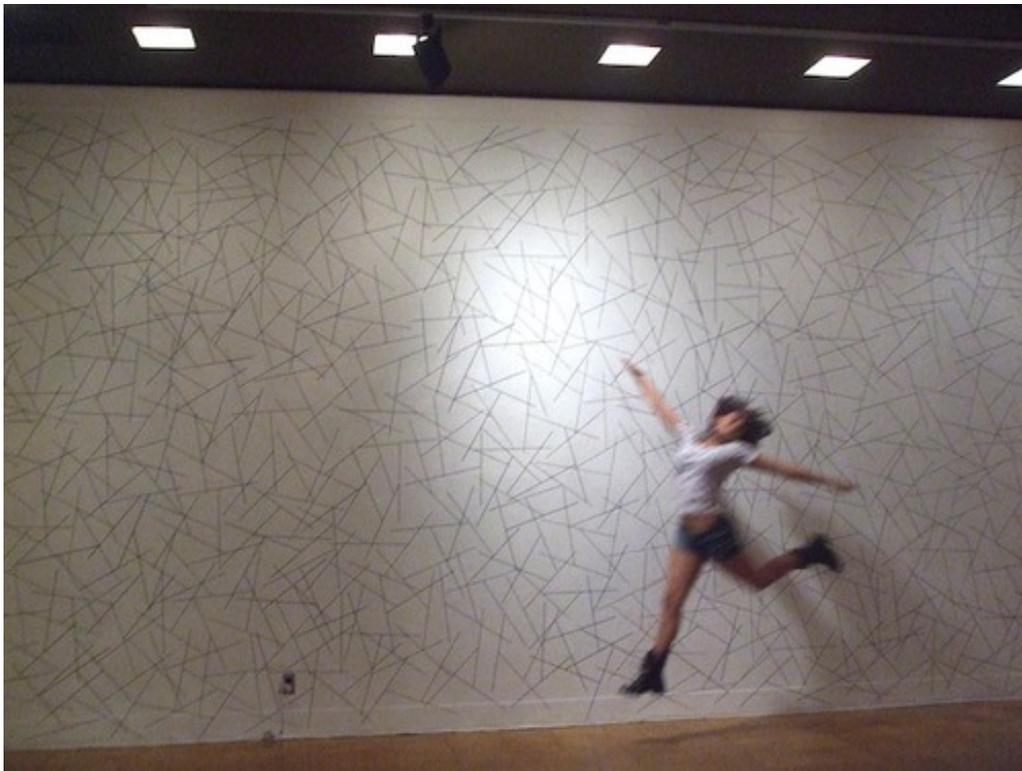
In Figure 24, which is the abstracted map of Michael's situation, it was evident to me that he had a highly centered career and personal life existence, as compared with the previous examples of TA6 and TA9 above. The concentric circles indicated: Michael as the central circle, his individual and group art making next, and his surrounding community, overlapped by a balanced satellite of mid-sized circles that represent issues and organizations that influenced his narratives.

I clicked on another link, moving backward in time, and read about a project that he was implementing with a team of teenagers at a contemporary art museum in December 2012. This

felt like moving over the fold in an exquisite corpse, shifting to an entirely new, yet connected image. It began with more layered aesthetic data, this time about line drawing and ritualistic practices that relied on collaborative consciousness. There was no reference to school here. But at the end, there was a hint of consciousness about the contrast between his community life with the students and the incongruity of their presence in an institution of high art:

### [LeWitt's Wall Drawing #960](#)

*“The first day was painfully slow and we only covered a tiny section of the wall. We were not just drawing lines – we were becoming Sol LeWitts’ assistants while taking complete ownership to the work. Each artist made one line and then the work passed on to the next person. With each passing hour our process evolved. We went to two lines, then three lines. Finally we moved to timed sessions – five, ten and finally twenty minutes. Eventually we found ourselves working ritualistically, silently enjoying the ambiance created by the piece and our setting.”*



*Figure 25. Do you hear that Sol?*

*“After working we would sometimes go for pizza. It was a real confirmation watching one of the teens explain what it was like to work in a museum to his friends. Imagine you’re a sixteen-year-old tagger who has never used acrylic or been in a museum, let alone having the opportunity to draw on their walls, legally. His friends, decked out in their baggy pants, backpacks and*

baseball hats responded to his tale of our work with “that’s dope dude,” glancing at our crew and smiling. Do you hear that Sol?!” (Figure 25).

Clicking on an embedded link in the text, moving over another fold in this corpse, brought me to the museum website (Figure 26) and the institutional realities of a university and how they invited participation with their art collection via internet squares, texts, and images. I was jolted out of the student artmaking process, but learning about it with a new voice of marketing:

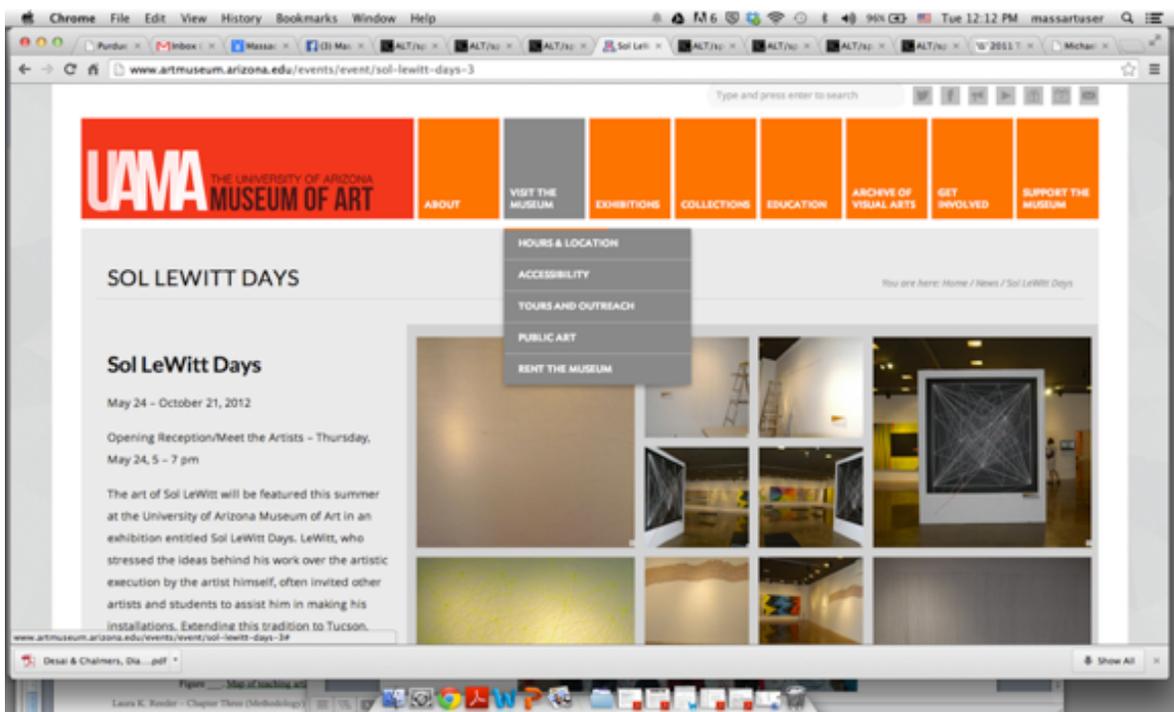


Figure 26. Museum website detail

Click... on the bottom of the December blog, another fold, and I was checking out Michael’s website (Figure 27).

His business voice was extending a similar communication in a menu of squares that led to details about his practice. It also told a story about works of art and the participation of adult and child community collaborators in their content:

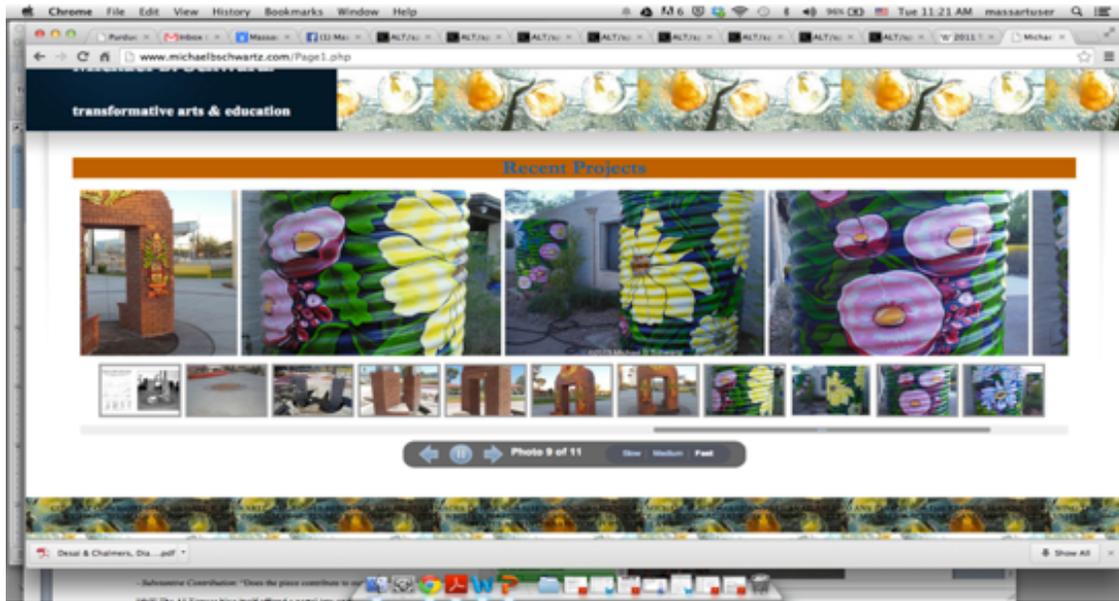


Figure 27. Michael's website detail

Click...another fold, and I was consulting his previous blogs and deciding which one to enter next. Should I go back to the previous entry or go forward to understand what was happening next in his life? I clicked on the next sequential link and it was six months earlier, July 2012.

### [The Opposite of Purple](#)

*"It's sizzling" smiled Ray at the mural site the other day. 106 degrees in the shade and our mural crew is on it. When it's too hot to paint we hit bookstores, go to the studio to mix paints, meet in the homes of elders, coffee shops, or with our dance-theater crew. We are working on a number of projects, inside and outside this summer. Last week it was installing Sol LeWitt's "Wall Drawing #960" at the University of Arizona Museum of Art, this week we are preparing for a "live art" demonstration at a local rave. We meet daily for three to eight hours, usually taking weekends off, but not always. It's a small and dedicated group of talented young artists, many in trouble with the law, but all share a passion for creating beautiful works of public art. –*

*The summer has barely started and desperate parents from throughout Arizona are calling to see if they can enroll their kids in our program. The pleas are all similar to this one: "My son was just arrested for pot, but he's a really good artist." Our formal program was not funded this summer despite numerous attempts, proposals and grants, perhaps that's the risk of innovation. As a result, I've had to turn away dozens of deserving youth...*

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Another *ALT/space* teaching artist had made a comment as a response at the bottom of his entry:



**Lambruning**

Michael - I am so sorry your year has come to an end and this is your last post. Yours has been a "much needed" voice and one I have learned from, enjoyed and looked forward too. Keep the faith my friend - the funding sources will come!

- 
- ·
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*ALT/space* theatre teaching artist, Linda expressed her appreciation for his previous posts and regret that this was his last post. Because I had read all of these posts in various sequences, I knew that he had done two more after that in real chronological time. It made me wonder what had happened at that time to compel Michael to write again. Linda's voice reminded me that I had not visited her posts in a while. She lived and worked in Minnesota. Click...it was August 2012 and it appeared to be her last post too.

### [We'll Plant a Garden and Watch it Grow](#)

She used a garden metaphor to reflect on twelve years of teaching a specific group of students and to reflect on her year of posting to ALT/space:

*"I am an avid gardener, food preserver, and hunter/gatherer. This time of year, my days are filled with teaching theater camp and picking, drying, freezing and canning the fruits of my gardening labors. Last night, as I counted my quart jars of tomatoes, pickles and beans and then later perused my class list for my last summer theater camp, I realized there is a connection between the work of the teaching artist and the work of the gardener/preserver."*

She described specific projects and themes of artistic and social practice that ran organically through the years of collaborative work with students. She distinguished between collaborative "we" actions and her own "I" intentions and presented a community that evolved over time.

*“We worked through making artistic choices. We learned how to critique our own work and the work of others with respect, artistic consciousness and integrity. I taught them to be organic artists – keep it real, keep it clean, keep it honest and don’t let those artificial additives become part of the process.”*

*“Twelve years later, my Teeny, Tiny Actors are accomplished teen actors - bearing artistic fruit. They know how to develop a well rounded character, they know how to share a scene with others, they know the meaning of ensemble, they know how to positively and respectfully critique themselves and others. I see them making sound artistic choices aided by the knowledge of the craft.”*

Her voice was quite different from Michael’s. It was maternal and nostalgic and it portrayed a rural summertime in stark contrast to the sizzling city streets of Tucson. But Linda’s message paralleled his themes of pride, ownership, and voice (of course):

*“All of these are important to me but the thing that makes me proudest is to know they have all found their individual artistic voices – not mine, not their parents, not someone else’s. The voice which each child has found, belongs to them.”*

She turned from her student community of practice to her teaching artist community of practice:

*“This is what, in my opinion, a good TA does – guides the mentored artist down a path to finding his or her unique artistic voice, whatever the medium. I believe we do this by sharing our skills, encouraging the mentored artist, remaining true to our own artistic voice, showing a love for all things creative, being respectful and making even the hardest work fun.”*

She then, zoomed in to a more specific community of ALT/space “fellow” teaching artists:

*This will be my last post as a regular contributor to ALT/space online. First of all thank you to the Teaching Artist Journal, ALT/space editor Malke (who is a fabulous editor/collaborator) and all of you, who have read my ruminations over the course of the past year. To all my fellow teaching artists, may all your quart jars and creative needs be filled – Namaste!”*

[Brand New Territory](#)  
[Funding, Social Responsibility, and the Teaching Artist](#)  
[Arts in Education: There’s an App for That, Part One](#)  
[The Reality, the Road, the Rez and U2 - The Final Installment](#)  
[The Rez and How it Changed My Teaching Reality](#)  
[The Road and its Reality](#)

## [The Reality, The Road, The Rez and U2 Art - Give it a Try, Don't be a Drive-by](#)

I considered whether I should follow her entries, listed at the bottom of this post, back or forward through time. Then I remembered that I was analyzing Michael's body of work and I returned to his next (April, 2012) blog entry. The entry began with a reference to another teaching artist blogger. It became a new form of call and response among the hyperlinks!

### [Teaching Between the Lines](#)

*The dilemma Linda Bruning describes in her recent [ALT/space](#) post [Funding, Social Responsibility and the Teaching Artist](#) is bouncing around in my head. As Teaching Artists we have to deal with the pressures of controlled chaos in making art with huge groups of people, in complicated neighborhoods, with limited finding and sometime we inadvertently step on funders' toes. It's easy to do here in Tucson, Arizona where one of our best teachers, Sean Arce and the award winning Director of the recently outlawed [Mexican American Studies Program](#) was [fired](#) for excellence while our school board representatives are making fools of themselves on [national TV](#).*

I was now aware that the *ALT/space* artists did indeed read and learn from each other despite their significant differences in place or practice. Then, I appreciated that Michael was championing the artistic and activist work of a public school partner. Then again, I was I was confronted with what Garoian (2010) would describe as a concrete challenge in “prosthetic visuality” (p. 179) because this paragraph was filled with enticing links that I knew would provide portals to other worlds and ideas. Finally, because I could not resist clicking on the last link, I was distracted and sadly amused by a Daily Show television comedy segment that brought the racism of local Tucson issues outward into a global stage. This episode included a school board leader from the school district saying that he “based his thoughts [to ban Mexican studies] on hearsay” (Hicks, 2012). He went on to say that program teachers bribed their Hispanic students with burritos and that they were teaching students to resent “the gringo”. In a school

district where over 60% of students are Hispanic schools, this was explicitly racist commentary.

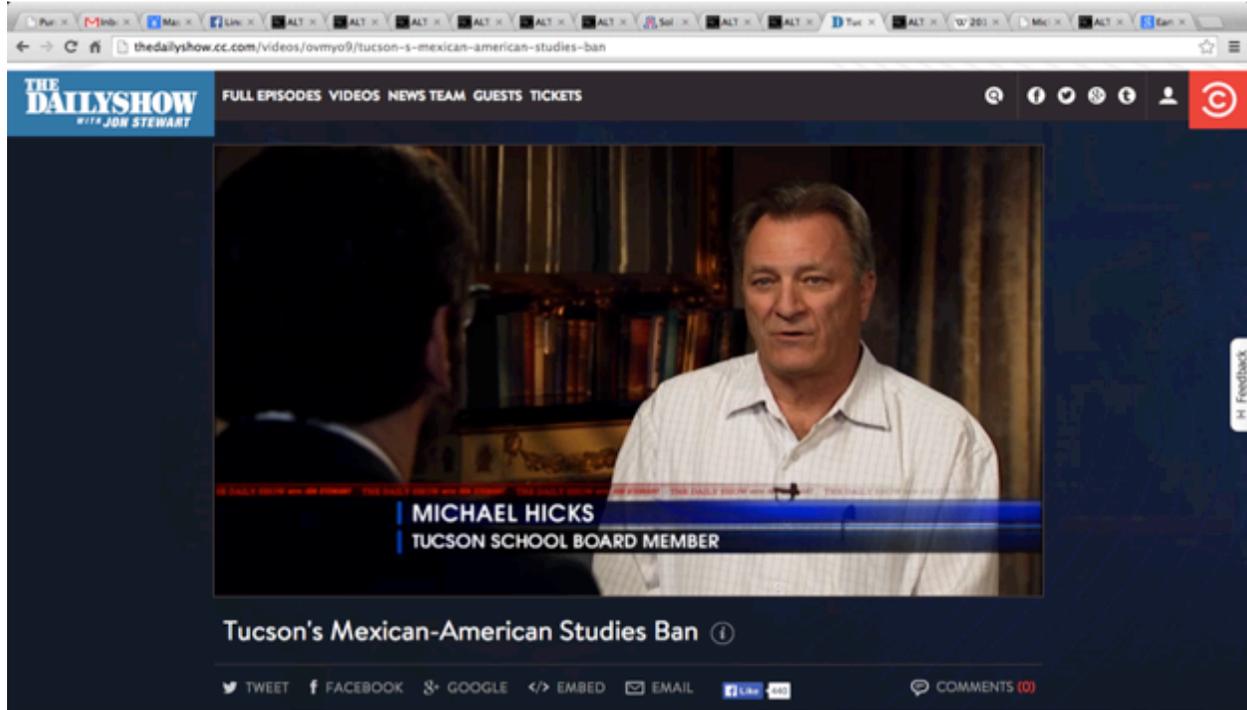


Figure 28. *Pop-culture television show website detail*

I was conscious of another Internet medium intervention into the culture. Was it a meaningful layer that offered timely context? Or was it an entertainment distraction that obscured the actions of a teaching artist? How had I moved from the inside of Michael's reflections into the New York City studios of a pop-culture television show? How was this relevant? Michael had chosen to share this link (Figure 28). I decided that it was intended to bring his local practices into a larger context. This teaching artist was demonstrating awareness of the worlds that shaped his practices.

Click...January 2012: Michael wrote about the anniversary of the 2011 shootings:

[Together We Thrive Mural Project](#)

*“January 8, 2011 started out like any other day in sunny Tucson, Arizona. The old Pueblo was abuzz that morning, the mild winter drawing annual snowbirds and festivals. A few hours later multiple gunshots at the “Congress on Your Corner” would shock and tear local social and*

*cultural fabric and shake our national identity. U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords, a Tucson local, and eleven others were wounded, six lay dead including nine year-old Christina-Taylor Green, born September 11, 2001.”*

Click...December 2011: I noticed six boldly colored images of people making art together (Figure 29), mixing colors, laying out mural compositions on sides of buildings under blue skies, and posing for group portraits in shared costumes and in sunshine. They were young and old, brown and white, asymmetrical and purposeful all at once.

### [Start the Peace, Stop the Violence](#)



Figure 29. *Boldly colored images of people making art together*

Click...September 2011: Michael outlined an eight-part theory of community arts integration that he had developed after many years as a teaching artist.

### [Restorative Practices: Community Arts Integration](#)

Michael began by simply addressing “the readers and writers of this blog”. He wrote

*“After years of doing this work I’ve started to notice some trends. When I talk with colleagues, or read materials from the now archived Community Arts Network, these trends seem to be reaffirmed. It would be great to have the opportunity to expand upon these ideas with the readers and writers of this blog.”*

This was his second post and I was reminded that when the teaching artists began to blog, the founding writers and editors, including myself, had a vision of much cross-posting and exchanges of practical recipes. It was a naïve vision simply because it was still untested and unprecedented among geographically and disciplinarily diverse teaching artists. They had no history to indicate who might really read their words. At this time the bloggers had to imagine an audience. From this post, I wondered if Michael imagined an audience of like-minded teaching artists or less experienced teaching artists. There was a photo in the middle of this entry that showed a circle of adults and children holding hands (Figure 30). The unifying symbols in the simple picture were abundant: the trust in hand holding, infinite circles, diverse folks looking



Figure 30. *Circle of adults and children holding hands*

inward together, young with old, black with white, and so on. He finished by saying:

*“As Teaching Artists we know there are many places where our talents and skills are required. Overlaying our skills and sensibilities with community needs may reveal more than anyone expected.”*

In later interviews with many of the teaching artists, they described the audiences that they had imagined. Some imagined the busy exchanges while others saw the posting as a hole drilled through limiting walls and fences calling inward and outward. One teaching artist who was part of a higher education community was pragmatic and explained that it was an easy way to get published, while others did not have a sense of publishing, they simply appreciated the reflexivity and self-imposed deadlines of the sequential journaling process.

Click again...it is August 2011: Michael begins his very first ALT/space blog with a word that promotes dread in the hearts of many practitioners. The word is assessment. In his voice, it is presented with a matter-of-fact tone. It is just what they are doing at the moment. In following chapters of this study this word returns with greater relational value.

#### [But it's a Dry, Lavender, Crimson, Gold Heat](#)

*“The end of the school years means its assessment, reflection and celebration time. I know we did our job when students want to know more about specific techniques and concepts. With few students getting a formal arts education in Tucson many of our participants arrive drawing stick figures and depart wanting to know more about observational drawing, color theory and how the principles of design we use in visual arts can be translated into poetry or dance. School ends in May here, reflecting life in the Sonoran Desert. This year is different; with the summer heats coming late some say it's more evidence of climate change.”*

In this excerpt, Michael's voice, played back through time in this body of narratives was becoming layered with the bodies and voices of so many other people. Students, neighbors, teachers, legislators, and even comedians were evident within his localized community of social practice.

*“The Tucson Unified School District Board meeting on the evening of May 3, 2011 was sizzling hot. Chaos is how one could best describe the mood as over 100 police officers faced off with less than 300 protestors in and outside the district offices. Legendary Ethnic Studies educator Guadalupe Castillo was arrested and taken away in handcuffs for reading “Letter from Birmingham Jail” by Martin Luther King. Outside hundreds of protestors linked arms attempting to block the doors. Several weeks later the district agreed to drop charges against the protestors.”*

Because the September 2011 blog had an image of people holding hands, and because this paragraph referenced handcuffed advocates and protesters linking arms, I was reminded of many other hands in Michael’s entries over time. Hands holding brushes, hands holding cameras, hands holding hands, hands holding guns, hands drawing very fine lines one after the other in meditative sequence, hands in coordinated tension with eyes to compose gestures that we see and act on. He shifted from hands to voices:

*“During a recent community paint day several of the youth from that neighborhood pulled me aside. “Those neighbors don’t respect us, they shut us down (out) and dis us (ignore our voices).” I asked if they had attended any of the neighborhood meetings, and they said no. Six months earlier that same neighborhood had voiced concern, even fear for personal safety, due to all the graffiti. One woman, a shut in, was absolutely mortified as she spoke of living alone and hearing the rattling of spray cans in the alley at night.*

*Bringing these voices together has been a challenge, but the conversation has started. The youth in this case are using the arts to organize. When I point out that both groups share at least a desire for a stronger sense of community and self-sufficiency the ice starts to melt. We exchange hugs and phone numbers, in the fall when the desert sun eases below a surface temperature of 106 degrees there will be new mural projects.*

*Back in the classroom we finish our assessment collages. The students talk about transportation and scheduling of after school activities and what they will be doing over the summer. They are delighted to know our collaboration will continue next year. It’s been a tough year for many Tucson students and teachers. Still it’s good to know that while the powers that be might seek to deny us our cultural and human rights, we will be celebrating the unveiling of the Barrio Centro history mural with food, music, stories and dance.”*

I demonstrate this example of my unfolding approach to content analysis, situational analysis, and then exquisite corpse analysis here in order to show the steps that led to my ability

to name and use an overarching analytic method over time. This very quality of juxtaposing methods and waiting to see what the next blog entry offered was the parallel to exquisite corpse artistic process that sparked greater understanding of my data.

*A digital poetic body*

In my exploration of the process, I went one step further and created a poetic digital body of images. This was similar to the abstracted situational mapping process and became a method of coding or categorizing data and initial findings. I eliminated most of the text and image data to assemble information that corresponded to my three sub-questions. The final abstracted exquisite corpse analysis from Michael's blog (Figure 31) revealed the following:

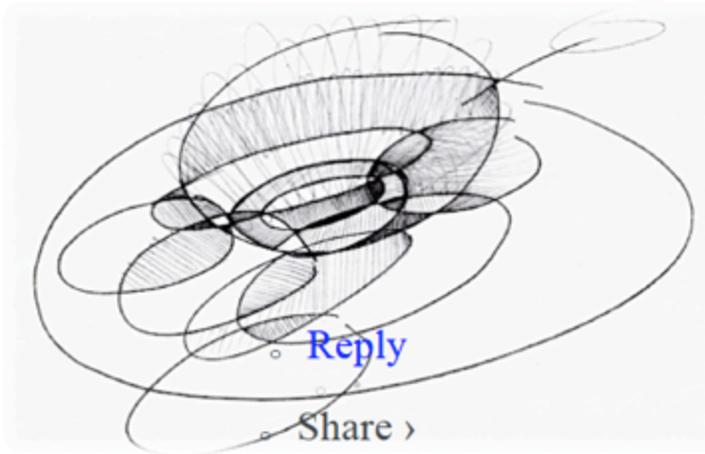
*"Our theme today is gesture...and the tension created between the hand and eye as we create art"*



*Do you hear that Sol?!*

[The Opposite of Purple](#)

*"It's sizzling" smiled Ray at the mural site the other day. 106 degrees in the shade and our mural crew is on it.  
"My son was just arrested for pot, but he's a really good artist."*



*"Those neighbors don't respect us, they shut us down (out) and dis us (ignore our voices)  
One woman spoke of living alone and hearing the rattling of spray cans in the alley at night"*



Figure 31. *Abstracted exquisite corpse analysis (Michael)*

- *Actions that engender greater interest in teaching artist work:*

Michael was working in a range of neighborhood, cultural, and civic communities so that his work was more apparent in more places.

- *Qualities of teaching artist pedagogy that may be difficult to engage within schools:*

Michael worked with a range of ages and affinity groups at the same time. In schools, it is more likely to have students working in grades and even in ability groups.

- *Awareness of career or professional issues as part of a larger field:*

Michael described a national and highly political arena in which he acted as an advocate and collaborator. Additionally, he referenced and was referenced by teaching artists in the *ALT/space* blog. They described professional specific gains from the exchanges.

This comprehensive example of my analytic process and initial finding is not presented as a way to patent a new methodology for others to use. It is also only a portion of the large body of data that was gathered and developed in the study. It is provided here to illuminate the unfolding artistic and meaning-making processes that I undertook to better understand my findings and to confirm to myself that my artistic worldview was part of the equation. It is important to note that this example was used as an analysis of only one teaching artist in a chronological sequence, with the juxtaposition of only a few other voices in the process. Over time, I also conducted horizontal analyses that followed a theme instead of a pre-determined order. These are included in analysis and synthesis of findings in Chapter Five.

## CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS & SYNTHESIS

*“Going back and forth between these two roles of artist and art teacher, oftentimes in the same day seems like having a split personality; I am not thinking of the obsolete medical term but rather of my dual practice which involves inhabiting two worlds that fight constantly within me. They both demand my time, my mental space, my energy and my complete attention and devotion. Like fierce enemies, they eat each other up but also in total contradiction, inform each other and need the other to exist.”*

- Chio, 2012

*“Put us in a situation where we’re going to fail ... so we can figure our way out.”*

- Sticks, high school student, 2011

### *Introduction: Resistance and persistence*

The quote from Chio, a teaching artist in this study, is an example of a constant cycle of inquiry that was evident among the *ALT/space* teaching artist blogs. In interviews, personal interactions, and in the blog posts, teaching artists posed questions that were filled with tension around what mattered most in their work. The array of questions and tensions was vast. They challenged themselves and the institutions they inhabited in order to get to more human-focused questions in the lives of their students and in their own social and artistic endeavors. They were concerned with predictable issues in arts education: student needs, system inequities, artist and teacher career qualities, instructional approaches, curriculum content and standards, rigor and passion in the learning, and issues of in-school versus out-of-school learning.

Their questions were never simple binaries. They really wrestled with their questions and the act of wrestling, the act of questioning, appeared to be the point. The student quote (Sticks, above) captures something about the circumstances and spirit of teaching artist practices in this study. The teaching artists consistently chose difficult situations to navigate in their teaching and

learning with students, in their development of peer communities, and in their career or professional choices. Teaching artists resisted comfortable or accepted norms at every turn in their practices and it was contagious among their students and peers. This common thread of dissatisfaction was the most provocative and persistent of my findings and it is woven through each quality of teaching artist practice in this study.

### *An Ethnographic Corps(e) of Voices*

In this chapter I present three examples of the most common teaching artist practices described by *ALT/space* teaching artists. Those practices all include the habit of constant questioning that I have just described. Additionally, three discrete threads became prominent, albeit in truly diverse ways. The three emergent threads included: teaching artists describing critical pedagogical consciousness in their teaching and learning with students, teaching artists exchanging questions and making intentional contributions to communities of practice within and beyond *ALT/space*, and teaching artists describing resistance to standardization of career practices and policies in systems of education.

My findings in this chapter are separately analyzed as three sets of juxtaposed voices in a combination of words, images, hyperlinks, and impressions. They are written in a visual and poetic juxtaposition of information that comes from my own artistic study of exquisite corpse practices. Each section is presented as a corps(e) of voices. There is a corps(e) of voices that demonstrate ways that *ALT/space* teaching artists engaged in critical pedagogical work with their students. There is a corps(e) of voices that demonstrate ways that teaching artists contributed to a community of practice. There is a corps(e) of voices that demonstrate ways that teaching artists envisioned and resisted their career roles in a field of standardized arts education policies. I refer to each section in this chapter as a *corps(e) of voices* to signify both the individuality of the

figurative body or *corpse* of information and to acknowledge the collective body or *corps* of contributors whose work come together in each set. This is a reference to both exquisite corpse process and community of practice theory in a semiotic nod to the Surrealist and postmodernist influences on my research. Wacquant's (2004) carnal awareness of bodily understanding is also present in my own synthesis of the data into a corps and articulated corpses.

By using this arts-based approach to ethnography, I am aware that I am asking the reader to straddle worlds of research, artistry, education, and humanness all at once. On the publication of his second edition of *Tales of the Field on Writing Ethnography*, organizational ethnographer, John Van Maanen wrote,

Minimally, now I think that method discussions of ethnography must explicitly consider (1) the assumed relationship between culture and behavior (the observed); (2) the experiences of the fieldworker (the observer); (3) the representational style selected to join the observer and the observed (the tale); and (4) the role of the reader engaged in the active reconstruction of the tale (the audience). (2011, p. xv)

In this chapter my discussion assumes that (1) teaching artists are represented in their own terms and not crammed into a sterile and sociological box; (2) my own voice and presence as a teaching artist and ethnographer is evident; (3) the story of *ALT/space* as a critical community of practice, presented in an exquisite corpse process is coherent-yet-artistically aligned; and (4) the role of the reader is engaged as someone who is interested in navigating a twenty-first century tale about arts education worlds.

#### *Naming narratives*

As I worked through my own ethnographic process of observant participation, first as a reader of content, then as a participating contributor, I became conscious of the act of naming

narratives through the titles that we, as *ALT/space* writers gave to them. I hope not to appear gimmicky or reductive to engage in such double entendre, but there is so much situational information attributed to content in any title, and even more in titles crafted for a web-based medium. Titling a blog was unto itself, an act of conscious meaning-making and dialogue development in the *ALT/space* community. In interviews, teaching artists explained how important it was to them to pose questions and craft provocative titles as a way to feel connected to an audience of peers. Some leaned toward levity, some toward criticality, all described their awareness of how, or if, they would be read by people whom they had grown to respect, even if they had never directly corresponded.

### *A body of information*

Because this is an ethnographic body of information, it represents interviews and fieldnotes from two years of my own engagement as an observant participant within the *ALT/space* blog community and reflections from my own decades as a teaching artist. Yet, the most compelling information came directly from words and images provided by teaching artists in their regular blog entries when they were not conscious of being studied. The unfolding narrative from individual teaching artist entries over time grew into distinct voices in a body of practices. The voices came together to provide substantive data to illustrate my findings that indicate teaching artists:

- *Consciously engage in critical pedagogical practices.* This means that they overwhelmingly chose to teach students about concepts of agency through artmaking. Their blog entries were filled with descriptions of learning about ways to resist and navigate social issues, ways to identify and transform individual challenges into possibility, and ways to use art as a medium for making their worlds better in some way.

Artists in this study were rarely tasked by organizations that hired them to teach to standardized academic content of math, language arts, science, etc. Often they worked with students who were already excluded from regular arts instruction due to systemic failures in education.

- *Intentionally contribute to communities of practice in and around ALT/space.* This means that most teaching artists made a point of describing how and why they concluded to call themselves teaching artist. Their explanations were often prefaced with a statement about why becoming a teaching artist was considered an alternative to a more mainstream career choice. They described specific transactions in and beyond ALT/space that led to greater sense of teaching artist community and improvement of their work and worlds. They acknowledged their own situated learning experiences with other peer groups and described their attempts to extend and refine what they gained.

- *Collectively resist standardization of career practices and policies.*

This means that teaching artists in this study described belonging to a group of practitioners that had no name, and had no formal membership, but shared reluctance to being organized due to failure of standardization in fields of education, art, research, and social practice. Individually, collectively, and in a range of institutions they described specific moments of resistance to alignment with finite rubrics of professional practice.

The wide disciplinary, social, and geographical sampling of teaching artists suggests that these findings have some universal resonance as a critical community of practice. Yet, in the

spirit of the artistic and pedagogical worlds of these findings, critical community of practice theory is used as a lens and not as an answer to any questions posed by the research.

Much like a single exquisite corpse that has been opened up and evaluated by the group of contributing artists who each took part in its making, the collection of narratives and images in this chapter may be attributable to individual teaching artists, their students, their peers, and the institutions that enlisted them. Additionally, like a single exquisite corpse, the original parts of this body are also attributable to clusters of ideas that belong to no one person. It is the combination of individuals to groups that make it possible to understand the ethnographic texture of the corps.

In order to read each corps(e) of voices it is necessary to understand that, as with the exquisite corpse game there is a rule of order and a rule of chance. The order goes like this: concept introduction, profile of teaching artists, juxtaposed voices, hyperlinks, and images, and a final unfolding. The chance involves moments of choice when, as in the electronic medium of any blog, you choose to click on a link and spend some time in the *ALT/space* community of practice.

#### *Corps(e) #1: Critical pedagogical practice*

Overwhelmingly *ALT/space* teaching artist practices demonstrated critical pedagogical approaches over any other artistic or educational approach to teaching and learning. As a collection of narratives, these examples together compose a body of practitioners concerned not only with artistic education, but with changing the way education makes use of artistic work in and out of school. Success of this corps at making lasting improvements in student lives was not evident from such a small sampling, but short-term impacts and activist aspirations were universal. This is not to say that failures and frustrations were not shared in the narratives of the

*ALT/space* blog. But, the teaching artists made productive use of their struggles without especially naming them as part of any theory or movement.

By grouping these stories and calling them a corps, I am intentionally presenting their work as part of a critical pedagogical movement that may be valuable to notice in and around arts education. Giroux described critical pedagogy as inspired by Freire and as an,

[E]ducational movement, guided by passion and principle, to help students develop consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action. (2010, web page)

Teaching artistry may best be understood as a critical movement that gains strength from challenging the realities of public education at a grassroots level. The TARP (Rabkin, et al., 2011) researchers proposed this concept when they wrote:

Arts education will continue withering in American schools if policymakers are unwilling to rethink the strategies that have dominated school reform. Or it could become a focus of bold new efforts to develop valuable resources that engage students, deepen learning, and enliven school cultures. There is ample evidence that arts education can make very important contributions to helping schools and students start moving in the right direction, and there is growing critical dissatisfaction with school reform and the distortions of over-zealous testing. (p. 18)

Giroux further explained the collective activist roles of people who teach using critical pedagogy when he expanded his remarks in a later article. He wrote,

[C]ritical pedagogy insists that one of the fundamental tasks of educators is to make sure that the future points the way to a more socially just world, a world in which critique and

possibility - in conjunction with the values of reason, freedom and equality - function to alter the grounds upon which life is lived. (2010, web page)

Giroux describes qualities and responsibility of educators within a system of teaching and learning. I use this quote to articulate the subtle differences between pedagogy and practice as they pertain to findings. Pedagogy is still offered in this chapter as the actions of a teaching artist as they relate directly to their work with students. Practice is more encompassing of the choices that they make within their pedagogy and around it, to advance their careers or to animate their worldviews.

---

Chio is a visual artist who currently lives in Lima, Peru. She exhibits and engages extensively in multi-media arts projects that include photography, writing, and performance. She is an art teacher for an International Baccalaureate high school. Chio never formally trained to be a teacher, but during her ten years as a gallery educator and teaching artist in New York, she had a range of formal training opportunities that contributed to her pedagogical practices. Chio's *ALT/space* voice was brief because she wrote just four entries. But, her descriptions of critical work with students and her meta-consciousness about her role as a teaching artist provided insight that directly informed my research questions about critical pedagogy and teaching artist identity.

***First Fold: Why should they care?***

[From Museum to School: Adapting Models of Teaching to Different Contexts](#)

I present Chio's voice here using a sequential, four-fold, exquisite corpse metaphor. In this case each fold represents the number of blog entries made by this teaching artist. This is similar to my analysis of the work of Michael in Chapter 3. While I did not reference each new analysis from his blog as a quantity of folds, each click of my mouse indicated a point of juxtaposition, leading me to a new prosthetic understanding of his world and how it connected to the worlds of other artists, learners, and teachers in his work. When I began to read the *ALT/space* blog as content data, I read each individual teaching artist from their first entry to their last as a way to follow their own experience of writing the short vignettes as they unfolded. With these sequential vignettes, it became evident that the period between entries was an essential reflective pause that allowed life and experience to shift and inform the next entry. That pause reminded me of the fold between body parts in an exquisite corpse. In an exquisite corpse, the fold is a gap between images that must be bridged by a small textual or visual clue. Much information is considered between folds, much information is also withheld.

In this case Chio's first fold comes after her first *ALT/space* entry. In this entry, she was writing about her new position as an art teacher in Lima, Peru after spending years as an artist and teacher in New York City galleries. She had been an art teacher before working in galleries, and she noted that her former style of teaching had been "linear" and now seemed insubstantial. Her dilemma was not unfamiliar to that of many art teachers. She wrote about how difficult it was to teach art history without visits to actual galleries or access to any live works of art. She wrote:

"Now, however, when faced with teaching art history as a subject to young people in a school setting, without the context of the museum (objects, artworks and through these, the presence of artists) it felt isolated, arid, bland. I'm a firm believer in teaching from my passion, that as I teach I become a learner myself; the dissatisfaction I felt using a traditional practice became a challenge."

During her hiatus as a teaching artist, she had been required to engage widely diverse audiences in dialogue with even more diverse objects, ideas, and contexts when she worked at a major art museum in New York. She found that art became immediately relevant to learners when they were confronted with aesthetic realities that cannot come from textbooks and slides alone. She questioned why her current students should even care about historical or contemporary art if they could not have contact with the real thing. She wrote:

“What could I do, without the presence of actual artworks that would help students understand how artists think and why they make art? Most importantly, why should they care?”

She described her determination to engage students in a rigorous research process that was meaningful. She addressed the multiple layers of dissatisfaction and interest that she was wrestling with in her own work:

“In a standard art history course students ‘look at’ artists and their practice in much the same way that zoo visitors look at animals: isolated from their environment, without actual objects or a direct artist connection. This lack of connection led me to find other ways to teach what the syllabus requires while at the same time encouraging students to think like art historians and be inquisitive about the process of creating art, building connections with their own lives and humanizing the artists being studied.”

She included a student voice that echoed her own questions about roles and responsibilities. The student also echoed understanding about the social intentions of art and about “why” things are the way they are. A seed of criticality had been planted. Her student said:

“I learned that being part of a museum’s staff isn’t easy; there are many roles involved and hard work. It takes a lot of time to prepare exhibitions. In fact, the idea of “boring” when someone talks about art exhibitions and museums has left. Instead, I think about the whole process and question myself “why is this art work placed beside this one? What is the idea that the artist wants to transmit to everyone with this painting?”

Chio presented a starting point in this entry for an unfolding story about contrasts: teaching artist and art teacher, teacher and student, gallery and classroom, art making and art reading. Her

central question, “Most importantly, why should they care?” introduced a theme that would persist through her following entries.

### ***Second Fold: OMG***

#### **[OMG VanGogh Blocked Me on Facebook!](#)**

In her second entry, which came six weeks later, Chio wrote about a project that involved her students creating Facebook pages for historical artists such as Claude Monet, Pablo Picasso, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and more. The “why should they care” thread that held these entries together over the fold was captured in vignettes about art history projects that engaged students in finding personal relevance in historical study.

“Students set up a Facebook page in that artist’s name and, in the two weeks that followed, they researched their chosen artist and represented him or her in exchanges with their classmates using Facebook. Students engaged with the material and immersed themselves in the subject to a degree that was unprecedented for this class. I myself was forced to reflect on the fact that every human being wants to learn, but sometimes the methods we use only suppress this desire.”

The new vignette provided screen-shots of the pages (Figure 32), and reading these small dialogues along with the commentary by Chio provided something new: a comedic, laugh out loud collage of student voices, fictionalized artist voices, teaching artist narrative voice, and ultimately a social voice that became conscious of the medium. She wrote:



Figure 32. *OMG*

“I feel that this experiment with Facebook sheds new light on the words of someone who has deeply inspired my teaching artist practice, Sir Ken Robinson: “Information technologies have changed the nature of work; they have changed the nature of economic enterprise, they’ve changed the cultural equation, they’ve changed the gateways to ideas and information, they’ve completely opened up issues of access, they’ve created entirely new ways of framing ideas and of engaging with them. They have challenged the traditional roles of teachers; they’ve challenged the narrative of public education. The good news is, they also offer some of the means by which the system can be reinvented.”

The students were able to find a way into history through the electronic and social medium of Facebook. They also developed a meta-awareness of themselves as players in a performance that was documentable and part of a living history for others to see. Their questions were highly critical of the histories and stereotypes that they had been taught. Chio explained:

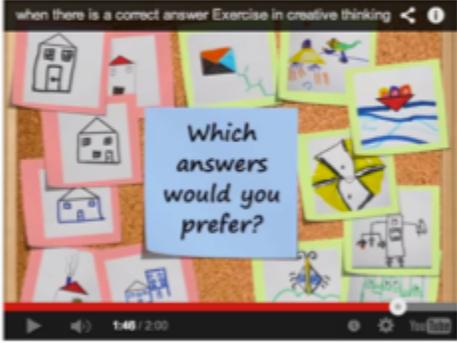
“This simple exercise opened new questions for and from the students and they happened naturally: Why do all artists suffer? Do they all suffer? Why are artists not appreciated in their own time? I don’t like the work of this artist, what made it important? What makes an artwork worth being in a museum? Who or what gives art its value? Are all artists self-destructive? Why are all artists men, are there no women artists?”

The students had to develop empathy for humans that lived in another era so that they could respond to them spontaneously and without a script. Most importantly, Chio encouraged them to do what Ken Robinson proposed, immerse themselves in the technology that would “challenge the narrative of public education” (Robinson, n.d.).

The introduction of a Ken Robinson quote sent me into a short hunt for the source of the quote. I did not discover the source, but I did discover a video that Sir Ken had presented in a 2013 keynote to educators in California. The video (Segev, 2013) demonstrated the generative advantages of open-ended tasks in education and critiqued exercises in which there is a perception of one correct answer (Figure 33). While this journey was interesting in content, the real interest to me was the social exploration of information technology. Just beneath the video was a set of icons that represented other journeys I could take (Figure 34). It introduced other people that I could learn from. It offered other worlds and arenas that might be “related” to whatever I was doing in arts education, creativity, technology, or life.

- Perception is everything when it comes to gauging the effectiveness of technological innovation.
- We need to allow for creativity by not seeking the 'right' answer
- What questions should higher education be asking?
- Exercise in creative thinking: watch this two-minute video on when there is a correct answer
- Creativity—original thinking, most often comes when people ask a different question.

**Video Sir Ken Showed in his Keynote: When There is a Correct Answer: Exercise in Creative Thinking**



when there is a correct answer Exercise in creative thinking

SHARE THIS:

Like

7 bloggers like this.

RELATED

Figure 33. *When there is no answer*

SHARE THIS:

Like

7 bloggers like this.

Figure 34. *Other journeys I could take*

Because *ALT/space* was less about cross-referencing academic research and more about direct narratives from practicing teaching artists, I was able to elaborate my search to consider the impact of information technologies on art, on student perceptions of the world, and on *ALT/space* as a community unto itself.

As with Michael's blog, I recalled that I was wearing my researcher hat and returned with a click to Chio's world. At the bottom of her entry were three responses to her post. They included an entry from my student whose screen identity was ErikaR. EricaR applauded Chio doing work that was "exciting, familiar, and important" (Chapter 3, p. 139), another *ALT/space* teaching artist who was inspired by the Facebook method as a structure for other content areas, and another teaching artist who was complimentary about the value of engaging students in relevant and interactive media. The *ALT/space* moment was filled with a world of past, present, and future peers.

### ***Third Fold: On having a split personality***

#### **[On Having a Split Personality – or – Being a Teaching Artist](#)**

The identities in Chio's blog and in her students' Facebook blog were scripted as people who were living their lives and wrestling with challenges of energy, money, social-emotional life, and status as well as conceiving, making, exhibiting, and critiquing their art. Having an identity as an artist was important to Chio, yet she was aware that her identity as a teacher was equally valuable and inseparable from her artist self. She began her next entry with a quote from the artist Joseph Beuys, "To be a teacher is my greatest work of art" (1969). The entry described her process of preparing for a solo exhibit. While a solo exhibit indicates one artist, she was clear about the presence of student voices and her teacher self the work. She explained that the

“students were part of this exhibition in many intangible ways.” She felt that, “Through immersing myself with their own processes and bodies of work and guiding them in clarifying their own practice that I clarified mine.” Was this blog post about her own artistic practice or was it about her teaching practice?

“Going back and forth between these two roles of artist and art teacher, oftentimes in the same day seems like having a split personality; I am not thinking of the obsolete medical term but rather of my dual practice which involves inhabiting two worlds that fight constantly within me. They both demand my time, my mental space, my energy and my complete attention and devotion. Like fierce enemies, they eat each other up but also in total contradiction, inform each other and need the other to exist. Having said that, I have frequently been unable to balance these two forces and the permanent tension they create is often times hard to deal with.”

Was writing this entry more of a rhetorical exercise for her own professional development? As I was following her words and trying to engage with her artistic direction, she brought me back to New York with a description of students who she had worked with in a nonprofit organization for alcohol and drug abuse treatment and prevention. She explained:

“My group was composed of people who had been through a lot in their lives and were court mandated to be in the facility. They had little or no knowledge of art and were at first uninterested in anything to do with it. Many had chosen to be in the workshop to be away from the facility, several were medicated and others could become very violent or aggressive. Working with them was a real challenge for me, which is exactly why I wanted to do it.”

She was choosing a difficult pathway again. Choosing to wrestle instead of choosing to teach something that was clear and convenient. Additionally, she chose to pay even closer attention to the needs and interests of her students. While they could have been engaged in her residency for pleasure and distraction alone, she found that there was so much more involved.

“Throughout the residency, my students took a closer look at their lives and found possibility and connection through art. Many times, the artwork became a mirror that showed them their true selves and this was sometimes hard for them, but it also showed them how beautiful and deserving of happiness they were.”

Understanding the dualities or multiplicities of identity is a disposition that comes with the territory as a teaching artist (Rabkin et al., 2011). It is not always about being an artist. It is always about being many things. This understanding became another way that Chio took up the “why should they care” thread in collegial resonance with other teaching artists. Many times the *ALT/space* teaching artists expressed their own multiple identities as they scratched at the surface of a teaching problem with students. They have described themselves as mothers, lovers, clan members, social agents, partners, administrators, businesspeople, and more in equal measure to the times they call themselves artist or teacher. They have written:

“As a teacher and a person, I want to cultivate a posture (and a notebook of lesson plans) that work to stay in the moment, wringing it out ‘till it drips with the inky blues and grass greens that I missed last go around” (Anna, 1-1-13).

“As a strategist and a creativity coach I look for strengths while, at the same time, understand that the creative process can help people overcome limiting statements” (Shaque, 6-23-12).

“As a teacher-trainer, I talk about curriculum and lesson plan writing as forms of creative writing” (Joan, 4-23-12).

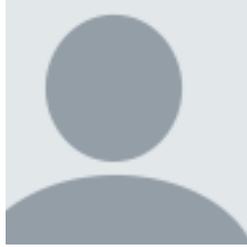
“I became accepted as a poet and a cool weirdo” (Spoon, 1-5-12).

“It felt good knowing that I had shared a life skill with my students that could be useful in their lives. It gave me hope that hand sewing skills and the artistry of needlework would flourish and live on in another generation of artists and craftspeople” (Marquetta, 11-20-12).

These multiple identities allowed the teaching artists to model the act of stepping back and reflecting on their position in a context that was explicitly linked to the gains of their students.

The entry ended with one comment. I was surprised to see that it was mine. I was transported back in time to another community of practice:

- 
- 
-



**Lkreeder4**

Chio, I just spent the past two days with twenty teaching artists on Long Island who were exploring their peer-community of practice. In preparation for our work we all read and wrote responses (on and offline) to various authors on ALTspace. This article sparked quite a few responses and I will encourage my peer TAs to post their thoughts here.

The group appreciated your account of dimensional personalities/hats and found that it was valuable to approach teaching artist work with the understanding that this is part of the job. If they adopt a nimble stance and anticipate the changeable circumstances...then it does not feel as much like a split personality...it feels more like confidence.

Thank you for your perspective on this idea.

Laura Reeder

PS, I will post this on the TAJ Facebook page to encourage more voices.

- 1
- ·
- Reply
- ·
- Share >

Chio and I never met face to face, but we formed a correspondence first through shared subscription to FaceBook pages for *Teaching Artist Journal* and *Association of Teaching Artists*. We “friended” each other in 2012 between the previous post and the next. Was this an authentic relationship? Was it professional? Was it social? The act of engaging an ally in practice made it feel like both a social and a professional intention. Without the medium of multiple sites, would her voice provide less information to this study? Regardless of perceptions, the added information about her life and work provided more validity and authenticity to her *ALT/space* posts.

***Fourth Fold: Art Palooza!***

### [Art Palooza! Engaging High School Students in Art History through Fashion Design](#)

In her final post, Chio described a final project that brought “why should they care” to the front of her collective of voices. As with many arts educators, the end of a school year is a time when exams and assessment activities encroach on the schedule of regular art instruction. The project included a fashion show of costumes made through interpretation of an artistic era such as Surrealism, Cubism, Pop Art, Post-Impressionism, Pre-Hispanic, etc. The project itself spawned a series of inspirations for my own pre-service art education students at MassArt who were teaching a “Fashion & Fibers” studio to middle and high school students. They were wrestling with issues of female fashion norms because 18 out of 20 of their students were girls. They studied Chio’s blog to craft their own teaching goals. While they intended to teach about design concepts and material qualities of fashion, their central message was social and questioned the limitations of their own context. Their curriculum overview stated:

“In the most basic - a fashion statement tells the world – This is who I am. On a larger scale, like other art forms, fashion can say so much about our current times and what is important to society as a whole. Fashion can also set parameters within cultural, religious, and socioeconomic realms. What do our clothes say about out who we are? Do they bring us closer together or further apart from others? [In this studio] we will begin to understand our commonalities and differences” (Student curriculum overview, 2014).

In addition to aspiring to teach to the social consciousness of fashion, these emerging art educators implemented exercises that engaged students in symbolic and practical exploration of human connectivity and the consequences of their actions on others.



Figure 35. *Exploration of human connectivity*

[\*Fashion and Fibers studio at MassArt, 2014.\*](#)

The MassArt student work was a prosthetic outgrowth of Chio’s critical teaching artistry. The lesson plan that she introduced in her blog was inspiring, but the questioning and activist nature of her voice was most compelling to my students, and in turn to their students. While Chio was providing a narrative about the multiple approaches to art history that she was grappling with through her own multiple identities, she was also concerned that her students gain more than names and dates. She wrote:

“Why should they care about art history? How can they build connections between art and their own lives as well as to the bigger world? I have found that a linear system of teaching art history is ineffective; it’s the practical real life experiences that have, in my experience, produced the best results in every aspect of my teaching and my students’ learning” (4-8-13).

Where did I hear this linear statement before? I searched back in time to the first entry by Chio, over fourteen months earlier, when she posted:

“Before moving to New York, I worked in a different British school in Lima where art history was part of studio arts. I taught the subject using what I then considered an

interesting approach, looking back though, it was mostly linear. This methodology would not be enough in my current teaching” (2-14-12).

She had made four posts over fourteen months and had shared her experiences from early work in Peru as an art teacher, to past work in New York as a teaching artist, and back again to being an art teacher in Peru. She had worked with students of privilege to students in need. She had walked large and small groups through brief experiences in galleries and had spent months and months in a studio environment with the same students. She still cared about why they cared, and she was still fighting that a “linear” approach to learning. She emphasized the importance of students addressing conflict and engaging in more wrestling:

“Students had been working individually throughout the two-year course so it was very important that they interact with each other and experience the team work and necessary conflict resolution and compromise that come with it” (4-8-13).

On top of that, she modeled valuable instructional capacities for future art teachers and teaching artists who lived far away and responded to her blog a long time after she wrote it. Her final words, “I could see how moved and truly happy they were, ending the school year with a real sense of achievement and having grown to understand art as part of a bigger context and connected to life” demonstrated her interest in influencing a world beyond her own classroom.

### ***Unfolding: A critical corps***

Chio, her students, my students, and other *ALT/space* teaching artists came together in this corps revealing a critical collective identity that was formed somewhere between being dissatisfied with the ways of the world and wide-awake to aesthetic opportunities for navigating the world. There was softness to the criticality in this unfolding because the work centered on understanding histories, relationships, and possibilities and did not exemplify grave injustices or tragedies that are often inherent in social systems and impetus for critical action. This corps(e) demonstrated the capacity of one teaching artist to influence three or more specific bodies of

artists, learners, and teachers in critical pedagogical work. The next corps(e) of voices proposes that among teaching artists there is a collective body of experiences that come from teaching artist contributions to a dedicated community.

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### *Corps(e) #2: Contributing to a community of practice*

A critical community of practice theory emerged from my own fifteen years of practice and from my awareness that teaching artists were being enlisted more and more by schools and organizations to engage students in developing what Boykin & Noguera (2011) called “asset-focused” (p. 69) experiences. For over ten years, I had been an arts education resource provider for schools and organizations in New York State, and the requests for support increasingly called for traditionally non-curricular content that resembled what Boykin & Noguera listed as, “existing or emerging interests and preferences, motivational inclinations, passions and commitments, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, self-perceptions, personal or collective identities, and prior experiences, knowledge, understandings, skills, and competencies” (p. 69).

Years ago a group of, middle-class, mostly female, teachers in a rural school that my agency served complained that their students were excelling on standardized curriculum, but that they “lacked culture”. When I pushed them on what they meant by culture, they described students who were obedient but did not know what to do when they were confronted with human differences. In their own words, they were wrestling with ways to make human histories and life experiences relevant and to help their students consider pros and cons of perspective and context. In unspoken words, the teachers themselves were describing their own struggles with racism, conflict, and social injustices. School systems were increasingly aware of the student needs that they could not address within their regulated curriculum. My job, at the time, was to expand a

community of practice with these teachers by introducing them to teaching artists who could model more specific approaches to understanding their own cultural limitations.

I was pretty sure that the teaching artists I worked with saw themselves as belonging to a larger community of workers who had a shared set of learning and practices but who also intentionally avoided organizing as a united profession because of the limitations they saw in school communities. This was just a hunch, from personal conversations. But it was a stubborn understanding that came from my lifelong orientation as a teaching artist straddling worlds in and around public education.

Each of the teaching artists contributing to *ALT/space* described their work with distinct voices that spoke to limitations and possibilities of teaching and learning that might be considered predictable or traditional for the context of school, community, prison, museum, or other settings. This was evident when they provided: dance structures for math, collaborative approaches in mural making for community development, reflective strategies for prisoner rehabilitation, cultural interpretation in museums, and so forth. If they were hired to teach in a school, they were more likely to aim for alignment with English Language Arts (ELA), math, social studies, or science content areas. Yet even in those cases, they emphasized activities and outcomes that aligned more with understanding the asset-focused constructs of something like mathematical relevance and less with memorizing equations or systems. In one case, a teaching artist addressed this conundrum directly when she wrote:

“I have consciously created specific lessons to identify and learn the math that we’re going to use in our dancing. Not only is math a tool we need to understand in order to use it properly, but I think it’s also important to know exactly how math is involved in our physical and creative work” (Malke, 2012).

Each teaching artist also presented a voice that spoke to critical social awareness and a degree of unrest with themselves, their students, or the worlds that they shared. While some of

the teaching artist voices were poetic and highly self-aware of this dual intention, others did not especially state strong activist objectives. They did not all wave banners for social change, but they did all speak of social change as a natural part of their practice. A teaching artist in an Alaskan school was invited for a residency where he would work with an elementary classroom to write and perform a morality play using puppets. He had a common academic approach planned: following the story structure with sequenced lessons on form line, silhouette, and contour line. But, in an exchange with a student, he discovered that the engagement in these lessons was guiding him, his students, and ultimately their audience of friends and family toward something more complex and social:

“My next puppetry residency will be this fall at an elementary school in Juneau. When I meet those teachers and students, I’d like to revise my standard definition of the term “puppet”: “An object to which we give imaginary life, *in order to spark a story.*” This addition will bring our attention back to the audience members, giving them the right and the responsibility to create an imaginary world. Perhaps I’ll add even more to the new definition, incorporating Mehmet’s [a student] profound perception: “An object with a heart, to which we bring our hearts, in order to spark a story in the hearts of the audience” (2012, theater teaching artist).

It was common and evident that each of the teaching artists had dispositions toward questioning and improving *something* about the existing patterns of human power and practice in teaching and learning. It was not evident that they all had studied critical theory or pedagogy. Yet, it was evident that they wanted to change something about the way that learning was happening and the impact that learning could have on a better world. Maxine Greene once said to Graeme Sullivan, “Art can’t change the world, but it can change someone who can” (Lake, 2010, p. 151). The *ALT/space* blogs consistently expressed this optimism, even when the teaching artists felt a great discouragement with the educational and social systems they encountered. One teaching artist was a prisoner who led writing classes with his prison peers. In this most discouraging space, he found that by focusing on poetic work not as an exercise in grammar or

structure, but as an exercise in human expression, they were able to change dominant societal perceptions. In an exchange with some college students (whom he referred to as “free world students”) this teaching artist shared how the artistic work of prisoners had shifted their understanding:

“The letters we received from New Folsom are incredibly moving. At first it was hard for me to imagine that actual prisoners wrote these letters, but they indeed did. It boggles my mind to grasp that someone who has committed murder can so easily stir me. However, that’s exactly what happened, and it’s what should be happening, not just for me, but for the rest of America’s population” (2012, poetry teaching artist).

What did this mean? Did the *ALT/space* editors carefully select a community of artists who indicated interest in critical pedagogy? Did the act of writing for a community of peer practitioners somehow orient teaching artists toward activism? I re-read the texts to discern the difference between altruistic messages and critical, pedagogical practices. Nieto (1999) reminds us that:

Critical pedagogy is an approach through which students and teachers engage in learning as a mutual encounter with the world. Critical pedagogy also implies praxis, that is, developing the important social action, predispositions, and attitudes that are the backbone of democratic society, and learning to use them to help alter patterns of domination and oppression. (pp. 103–104)

Giroux (2010) described critical pedagogy as he learned it from Paulo Freire as “not about training in techniques and methods,” but as, “a way of thinking beyond the seemingly natural or inevitable state of things, about challenging "common sense." It is a mode of intervention” (website, para. 5) In almost every entry, and in every collection of entries by individual teaching artists, there was a problem to be overcome that went beyond learning a technique or artistic concept. These teaching artists invariably intended to address social and human need.

By attaching the well-used words: critical and community to this theory, a political and ethical stance is established and this section introduces researcher and subjects as participants in a common moral project. This does not mean that the teaching artists have been enlisted in any formal organization. It means that their practices have revealed shared themes of resistance, their interviews have revealed critical consciousness, what Paulo Freire called “conscientization” (1999) of developing transformative voice with students, teachers, families, and cultural workers.

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The *ALT/space* teaching artists were conscious not only of their audience as they wrote their blog posts, but of individual and shared challenges too. This corps(e) of voices demonstrates ways that teaching artists grappled with their own practices and with their messages outward and inward among peers. It is different in form than Corps(e) #1 because it incorporates many voices juxtaposed along a theme of questioning. The disembodiment of the names in this section is intentional. By simply listing the name of each teaching artist, the emphasis is on the chorus of questions. As in appropriated visual collage images, the words take on new situated meaning.

**First Fold:  
Teaching artists asked questions  
about the meaning of artistic work, for and with their students.**

*“Did the poems seem to mean the same things the third time we heard them aloud? Did it matter who read? Did that happen with your poem, too?”*

(Maya, 2011)

*“Who is art really for?” & “Do you have to be an “artist” to make art?”*

(Deborah, 2014)

*What was the scene about? Where did it take place? Who had the higher status in the scene? Did the conflict escalate or de-escalate? I encouraged the group to dig below superficial differences, hoping to pave the way for further discoveries. Who else could “all you people” be?*  
(Kim, 2012)



Figure 36. “Can you show me?”

(David, 2012)

[Where do the dinosaurs live?](#)

(Gigi, 2012)

**Second Fold:  
They asked questions about their instructional approaches  
to engaging with students:**

*“I was afraid that the 4th graders might have lost interest in our work investigating collections. What potential stories, spoken and unspoken, might they represent?”*  
(Mark, 2012)

*“What if instead of a poster or a PowerPoint, students devised a theater piece to demonstrate that they understood modern day slavery?”*  
(Jeff, 2013)

*“Um, how can we phrase that as a question?”*

(Ryan, 2011)

**Third Fold:**  
**They asked questions about the contexts  
that influenced their shared experiences:**

*“I wonder about the various goings of the youth I will soon see. Are they on vacations, family visits or any other trip they wouldn’t have made while in school?”*  
(Billy, 2011)

*“What do we lose when we position the arts as being necessary and beneficial for only a certain population of students?”*  
(Debora, 2013)

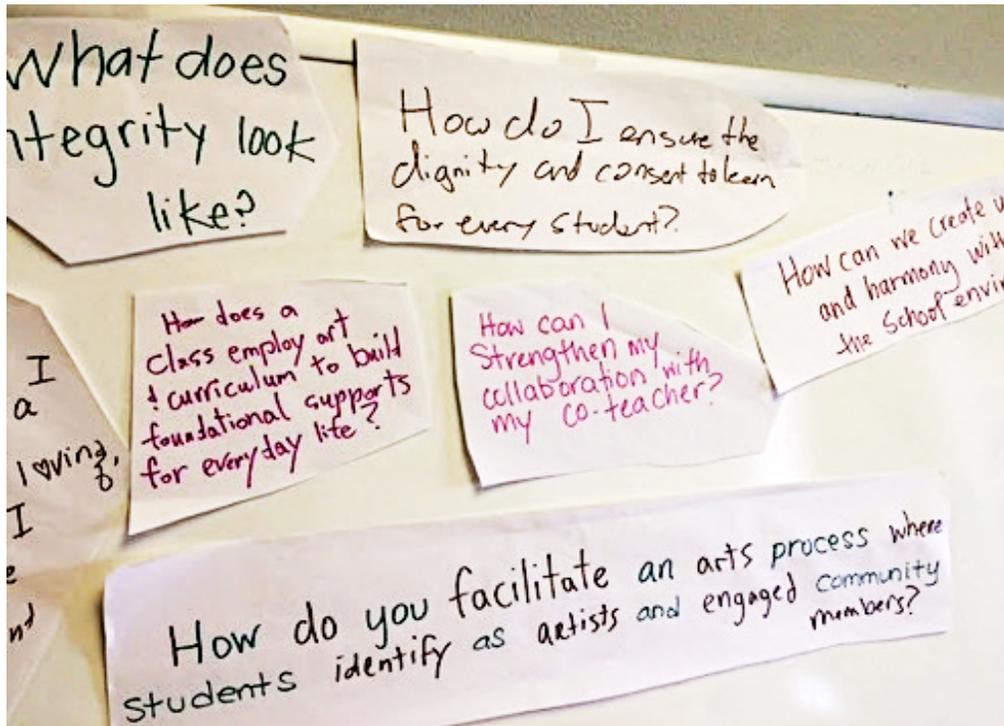


Figure 37. *What does integrity look like?*

(Elise, 2014)

*“What did you eat for breakfast today?”*

(Joan, 2011)

[Whose Reality?](#)

Malke, 2011

*Could Chicago also have its own museum of education?  
If we have one, what will it be like? What would we try to tell others about our education?*

*What kind of spaces will we build for our children's education?  
How would a museum in Chicago be different from the one in Hong Kong?  
What would be the role of teachers, students, artists, and other community members in its  
development if we were to build one in Chicago?  
How would this space help the citizens to envision our education system for the future?"*  
(Carol, 2012)

**Fourth Fold:  
They asked questions about professional responsibility  
and their ability to engage others in their objectives:**

*"As teaching artists, we bring our experience in our respective mediums to the classroom. But,  
what about lack of experience?"*  
(Suzanne, 2013)



Figure 38. [\*What's the message?\*](#)

(Daniel, 2013)

*"How did I facilitate all of this?"*

(Jay, 2014)

*“Here is my dilemma - do I censor student artists’ voices simply because a segment of society finds works of art based on teenagers’ harsher realities objectionable?”*

*Do I forego the funding (and, in the process, my salary)  
or do I cave and change my focus to safer topics, so that I receive funding?*

*Is there a place for socially responsible art creation, political art creation, healing art creation,  
and controversial art creation when working with young artists?*

*Finally, what is our responsibility, as teaching artists,  
to the voice of the next generation of art creators?*

*Do I need to pay attention to the conservative lenses viewing my work or do I stand firm?*

*Or maybe the question is simply,  
is it ever valid to look at artistic work in terms of “what is fundable”?”  
(Linda, 2012)*



Figure 39. [\*So, What is it You Do?\*](#)

What do you think? What’s your elevator speech? How do you embrace the “weirdness” of your work and communicate what it is you do to others?

(Alison, 2012)

*“Is it any wonder that I believe the arts are how we process our lives, our most powerful tool and matrix for discovery and transformation—of self, other, and community, of paradigm and process, of social structures and values?”*

(Holly, 2012)

*What would it mean for my identity as a teaching artist if I no longer used the arts to teach? It would be a relief, I decided.*

(Kim, 2013)

### *Unfolding: Community of practice*

By posing their questions within contexts and within an open forum of peers, the ALT/space teaching artists were not seeking answers. Sometimes advisement happened in responses, but the responses to each blog were rarely more than one or two agreeing voices. In interviews teaching artists expressed interest in sharing their struggles so that they could give what they received. They recognized that there was value in co-developing a place for empathy with a structure that allowed them to grow in their own unique directions.

These examples are not provided as a counterpoint to say that other teachers, administrators, or learners in and around school systems are not questioning their own identities and practices (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Ravitch, 2010). But, in teaching artists, the questioning appeared to be a universal strategy for moving beyond efficacy in meeting standards and moving toward more individualized gains for students and for themselves. It also supported my hunch that any standardized principles for professional development or organization might be difficult to confirm as the teaching artists were rarely content with any normative situation.

By participating for many years in a range of teaching artist communities beyond the *ALT/space* blog, I have found that teaching artists intentionally look for ways to engage with other like-minded communities of practice as a way to develop their career skills toward maximum social change over maximum economic gain. Those communities are often changing and are also outside of mainstream educational organizations. They may be in alliances with social workers, specific cultural or community agents, friendly advisement from other artists, or even as social media groups developed with students.

In my study of the *ALT/space* teaching artist voices, I found that teaching artists expressed distrust of rigid and standardized educational systems. This was expressed first on

behalf of learners who were not being served, or being served insufficiently by those systems. Additionally, teaching artists had similar reservations on their own behalf because they were reluctant to participate in training, professional organizations, and credentialing that might ally them with the systems that have excluded so many learners. The *ALT/space* teaching artists and regional communities of teaching artist practice scattered across the United States and globe have engaged in conversation about shared standards, but to date, they have rested in more organic practices that include sharing stories and advice.

The narratives in *ALT/space* favor what community of practice (CoP) theorists Lave and Wenger called “situated learning” (1991), whereby knowledge and understanding is formed through socially co-constructed experiences. An example of such resistant-yet-social learning was described by an *ALT/space* contributor who was a certified dance teaching artist in Seattle public schools, and who wrote:

“This conflict [between maintaining the life force of dance and molding dance as an understandable content area] plays itself out on a daily basis. I try to plan units that include formative and summative assessments, units that also meet the state’s grade level expectations, including daily teaching points that encourage students not just to dance but to think and verbalize what they know about dance. At the same time, I try to get the kids moving, give them a chance to be swept along by the flow of creating, and dancing together – experiencing the spark that has kept me dancing all these years” (Meg, 2012).

Meg’s narrative exemplified a struggle with standards that is common among teachers and teaching artists alike. But she then shared her practice of moving beyond standards to more social and physical practice that got to the learning she valued most. In the same blog, Meg went on to identify the *ALT/space* community of practice that was informing her work when she acknowledged an affirmation that she gained from another teaching artist blog. She wrote:

“Never mind that [Victoria’s] main point (a wonderful discussion about how a team of teachers can enliven the teaching/learning interaction) is moot within the public school setting, where budget constraints always limit the teacher/student ratio. What caught me

was her portrayal of the real goal of teaching art – the spark. I’ve modified her words here in order to apply them to myself...” (Meg, 2012).

She then re-stated a passage from Victoria and modified instances where Victoria used the word “we” in reference to teaching artists at large to using the word “I” as a personal mantra. Three distinct messages were reinforced. First, that current educational systems are not serving students who need them most; second, that teaching artists find social and aesthetic learning to have enduring value to their students and themselves; third, that these teaching artists intentionally contributed to and gained professional development from their informal community of practice.

The TARP study confirmed my own findings here and suggested that the work of teaching artists holds a mirror to the failings of contemporary education systems. Rabkin (2011) wrote about the pedagogical practices of teaching artists as being outside of the content goals of standardized arts and non-arts curricula:

Program managers and TAs consistently cited the importance of core art-making principles and processes – “making meaning,” “student engagement,” “voice,” “making connections,” reflection and self-assessment, collaboration on group projects and critiques, personal agency and expression, and community-building as key elements of their practice as educators. (p. 19)

He further described in-school and out-of-school relationships that have led to advances and tensions in school arts education when he wrote:

TAs are the core human resource in non-school arts education, and schools have benefited from the field knowledge that was developed in a wide variety of community venues for arts education. It is vital to sustain and support non-school community arts education as a resource for neighborhoods and communities, and as a source of intellectual and practical innovation in arts education for schools. (p. 19)

Finally, he described the social priorities that teaching artists emphasized as important to their professional development when he wrote:

Focused on their interests and experiences as teaching artists, reflecting on their practice, assessing their work from the perspective of student learning, and structured around the development of strong communities of TAs and teachers learning together and from each other. (p. 17)

That teaching artists have not yet formalized any professional body may have less to do with dissatisfaction in their fields. Perhaps they are content with this open-ended existence. If they are not successful in their teaching due to a lack of specific skills, they can choose to gain the expertise, or to simply not teach anymore.

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### ***Corps(e) #3: Collective resistance in systems***

The final corps(e) of voices in this chapter juxtaposes entries and corresponding comments from four teaching artists whose practices are quite diverse. Their experiences share an undercurrent of dissatisfaction that drives them to continuous improvement in their work. Their experiences also share a consciousness about operating in and outside of regular educational systems. Their voices are assembled in one poetic sequence that is center formatted to link the folds visually. The teaching artist voices include:

- David, who is a visual artist and elementary classroom teacher in a private school. During his time as a blogger for *ALT/space* he engaged in academic research and teaching around self-initiated creativity.

- Carol, who is a visual and performing artist and education program director at a university institute for Near Eastern studies. During her time as a blogger with *ALT/space* she held a position as education director for an outsider art museum. Her teaching artist practices included residencies in a range of urban sites.

- Spoon, who is a poet, writer, actor, musician and prisoner. During his time as a blogger for *ALT/space* he was teaching fellow inmates and corresponding as a guest teaching artist with college partners.

- Malke, who is a percussive dance teaching artist, curriculum designer, writer, editor, math explorer, specialist in interdisciplinary arts-based programming, and cheerful leader of professional learning workshops. She has been the editor of *ALT/space* since its inception in 2011.

### ***First Fold: Dissatisfaction (David)***

#### [Technique Schmechnique: Why Kids Don't Need to be Taught How to Use a Paintbrush](#)

“On an online education forum an art teacher asked: “Can students be taught to use paintbrushes so that the bristles aren’t ruined?” I replied with a variety of suggestions: students could experiment with paintbrushes or employ alternate methods of paint application via fingers, sticks, paper towels, or squeegees. The responses from other educators endorsed traditional applications rather than experimental or unconventional methods of applying paint. Some recommended that students use their brushes “gently,” “respectfully,” and “carefully” in order to generate work that was “nice” and “proper.” In their opinion, students should first be taught to use paintbrushes in appropriate ways. Then, they must practice these techniques so the resulting artwork was not “messy” or “bad.” One teacher even implied that students who were “caught” using brushes improperly should have their painting privileges taken away. I felt the tenor of the posts was summed up by this comment: “care of the tool is paramount.”

“I was curious to see how my students would approach watercolor painting if given the freedom and agency to use the materials (Figure 40) as they wished.”



Figure 40. *Freedom and agency to use materials*

“The brushes were pushed, pulled, spun, swirled, dipped, flicked, tapped, whipped, and turned. Paint was dripped, dabbed, poured, puddled, stroked, swept, and scumbled. It felt as if I were watching a highlight reel of modern abstract art. Some pieces were reminiscent of Kandinsky’s early abstract work. Others contained a pop sensibility. Here a Helen Frankenthaler color field piece, there a Morris Louis stained work. An Adolph Gottlieb blotch suddenly bumped up against a 1960s era Larry Poons dot and dash piece.

I wish I could paint as they do.

Christie’s auction house estimated the value of Nolde’s painting to be between \$300,000 and \$500,000. It ended up selling for \$698,500. One student gave me six paintings for free as she skipped out the doorway.”

### ***Second Fold: Consciousness (Carol)***

#### The Outsider is In

“I am further convinced about the significance of building partnerships and networks with artists and arts organizations. I have a growing interest in bringing together other teaching artists and the larger community to foster a culture of collaborative art-making.” (11-8-12)

“Lily concluded our phone conversation by saying, “Listen more, talk less. Show more warmth and concern. Give help.” The Dandelion School project has touched so many lives — the project scope is grand and involves the participation of the entire school, yet it was started by small acts. Making place meaningful begins by taking one small step at a time. Artists in community lead with a servant heart and a mindful purpose.”

(5-1-12)

“It never stops amazing me how one thing leads to another in life. It’s been over ten months since I joined ALT/space. Writing, reflecting, researching, and sharing ideas from my own teaching artist practice with my peers has built a much greater sense of community in me and, having done so, I feel that my work has been further affirmed and validated. Being part of the

ALT/space community has brought me to think more deeply and engage more consciously with my own work in the classroom and in different communities”  
(6-11-12)

“This project allows students to pick up the “unfinished business” of arts education by re-imagining how the history has informed and transformed the way we participate in activism. This whole experience ultimately allows me and my students to re-think how we can carry on the revolutionary work of our predecessors.”  
(11-21-11)

“Entering my fifth year as a teaching artist, I have come to find that this role has many more dimensions than I initially thought when I first started. Recent conversations with colleagues whom I have known at different times, have inspired me to reflect on the forms of work a teaching artist can do. Ultimately, it appears that there seem to have been a number of entry points for me into this profession.”  
(10-22-11)

“From a class and economical viewpoint, the term “outsider” is not unfamiliar for my students. Ninety-five percent of my students come from broken homes, have been incarcerated, are single parents, on drugs, have gang affiliations, and or have some type of learning disabilities. I knew that the previous art teacher only used paints and crayons and never took them on any art-related field trips. I wanted to show them that this thing called “art” could be something personal and that you didn’t need a lot of money to do it.”  
(8-10-11)

### *Third Fold: Systems (Spoon)*

#### [The Brave Six](#)

“Lockdown continues, going on six months now,  
so I don’t have my writing classes to teach.”  
(6-12-12)

#### [My Reality](#)

“But I am an artist confined physically by concrete, steel and electric wires for 35 years. Sometimes teaching artists must stay put by choice or circumstance, yet their hearts, minds and spirits must still travel. Somewhere I read you don’t have to travel the world to know the hearts of man. These days I am not even able to travel past the bars of my own cell...  
... I’ll paraphrase something Rilke wrote in Letter to a Young Poet: There are endless paths and things inside us – place, stories, poems and songs. There are memories in our hearts, bodies and souls that we can naturally draw upon to teach art and transcend structures.”  
(2-16-12)

## Moving Past Hostile Classes

“There are long waiting lists for most of our classes. The turnover rate in the classes due to lockdowns, prison politics, transgressions and transfers can be swift and sad. Before I even finished my [first post](#) for ALT/space [in October 2011] the student highlighted in this piece, Wikiri Ologun, was transferred, and not because he had done anything wrong. Wikiri had chosen to walk a path of creativity. He wanted to stay in this environment that is open to the creative process. He knew that New Folsom is the only spot in the California prison system to have a creative arts program. Peer pressure and prison politics on other prison yards that have no arts will be intense, and the art can wither without fellowship. But we keep creating.”

*Remember*

*When I walk or fly*

*out of this place*

*no one will remember*

*how the birds came to me*

*as friends and shared bread*

*No one will remember*

*how I planted a garden*

*of flowers and spices*

*in a space where growth*

*is prohibited*

*No one will remember*

*the Shakespeare and my poems*

*I read in hostile classes*

*I should have known*

*that once the trees*

*were all chopped down*

*like unarmed soldiers*

*I would be transferred.*

(1-5-12)

### Deadlines

“Today I prepare and gather my wits, thoughts, and hopefully wisdom to write an article and to teach my poetry class. I have two deadlines. Despite how dense the tension is in the cell block, I must still prepare to go out and run my class. Despite almost getting into a fight with three other prisoners, only moments ago, I must create an article for the *Teaching Artist Journal*. I have a deadline at the top of every month.

I prepare my article in the cell as I ponder my poetry lesson while not getting along with my cellie. We have been in the cage together for over seven years. We have never been friends and have gone over a month and a half now without talking. Today our not getting along reached a high point when my cellie and two of his homeboys had words with me, right in front of the cell, as I came out to shower.

I stood my ground and made sure none of the guys circled behind me. I hurled invective back at the main cat throwing insults my way as the tower cop shouted, “What’s the problem?” The incident died down, and nothing else was said. We all went our separate ways. I went back into the cell with the same cellie.

Silence inside the cell again became my mantra and way of being. Otherwise, I would have been consumed in darkness, on a dark road to the hole.

I use the energy and tension of today to create art, writing lessons, poetry, prose. Today I must transform the stress into an article about the importance of meeting a deadline. I’ll turn the core of today’s tension into a class lesson and discussion to write from. I’ll continue to run my class even though I am like a mountain climber going up the steepest part of Mount Everest.

I’ll speak on voice, on using whatever feeling or vibe you are in as the edge, or driving power, behind your poetry reading. Today I’ll do a poetry reading and the power of my reading is anger.”

(11-29-11)

### Pockets of Light

“Those pockets of light, they arrive to my creative writing classes from all the territories on the yard. They stroll in with each of their cultures written in their walk, dress, tattoos, talk and hair styles; Latin, Native American, Asians, white, and African. There is no other place in the prison where these men gather as one community, one humanity, and one group of writers who sit, write and converse together.

They are writers creating text they can humbly, proudly, and heartfully send home to their mom or dad, their sisters or brothers, their sons or daughters or their wives or girlfriends. More than one student has told me how much their family and friends have loved an essay or a poem written in one of our writing sessions.

We greet, congress, and then we do our writing. Nothing needs to be said other than:  
Gentlemen, it is time to write.”  
(10-20-11)

#### ***Fourth Fold: ALT/space (Malke)***

##### Places We Work

“ALT/space has now been online for a year and a half! It’s incredible to realize that in this short time thirty-one teaching artists have contributed 171 diverse stories about all aspects of their teaching practice. As we grow over time, we hope the stories collected here will represent as wide and detailed a picture as possible of teaching artist realities, artistic media, student populations, teaching venues and geographic locations.

But, though I see great potential in the future,  
we already have so much depth and substance to mine right now. For example:  
As I was constructing the print section of ALT/space for the July-August 2013 volume of the Teaching Artist Journal I realized that *where* we teach is not limited to venue and geographic location. There are actually an endless number of places in which our work occurs, each location as unique as the person teaching and the people learning.”  
(2-15-13)

##### Happy Half-Birthday ALT/space!

“In another six months our inaugural contributors will be wrapping up their time with ALT/space. I can only imagine how much I will miss reading about their work on a regular basis. Because ALT/space is structured on a six- to twelve-month commitment, we will always be in need of new voices. If you are interested in adding yourself to the mix, please do not hesitate to [contact me](#).

And, as always, we welcome your voice, experience and perspective in other ways as well. You can respond to individual posts or by staying in touch through the Teaching Artist Journal Facebook page. We hope to hear from you!”  
(2-15-12)

##### Whose Reality

“Linda and I were in the middle of an interchange about the first draft of her recent post, [The Road and its Reality](#). I thought it was a great piece from start to finish, but something was bugging me, and I could not put my finger on it.

“I think you make your point clearly enough — working teaching artists have to travel, but I’m not sure that’s always the case,” I wrote her.”

...

“My current reality and those of other Indiana TAs is much different...I basically agree with you that if you are working as a TA you are usually traveling, but I guess my point is that I’m not sure that your traveling reality is the same as someone who has work in a more urban area. TAs who live and work in Indianapolis may not be more than 45 minutes away from home when they drive to their work.”

“Your e-mail got me thinking,” she wrote back, “we have vast differences in the experiences of the teaching artists across the nation, be they opportunities to work, the kind of work they do, their experience in the field, and the support for the arts in the schools. After reading your comments I realized the TAs in Alaska have to fly to where they are teaching and end up staying not in hotels but in the school itself.”

[See Ryan Conarro’s post, [Like a River](#).]

“TAs in rural South Dakota,” she continued, “have a commute of 45 miles one way from the nearest hotel to the one room school. (A friend of mine), a TA and poet in Montana, leaves her home in September and doesn’t return till December then leaves again in January and doesn’t return until May. Perhaps it would be interesting to do a fact finding mission about what TAs experience.”

...

“I like the rewrite very much!” I said. “It is perfectly pitched as *your* reality. I think the role of ALT/space is to eventually get correspondents from all those places you mentioned, and have them write *their* stories and realities and add them to the big picture of what it means to be a teaching artist.”

...

“So, whose reality? One TA’s at a time, that’s whose. ALT/space is here to present individual stories from a personal perspective – whether other TAs can relate to them personally or not. From miniature portraits of our work comes the truth of our own reality. And, over time, the universals will become apparent.”

...

“If you want to share your reality and your work with us, please consider [contributing your stories](#) or leave a comment in the comment section of this or any other story here on ALT/space. We look forward to hearing from you!”

(10-8-11)

### *Unfolding: Teaching artists as enlisted change agents*

Thirty-five of the forty teaching artists were employed by institutions to teach outside of, or in-between, what we might consider as typical educational settings. Only a few had full-time jobs as educators in K-12 or college classrooms. All of the others were funded by public or private dollars to fulfill societal needs that were not being attended to in a public design for learning. They were integrating arts into existing curricula as visiting artists. They were supplementing curricula with social and cultural content for out-of-school-time programs. They were specialists and consultants who were called in to resolve specific civic issues in adult and youth programs that existed in and around K-12 education systems.

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### *Teaching artistry as an alternative career*

This study began as an inquiry into the ways that teaching artists developed career identities or responded to advocacy for professional credentialing. Yet, the data suggests that teaching artists in widely different sites across the United States and in other countries universally elected to step away from typical career pathways and uniform professionalization of their field. Most teaching artists in this study indicated awareness of the controversy that surrounds a career that is not easy to label as well as awareness of the pressures from policymakers and peers for greater definition of their work.

The *ALT/space* blog became a portal into a community of practice for artists who engaged in teaching and learning as an alternative to existing work in fields of education or art. Yet, they did not choose to be outsiders. They chose to be involved and intervening players by

electing to write about their struggles and findings with other teaching artists. They brought their student work and voices into the mix along with their own poetic and inventive methods for interpreting the realities of teaching and learning through the arts in a world where the arts have struggled to be part of something typical. Yet, typical is something they are not. They are a moving and unfolding critical community of practice.

### *Transitional voices*

In the sixth, and final chapter I discuss implications of this study and the influence of teaching artist communities of practice on education policy and advocacy. Teaching artist advocate, Eric Booth once said,

No revolution ever happened without a lot of talk. So we will keep using words and the other power tools of the arts to change the culture--as artists have done since day two in human history. The etymology of "culture" does not mean high arts or sophisticated learning. It's meaning of origin is closer to "agriculture." Like that agar agar in your ninth grade biology Petri dish, culture means 'the medium in which we grow.' (2008, )

“Words and the power tools of the arts” are the data that the *ALT/space* teaching artists provided in their blog entries to help me articulate a growing confidence that these highly individualized practitioners were doing important work even if it was on the scale of one student at a time. They were learning from each other, from their students, from their teaching partners (when they existed), and from the worlds and systems that influenced their contexts. Yet, despite their diverse situations, they were all saying something similar. They were describing their wide-awakeness to problems of educational systems and they were offering linked and juxtaposed sets of words and artistic examples to demonstrate empowerment in so many small moments. They were also describing their wide-awakeness about belonging to a critical community of practice.

I offer here, one more voice from David (introduced above) to illustrate the extremely small scale of the voices that teaching artists were able to represent in their own words. They were on the ground, in the mix, up close and personal – just really involved with tiny details that are often too easy to neglect in generalized research or advocacy messages. David also represents a closer look at students who might otherwise be rejected from our systems because their behaviors were contrary to norms. In this mini corps(e), I begin with David’s introduction about students “checking out” and then I juxtapose images of the work that the students were doing when they were not especially engaged in the lesson proposed by the teacher. There is no doubt that they were engaged in complex thinking. This teaching artist was able to celebrate their actions and still account for the learning. He was holding a magnifying glass to his classroom-sized critical community of practice and also contributing to his *ALT/space* critical community of practice at the same time.

---

***First fold: Checking out***

[When Checking Out is Checking In](#)

“Ideally, fortuitousness should also play a role in how teachers go about teaching and how children go about learning but how can spontaneous creativity exist in a rigid learning environment filled with scheduling demands and narrowly focused itineraries? In our fifth grade classroom, I often find that the most creative endeavors appear when students seem disconnected from the scheduled lesson or activity. I have found over the course of this school year that when we thought students were checking out of schoolwork, they were in fact checking into creative engagements. I always found it difficult to simply describe these students as “unengaged” because they were, in fact, deeply engaged in the creative process.”

*Second fold: Talkative Ethan*

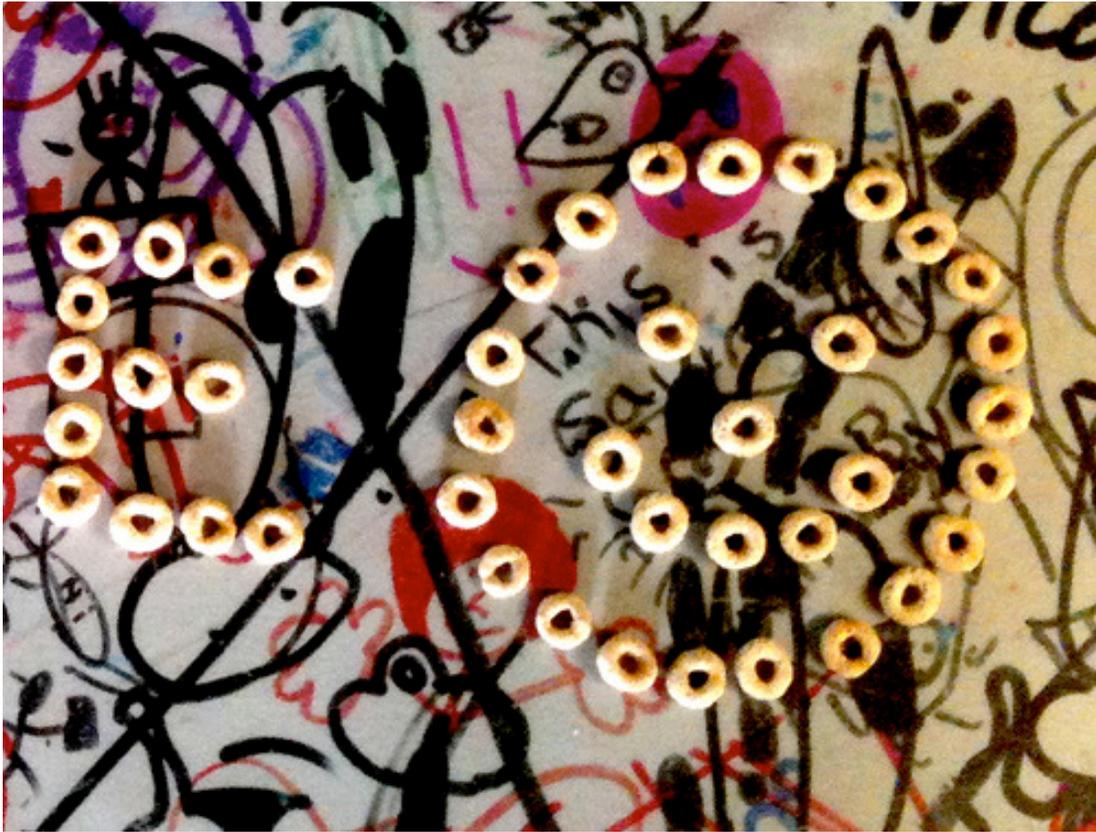


Figure 41. *Talkative Ethan*

“Ethan usually chose a corner near a window to sit. Ethan would typically enter into a muted conversation with a friend until directed by a teacher to attend to a lesson.”

*Third fold: Imaginative Louisa*



Figure 42. *Imaginative Louisa*



Figure 42. *Imaginative Louisa*

“Louisa always had a project she was working on. She would take an armful of supplies back to her table and begin making sculptures, banners, trinkets, drawings, paintings, lists, toys, tools, and models, always with a wide grin on her face. It would take a great effort to coax her into putting the supplies aside to attend to a lesson... She could use water-based markers to create expressionistic sunsets or masking tape to form weapons to ward off imaginary foes such as her “Monster Hunting Whip.”

*Fourth fold: Resistant William*



Figure 43. *Resistant William*



Figure 44. *Resistant William*

“As a talented math and science student, William could easily do the work assigned to him. Whether he did it or not was another matter. It was difficult to predict what lesson or

activity William would respond to or how much he actually knew during the times he would resist doing his schoolwork.”

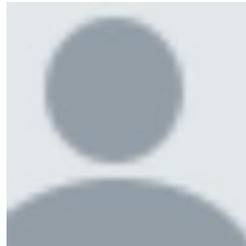
Each of these mini-voices offered the detail that I was able to share with my own teacher-education students at MassArt when we needed to study classroom management and the development of generative learning environments.

***Unfolding: Critical Community of Response***



Join the discussion...

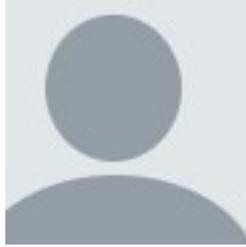
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**LG**

The balance between allowing free and creative thought and following the mandated lessons is a difficult balancing act, but the interest you have taken in these students' personal projects shows them that you value their ideas and their working preferences a great deal, even in the times when you must pull them away to complete the assigned lesson.

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David

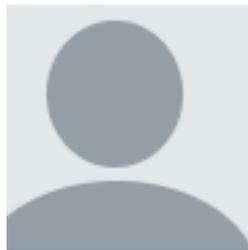
You're right LG - a difficult balancing act indeed! I hope to one day have an arts-based classroom environment and no longer have to pull the kids away from their creative endeavors.

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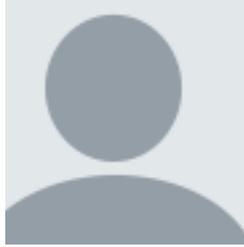
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ED

nice. very nice. We've all had students like Ethan and have somehow found ways to encourage them creatively. Sometimes it means sidestepping rigid k-12 school culture and rules a bit, other times it means breaking our own internalized teacher scripts.

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**David**

Thank you ED. Certainly high praise coming from someone in your position.

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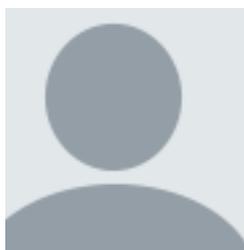
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**MD**

For me, David has hit the nail on the head. It is always a question of balance: How do we guide children to pick up the knowledge that they probably need some support or structure in order to discover? VS How do we trust children's innate ability to discover ideas on their own?

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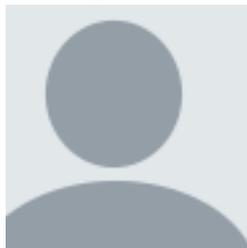


**David**

Great questions MD!

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**EILD**

More thought-provoking and delightful observations by David. What good fortune for a child to have him as a teacher.  
EILD, Seattle

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With this exchange of voices demonstrating the dimensions and scale of ALT/space as a critical community of practice, it is possible to transition from individual artist, learner, and teacher communities toward larger worlds that influence the work of teaching artistry.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

*“Our program and student evaluations are pretty effective. We are able to get data that informs our big decisions and our students are able to use data from their performance assessments to improve their work. Of course we do not tell them it is assessment or evaluation and we certainly do not use the word “data”. Our most effective test is the “August Wilson” monologue. It gives us all something to believe in and it may not sound scientific, but it has a form and outcomes that we can all agree on.”*

- Youth arts evaluation forum participant, 2014

*“Brittany turns her eyes from me to Mr. P: “Why are you mean to us?”  
The room is silent. The classroom power structure seems suddenly to have flipped upside down, and the students are calling Mr. P to be accountable for his behavior. Stony-faced, the teacher slowly opens his lips.”*

- Ryan, 2011

### *Introduction: Teaching artistry and the future of education*

*Teaching Artists and the Future Education* (Rabkin et al., 2011) is the title of the TARP report that I referenced so frequently in this study. I mention it here, at the conclusion of the study as a reminder about the value of data that meaningfully represents the role of teaching artists in communities of practice beyond arts education. The TARP study proposed that teaching artist practices had something to offer to education in general because they provided essential support to students who were not being served by mainstream public education. Additionally, TARP researchers proposed that voice has value in the pedagogy, practices, and ultimately the career pathways of teaching artistry.

This study took that proposal to heart and amplified the voices of teaching artistry as a way to demystify their work for communities beyond arts education. This chapter addresses the formal research qualities and understandings that have emerged from this study by situating teaching artists in a world of public policy that is establishing frameworks for their practices. But first, as has become the custom in this ethnography, I have a story to tell.

### *Advocacy and artistry*

It was spring 2014, and I was sitting beside the program director of a successful performing arts organization in a forum for youth arts partners with the Boston Public Schools (BPS) Arts Expansion Initiative. She made the statement quoted at the beginning of this chapter about using an “August Wilson” monologue when we were discussing evaluation strategies and methods to monitor youth arts program progress with our constituents. The nodding heads surrounding me in that room helped me to see that this approach to evaluation held some shared meaning. These professionals had been invited by funders and the BPS to discuss steps toward improving the use of data in youth arts programs in Boston. I was a newcomer to the group and was eager to learn more. Many of the arts leaders introduced themselves as current and former teaching artists. These were the people “on the ground” who informed policymakers about challenges and possibilities in arts education at both local and national levels. They worked mostly with young people outside of classrooms, but they were here to address how their work was relevant to improving public education issues through the data that they gathered in their arts-based programs.

The reference to playwright August Wilson was something that everyone in the room seemed to understand in a moment. August Wilson wrote plays about African American experiences in a style that referenced everyday life in the United States. He was eloquent and outspoken about borrowing methods from other artists. An important influence on his work was the collaged methods and social messages of artist Romare Beardon. Wilson (Lyons & Plimpton, 1999) once said,

I try to make my plays the equal of his canvases. In creating plays I often use the black cat, a garden, a bicycle, a man with a scar on his face, a pregnant woman, a man with a gun. (Para. 28)

I spent a split second imagining such collaged images translated as monologues by August Wilson and then being performed by young people in Boston (Figure 26). The young actors in the program were often African American too. The arts programs they attended were designed to give them something that was not available in their schools. One of the theater companies described it in their website as, “At the core of each work are soaring, lyrical monologues that take the song, laughter, pain, and rich content of African American life and place it in the mouths of a great and varied ensemble of characters” (Huntington Theatre website, May, 2014).



Figure 46. [\*August Wilson Monologue Competition\*](#), *National Champions* (2014)

While I had never been to one of the youth performances, I certainly knew about the work being referenced and I appreciated the layers of important American history and culture that were

available to students when they tried on the collective characters invented by Wilson. I tried to return to the meeting, but I was distracted again.

Earlier that day, I had been re-reading *ALT/space* blogs and came across the other quote (above) from Ryan who had been a teaching artist and state arts education liaison in Alaska public schools. The moment he described was one of meaningful teacher accountability. The teacher was recognizing his accountability to the students in contrast to his accountability to the mandates of the state. Ryan, as a witness to the moment was also recognizing the integrity of the student who was from an indigenous community and being taught by a teacher who was a cultural outsider to her world. Ryan's work was similar to the work of the people in the room with me in Boston that day. He was an artist, enlisted to translate the languages of the arts into standardized curriculum terms across cultural roles. He was responsible for mediating relationships between learners, teachers, administrators, artists, and ultimately, his own human conscience. I mused about the difference between arts education evaluation and advocacy in rural or urban places while I sat on my folding chair in the crowded room of an old city school built over a highway in Boston. What was the difference? What did it matter? What was our common ground?

I had worked in schools in the snowy northern countryside of upstate New York and I had worked in tight brick buildings with bars on the windows in the borough of Queens. I knew that advocacy for arts education was always, *always* about being as successful a human being as possible. Yet advocacy was often about efficient and overarching messages that could unite many different people toward unifying goals. I knew that the *ALT/space* artists wrestled with the balance between relevant action and overarching ideas all of the time in their work. In a more recent *ALT/space* blog, Ryan wearing both his advocacy and teaching artistry hats had written,

“Too often, I’m entering a school with a grand idea in mind, and I make it my task to convince the teachers to jump on my bandwagon. Yes, I believe that part of my role as a visiting teaching artist is to offer visions for new arts-integrated challenges and possibilities in a school. And yes, there are teachers who match my enthusiasm. I recruit them as allies to bring along the reluctant teachers. But how can I offer inspiration to teachers and staff while also responding to their real needs and concerns?” (Ryan, 2013)

Similarly, many other *ALT/space* teaching artists had written about the actual titles that they used or were given in order to demonstrate or justify their advocacy to various institutional partners.

Kim, a teaching artist whose work centered on various issues of social justice explained how she understood her advocacy messages and roles. She wrote,

“I am an advocate for equal rights and social justice within and outside of the queer community and see theatre as a way to help youth explore identity, internalized homophobia, and find empowerment around issues and challenges they face” (Kim, 2012).

She then described the title that she took on for one program,

“I was a volunteer Drama Specialist at Camp Outright, a residential summer camp program...for lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, transgender, questioning, and allied youth” (Kim, 2012).

She then explained how the over-simplification and possible implications of her title might not offer meaningful advocacy for the students that she wanted most to serve.

“The title of “Drama Specialist” seems ironic at a camp for queer youth. LGBTQ youth often find themselves in survival or self-protection mode in their everyday lives; school, community, and family might not be a safe space. As a result, many queer youth wear protective “diva” or “butch” masks rather than risk further stigmatization of themselves as “different” or “unacceptable” (Kim, 2012).

She went on to describe how she wanted to help students to move beyond masks and get to more authentic roles so that they did not feel like they had to hide behind masks as drama specialists in their everyday lives. She completed her post with a vignette about a complex improvisation that her students engaged in. She wrote:

“These fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds just used improvised theatre to give voice to real-life “othering” within the gay community, whether they were closeted or out. Their scene

gave way to an intense and cathartic dialogue among the campers about stigmatization within their own communities. They talked about their school GSTAs (gay, straight, trans, ally clubs) and the paradox of acting “too gay” for flamboyant students and the pressure to be “out, loud, and proud” for shyer ones. When we have a hard time accepting ourselves, we may act out against those who remind us of us. [T]heatre created change and built awareness of our common plights, onstage and off — not only for the audience, but for the actors too. We are all spect-actors when it comes to social justice, even the Drama Specialists” (Kim, 2012).

Creating change and building awareness were outcomes of the actions and messages described by Kim’s voice and in the voices of so many of the *ALT/space* teaching artists. Kim was focusing with students in her narrative on issues of scripting and dialogue in dramatic form. But, in a moment when their performance came together and they realized that they were performing a miniature moment of their own lives. Advocacy was their artistry.

While the *ALT/space* teaching artists each engaged in deep exploration of their artistic practices and enlisted learners and community partners as artistic allies, they also set high expectations for art to be a central action for a better life. The loftiness of their subtle advocacy was tempered by the actual descriptions of the intimate and grounded actions that they took in practice. Activist tendencies of an organized body were not obvious when I read individual blog entries. The teaching artists described mostly lessons and how the learning played out in alignment with some personal reflection on daily human life, artistic practice, or a social issue. But over the three years of my study, paying attention to over 40 voices and bringing those voices with me into my own everyday practices, I was overwhelmed by the collective sense of a movement. As I sat in a room in Boston, full of peer teaching artists who were also administrators and advocates, I began to believe that it might be possible to address big issues of human need with the teensy tools that we were using on a daily, one-by-one basis. I returned to the present and listened with hopefulness for new clues.

The conversation turned to ways that our arts programs could improve use of evaluations in the form of surveys, checklists, and quantitative data. There was agreement that teaching artists on their respective faculties “really needed to be convinced to do those chores” (From fieldnotes, March 2014). There was a moment of mutual laughter when one leader described how much work a teaching artist was willing to do to collect photographs, student interviews, and performance anecdotes, but how she almost quit when she was asked to have her students complete a 4-question quantitative survey. I interpreted that laughter as mutual because I knew that many of us, funders and school district personnel alike, were artists who understood the value of survey information for documenting the nuts and bolts of program progress. At the same time we understood the difficulties of asking peers to do tasks that were against their better pedagogical judgment.

What I understood the most, was that because we were also teaching artists, we knew the superior quality of the non-survey information that we could glean from a dance rehearsal in recordings, anecdotes, and interviews. There was irony in our laughter because we knew that the most valuable information about student learning was not being accessed with the survey data. By laughing at the independence and lack of interest expressed by the teaching artists in that data, we were responsible for reproducing a serious flaw that is reproduced every day in educational systems. We were ignoring the value of aesthetic data that is inherently present when a marginalized young person takes on another persona for survival, or when a teacher must face the fears and distrust of a student who comes from a culturally different world.

We all knew that a valuable combination of observations, performances, student sketches, exhibit work, and critique feedback was much more difficult to gather and much less uniform to translate for our boards, funders, and political decision-makers than data from the simple surveys

we used for expediency. We were guilty at that moment of reinforcing teaching artists as under-committed to formal assessment of teaching when in fact they were taking their work more seriously than we may have been. I believed in that moment that the TARP study was heading in the right direction. Teaching artists invited human complexity into a system that was excluding so many young people in the name of efficacy.

#### *Review of this study*

In this final chapter, I restate the original intent of the study followed by a brief summary of the methodology that revealed new understandings about the practices of teaching artists in contemporary educational systems. This section includes an explanation of the two theories that have emerged from the study: teaching artistry as a *critical* community of practice and exquisite corpse analysis for ethnography. I propose that these theories were helpful to me due to their complexity and to the custom design that may not be replicable by others. I review the emergent understandings that are now possible from my own hypotheses, and explain a hesitation that I hold for naming my new understandings as findings. I offer implications from this study for teaching artist practice and policy. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the study's potential for future research.

#### *Original intent of the study*

This study began as an exploration of teaching artist development of professional dispositions in between worlds of the arts and worlds of education. I was interested in better understanding how a growing career community of teaching artists could be more effective at formalizing or articulating their vision. I began with an assumed binary theory: teaching artists straddle arts and education fields. I proposed that because they exist in-between worlds they were prevented from becoming a more powerful or respected profession. Yet, by delving deeper

in between those worlds through literature and through the eyes and voices of teaching artists and their diverse partners, it became evident that my research question was now less logical to me. The original question was: *How do teaching artists navigate and communicate their own career development across social, educational, and artistic situations?* That question emphasized career development. Yet, I found that teaching artists were less concerned with advancing their field as an occupation or career, and were more concerned with improving social and learning conditions through artistic practices. Their critical and aesthetically rich social actions helped me to understand that wide-awakeness was a way of life and not always agreed upon as a career skill by teaching artists. I reviewed this inquiry in previous studies and policy documents that called for definition and description of teaching artist practices (Burnaford et al., 2007; Booth, 2003; Daichendt, 2010; Rabkin et al., 2011; Tannenbaum, 2011). I understood that my question was meaningful, but it was increasingly evident from the data that teaching artists themselves were less concerned with their career development and more concerned with disparities for learners and improving on the environments they co-created for teaching and learning.

### *Unfolding methodology*

My research question launched a two and a half year engagement with *ALT/space* blog entries and related virtual and real world sites where teaching artists congregated and exchanged narratives about their practices across the United States and around the world. In the early months of that engagement, the U.S. Secretary of Education made public comment on the gross inequity of access to arts education in our nations schools, calling it a “civil rights issue” (Duncan, 2012) and recommended further attention be paid to the hybrid work being done by teaching artists in and around educational systems. The leadership of SEADAE then published a

white paper (Richerme et al., 2012) on “[R]oles of the key partners who are responsible for providing an articulated, coherent, systemic, and sustainable K-12 arts education for all students” (p. 1). The white paper recommended that teaching artists as “providers of supplemental arts instruction” (p. 5) had a role in K-12 education systems. The paper emphasized the word *system* in a cautionary statement.

They can help provide students valuable insights into their work and their lives as practicing artists. However, providers of supplemental arts instruction must avoid presenting themselves as an alternative to providing an arts education *system*. (p. 10)

In this statement there was a warning about how teaching artists were presenting themselves as alternative practitioners. This caused me to slightly shift my research stance from examining what teaching artists do in their career development to paying closer attention to what they do within and around public education systems. It raised my consciousness to policies that were beginning to be formed around teaching artistry. The warning and use of the word “alternative” also made me conscious of my own complicity in establishing *ALT/space*.

#### *Alternative issues*

The ALT acronym in *ALT/space* was a shorthand representation of the words artist, learner, and teacher (Reeder, 2011) that also referenced the options available to me when I used the “Alt” key on my computer keyboard. Editor Nick Jaffe and I enjoyed the double entendre because we were launching an “alt”ernative space online with *ALT/space*. We were proud to be alternative. We were unafraid to present alternatives to an academic publishing system and to regular educational systems. But, we were not proposing that teaching artistry replace struggling professionals in the K-12 system.

I quickly found from the *ALT/space* voices that a community was developing with a degree of resistance to mainstream qualifications usually proscribed for public educators due to evidence of inequitable access to arts learning in public education for a majority of learners. There was significant evidence of teaching artists working as allies to existing systems and professionals. I crafted sub-questions with this consciousness in mind to address:

- The range of contexts that have encouraged individual and collective teaching artist professional practice. *What is or is not happening in and around education and arts education specifically that engenders increased interest in teaching artistry?*
- The qualities of teaching artist pedagogies that are developed intentionally or not, through practices in and outside of schools. *What do teaching artists do that differentiates their practices from school arts instruction, from regular classroom instruction, or from existing social and cultural and standards-based services?*
- The ways that teaching artists are beginning to form a collective career or professional identity in spite of an unformed system of training or advancement. *How do teaching artists identify and extend their own career communities?*

While these questions did not presume at the time to be about critical theory or pedagogy, they became more and more about resistance and agency than I had expected because I because I was reading the voices of *ALT/space* through a community of practice lens (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Brown & Duguid, 1991; Duguid 2008).

#### *Critical community of practice*

Community of practice was a theory that had undergone a political shift in practice from a pedagogical theory to use in education as a limited managerial model, and then back again to a theory of social agency (2008). I found this to be a parallel arc to the political history of teaching

artists due to their participation in a pedagogical movement that became part of a systemic model (Rabkin et al., 2011; Stankiewicz, 1989) and now I was finding conscious resistance to that system in their *ALT/space* voices.

My proposed research relied heavily on content analysis of the blog entries and on interviews with the teaching artists. I envisioned ethnography as the main method because I was feeling timid about my novice role as an educational researcher. I had been a practitioner for my thirty-something years. How was I qualified to anything more than observe and describe? By interviewing teaching artists, I was reminded that my status as a peer teaching artist who also had a unique policy-level perspective of the field was of some value. I had history and authority at helping to craft policy statements when I was a grantmaker with the New York State Council on the Arts and a board member with Americans for the Arts. I was probably guilty of establishing pedagogical frameworks that rushed toward efficient alignment with standards so that schools and non-school partners could access resources. By focusing my research on ethnography, I was able to re-discover my arts-based confidence, but with a greater sensibility of my own valid membership in a community teaching artist practice.

#### *A corps of alternative data*

The eight teaching artists that I interviewed for this study all became program leaders at some point in their careers. Additionally, at least half of the forty teaching artists in *ALT/space* also described being in charge of program administration in their posts. Of the interviewed teaching artists most of them maintained their positions for financial stability. Yet, they all confessed to believing that they were also better able to interpret policy and program-level practices than non-teaching artist colleagues due to their understanding of the messy and layered

meanings that can be found in aesthetic data. None of the teaching artists interviewed made these comments as a way to diminish the value of quantitative data to policymakers and business leaders. Rather, they felt that they needed to insert themselves as place-keepers for the human and aesthetic work of arts education in a system that overwhelmingly relied on quantitative data for making decisions about art and learning. They saw the value of understanding the survey as a tool, while advocating for keeping methods such as the “August Wilson” monologue in their repertoire of assessment tools as well.

I referred to voices and stories from artists, learners, and teachers as aesthetic data earlier in this study, but I am not the first to call for greater use of such information in educational advocacy. As I summarize my findings for the advocacy world in this chapter, I remind readers that in *Educational Courage: Resisting the Ambush of Public Education* (Schniedwind & Sapon-Shevin, 2012), Deborah Meier called such stories of voice and aesthetic experience “alternative data” when she wrote:

One of the most powerful ways to resist the dominant, suffocating narratives that surround us—about what’s wrong with schools, about blaming teachers, about the benefits of privatized education—is to create alternative images and share alternative data. And perhaps the most persuasive forms of “alternative data” are our stories. Our lives—our lived experiences—are our data. Test scores are, at best indirect evidence of what is happening in schools for children, but our lives and stories are the real data.

When we sit down with a child and listen to her read, we have much more useful and powerful evidence of that child’s reading skills than through viewing a test score. (p. xi)

Other influential advocates for education and arts education have echoed this recommendation for more detailed and subjective information (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). Yet as I write this final

chapter in 2014, the fields of arts education and of education at large still struggle to make good use of aesthetic data in the form of such subjective and informative voices and stories (Giroux, 2005; Kress & Lake, 2013; Rabkin et al., 2011; Schniedwind & Sapon-Shevin, 2012).

My deep belief in artistic process as a source for important pedagogical work led me to use exquisite corpse artistic process as analytical tool. The alternative and aesthetic data that was emerging from my artist, learner, and teacher worlds along with the voices of data that were emerging through situational analysis of *ALT/space* teaching artist blogs became a tangled and changeable body of information that eventually unfolded into meaningful data. I had found a few truths. Were they findings? Perhaps, but in keeping with my commitment to the character of this ethnography, I refer to them as bodies, or corps(e)s of understanding.

*Corps(e) of understanding #1: The opposite of standard*

This study indicates that teaching artists make up a formidable and grassroots community of practice. Additionally, they can be actively understood as a critical community of practice due to their everyday resistance to powerful norms that exclude people in many areas of life. They are engaged in practices of arts-centered co-learning, inclusion of multiple partners, and collaborative development of career habits. The critical community of practice that was evident in the *ALT/space* sphere of blog contributors was also comparable to practices of teaching artists in their discipline specific or socially specific contexts. By participating in the *ALT/space* community, many teaching artists expressed a heightened sense of their own career confidence.

This was also evident to me firsthand. When I decided to leave my position as an arts education policymaker to embark on a formal dissertation journey of arts education research, I never abdicated my core identity as a teaching artist. I continued to work in schools and with cultural organizations as a visual artist who used her artistic experience for teaching and

learning. I wrestled with my own perceptions of researcher identity. For a time, I stepped away from the *ALT/space* blog, thinking that it was important for researchers to be able to stand back and keep to the edges of a study site so as not to influence participant actions. I found that I was wrong. By returning to *ALT/space*, not as an editor, but as a contributing teaching artist, I reclaimed my own voice as a teaching artist who was better suited to translate a culture of teaching artistry to the higher education, public education, and policy worlds that employed me.

I have found from sitting beside my peer teaching artists, that they form a significant corps of voices that are being echoed, but not especially heard in policy worlds. Their collective voices are not a shouting chorus as much as they are a campaign of whispers and person-to-person negotiations. They are the opposite of standardizing forces and they appear to consciously choose that status. Ultimately, organizing and credentialing for teaching artists has entered into their conversations. Yet, the number of actual teaching artists who have expressed interest in such formal institutions quite low (Rabkin, et al., 2011). Some higher education institutions have begun to offer certificate programs and degrees in teaching artistry, yet standardization and accreditation of their work is still not a significant part of their own demand.

The TARP study and this study both indicate that artists overwhelmingly resist the structures that have been constructed in the name of education and education reform, because those structures have shown evidence of limiting the practices of full-time school arts professionals. Additionally, and perhaps quite obviously, the damaging effects of standardization in education reform can hardly convince teaching artists that certifying their practices will reduce the disparities that they are called on to address in their work each day. This was also articulated on that day in Boston when a teaching artist and program leader said,

“Teaching artists here, in the Boston area, do not have any one professional organization. It is sort of discipline-specific or organization-specific. Mostly the funding and school

folks are concerned with our getting together because it really would help them to support us more. If they get us in one room together, they might be able to get enough data at that moment. But it is both hard because of time and money, and sort of against what we do well as artists. You know, I sort of love the way we find each other when we need to. I am not sure I would want anything else” (From fieldnotes, 2014).

Casual acceptance of an un-formed community of practice is not unusual among teaching artists, and this study was not designed to determine the benefits or disadvantages to organizing. But, the persistent mantra of “get[ing] us in one room together” was expressed by ALT/space teaching artists and in a wider community of teaching artistry. One ALT/space teaching artist said it like this:

“I remembered that’s what’s great about this whole “Teaching Artist” thing anyway. If we weren’t unorthodox, if we didn’t look at things differently than classroom teachers, civic leaders, and even other Teaching Artists, there’d be no work for us.”

Then she provided an “elevator speech” for how she might explain her field to others. In this section, she indicates that she collaborates with other artists and convenes through her writing.

She wrote:

“Hi! My name is Alison. I’m an interdisciplinary artist and educator working to connect the dots across disciplines for audiences and learners of all ages. I help teachers integrate the arts into core curriculum areas, collaborate with other artists to create community performances, and write about my experiences on the Teaching Artist Journal’s Alt/Space blog” (Alison, 2012).

Getting together, in many forms among the ALT/space teaching artists, was understood as a preferred mode of professional development. Without formally naming their gatherings, it was possible to stay un-aligned with any one organizational system. This, unorthodox perspective, as articulated by Alison (above) was part of ensuring that there would be more work in the future.

In July 2014 there was a second global convening of approximately 200 teaching artists at the International Teaching Artist Conference in Brisbane, Australia, and the conference design

began by calling itself an “unconference” with the intention of gathering teaching artists in one place, but trying ostensibly to be the opposite of a standard conference. The website stated,

ITAC 2 signals a conference with a difference – perhaps an ‘unconference’, one which steps back from the established format of keynotes, panels and papers to one seeking to build global and collaborative narratives of teaching artistry, made rich by the engaged participation of all delegates. (From ITAC2 website, 2014)

Similarly, when a cadre of teaching artists affiliated with the *Teaching Artist Journal* wrote the *Teaching Artist Handbook* (Jaffe, Barniskis, Hackett Cox, 2014) a review from a teaching artist in the field expressed clear distaste for traditional academic approaches to her work.

Another wonderful discovery was that teaching artists “teach” by respecting their “students” as artists at the onset. We don’t just fill their heads with our knowledge. Way too old-school and traditionally academic. (From *Teaching Artist Handbook* website, 2014)

Finally, increased coverage of teaching artists in popular publications, scholarship, programming, and certificate offerings in the past three years indicate that teaching artists are indeed organizing in a prosthetic way. While they may be doing it with a stated indifference or disdain for tradition, a field of common issues and interests is becoming known in and around education and cultural communities.

“It seems to us that not enough of the writing about teaching artist work and arts education is written from the perspective of teaching artists. What brings many of us teaching artists to the work is the art making. We teach our disciplines first and foremost because we love making work and helping others to make their work is so satisfying. We also think that the love of art making is what makes students want to work with teaching artists and what makes art making especially educative. We hope the ideas in this book serve to further that simple truth that is at the center of teaching artist work.” – (Nick, Becca, Barbara, 2014)

Complexity and the custom nature of artistic practice is at the heart of this study. I did not spend significant time analyzing individual artistic experiences for pedagogical gains because I feel that the field is filled with research that has been querying such data for many years (Catterall, 2009; Hetland & Winner, 2001; Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012; Winner & Cooper, 2001). At times I agree that intense interest in artistic practice may make it appear that teaching artists lean too far away from being capable partners to standardized educational systems. It may make them appear to care too much about an ivory tower ideal of artistic talent development or in their own artistic development over the care and success of students. In the ALT/space entries, this was simply not the case. Teaching artists could not separate their artistry from their teaching artistry and the central concern for this inseparable quality stemmed from explicit descriptions of concern for learners in a system that was excluding and limiting them. It is my hope that this study inspires more teaching artists to seek out intentional communities of practice so that they can extend and grow their meaningful approaches within an exhausted and overly restricted field of social, educational, and artistic workers.

*Corps(e) of understanding #2: Teaching artistry and policy implications*



Figure 47. *Teaching artists' work can be defined through many lenses, Linda (2012)*

Teaching artists in the ALT/space community of practice were not unaware of the policies that shaped their lives and the ways that they worked in and around educational systems. They have, in many cases abdicated their teaching and learning to step up to policy engagement for the good of others. Two understandings from this study may have implications for arts education policy. These include: understanding that teaching artists are already active in influencing policy and that arts education policy may benefit from a reduced emphasis on standards.

Teaching artists in this study have shown that they care about policies that influence what they do with students. Yet they exert greater energies toward small acts of agency over large-scale measures. I found through this study that, as Maxine Greene once said, “The time may have come again for the painting of murals” (Arendt, 1961, n.d., p. 13). To me this means that by following the lead of teaching artists and stepping back from more standardization of practices

and telling stories from our active “work” of art (Booth, 2001, p. 2), it may be possible to influence policymakers to look for more new approaches to serving learners. In fact, because teaching artists had not organized and had continued to do their successful work in the field, they had slowly influenced and irritated policymakers at the executive and national levels into taking action.

This year there was a concerted effort from national arts organizations to draft a new set of standards for arts education (NCCAS, 2014). The new standards include many sensitive elements that indicate an increased interest in student agency and engaging directly in artistic practices. Yet, as with standards that have come before them, they are still understood as an objective and a content area for learning instead of a medium through which learning happens.

Recently, I acted as a facilitator for a national “town hall meeting” with arts education leaders hosted by Americans for the Arts (AFTA) in Nashville, Tennessee. Their goal was to strengthen current messages that they were bringing to legislators for increasing arts education resources. When I reviewed a field guide that AFTA had published to try to help people to understand the communities surrounding arts learning, I was reminded about the difficulties that may be ahead of us if policy tried to allow for more complexity within an already complex system. The guide (Figure 48) included a graphic organizer that drew on traditions of situational analysis to describe fields and discourses.

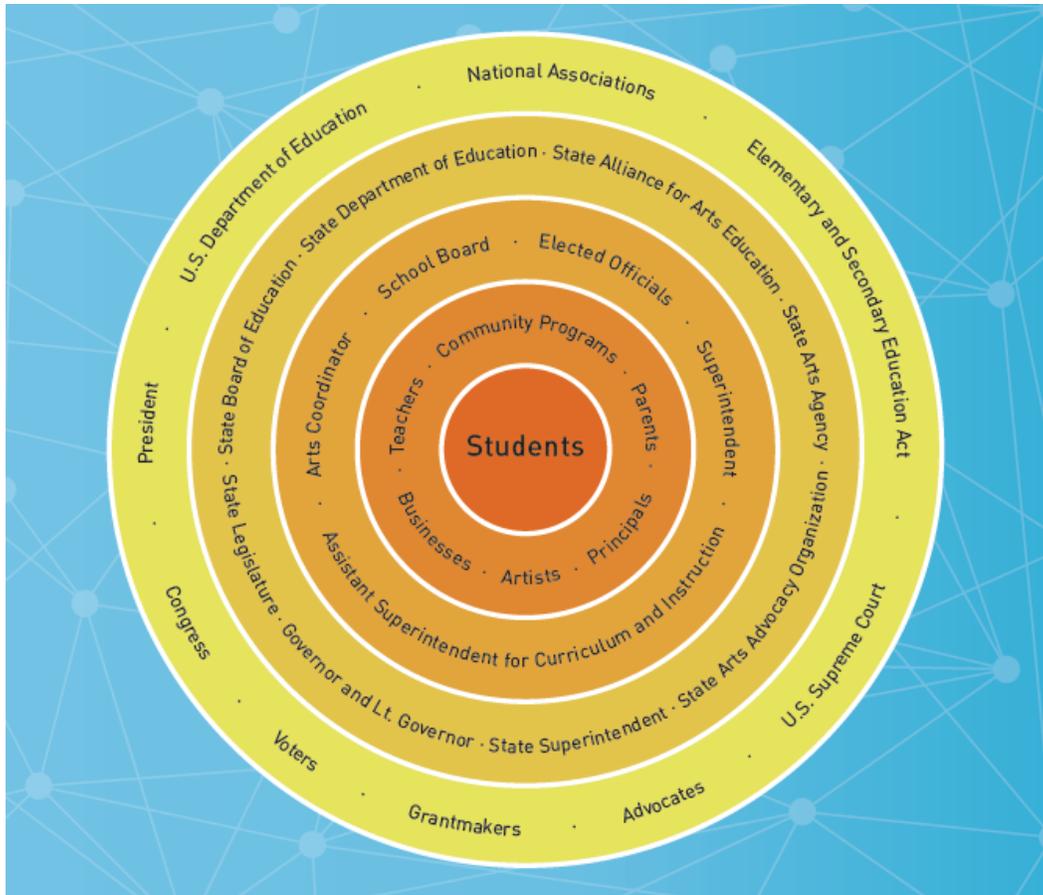


Figure 48. *Spheres of Influence: Americans for the Arts (2012)*

The map included many participants who influenced the education of a student. The role of artists was truthfully, a small one, just outside of the student arena. Three spheres of institutional policy encircled the small central communities in the middle indicating the density of top-down messages that must be navigated in order to influence a learner.

Another, more recent graphic organizer animated the SEADAE recommendations about roles in the field and illustrated them (Figure 49) as a “Shared Endeavor” (2014).

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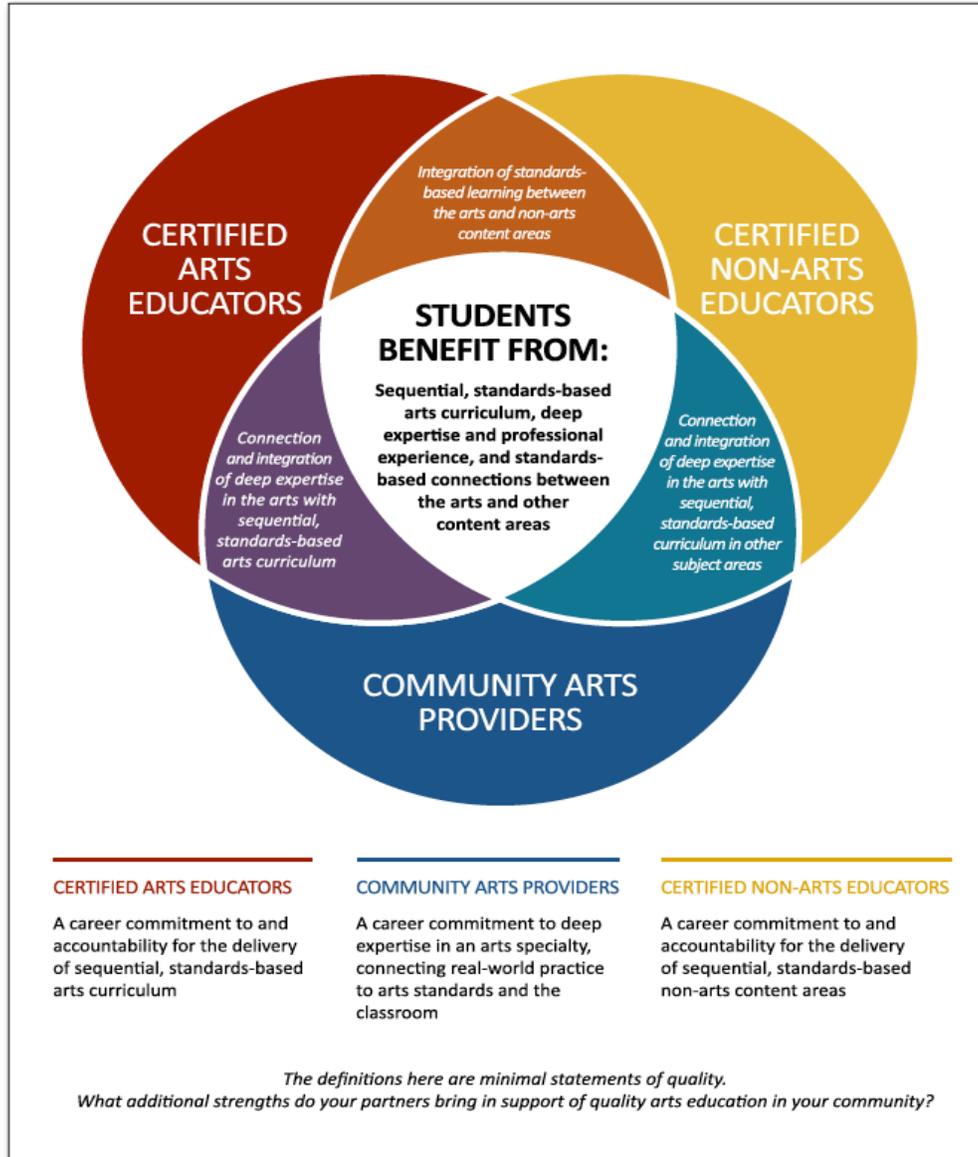


Figure 49. *A Shared Endeavor, SEADAE (2014)*

This made it appear that teaching artists, now in the field of “community arts providers” were likely on equal status in the education ecosystem. Yet, the words included in the student sphere stated:

Sequential, standards-based arts curriculum, deep expertise and professional experience, and standards-based connections between the arts and other content areas. (2014)

Standards were still at the heart of the student learning experience. The surrounding triangles of overlapping influence also included a repetition of “standards-based” and assumptions that the arts were to be understood in all educational arenas as a subject area. This was not incorrect information. It was simply evident that in an era when students have seen shocking decrease in their access to any arts education, standardizing the existing options would provide stricter limitations and could exclude more.

A publication (Figure 50) designed for national advocacy use was provided to the field by

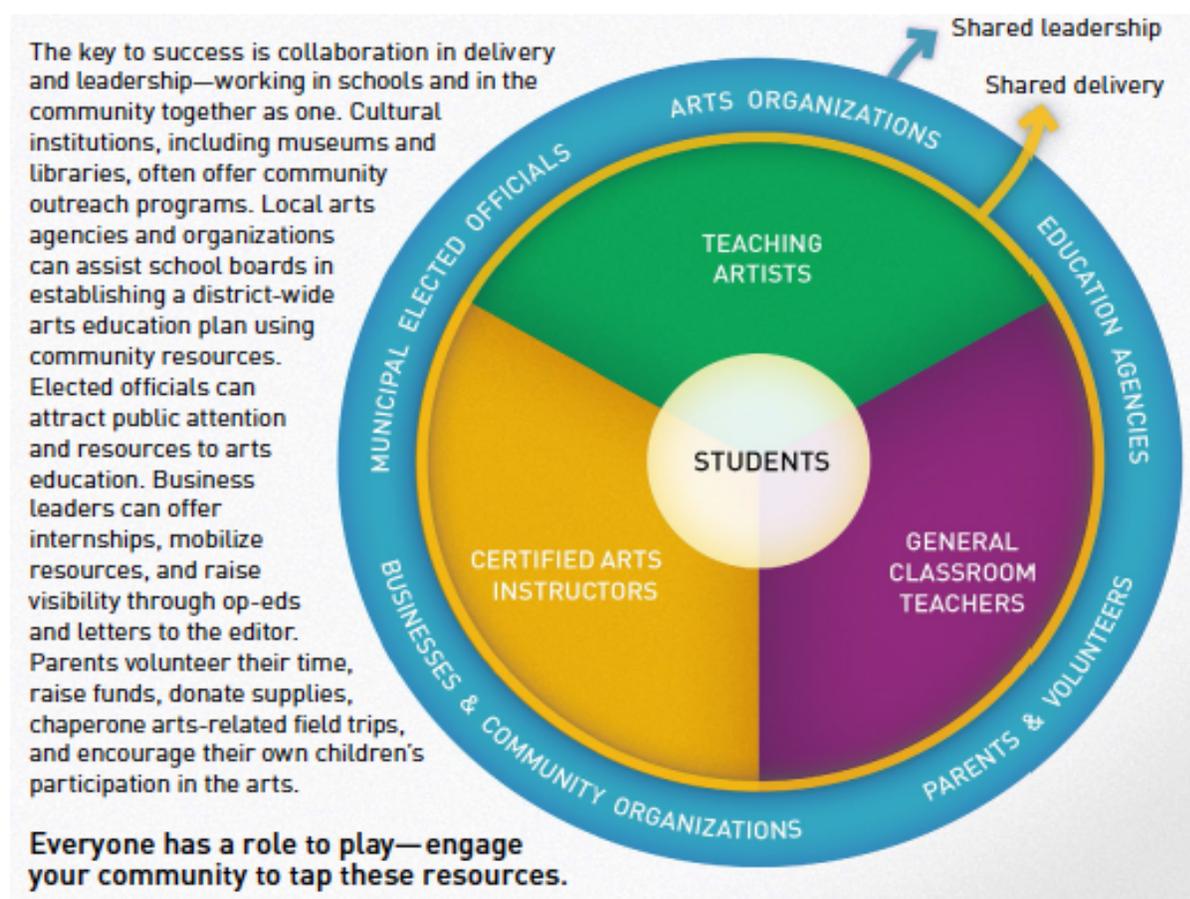


Figure 50. *Americans for the Arts, Navigator Series* (2013)

AFTA in 2013. This publication extended a more inclusive message about the collaborative possibilities among teaching artists and peer educators in and around schools. From this study, it is evident that policies might be drafted with the assistance of practicing teaching artists and their

students to embrace advocacy for learning that emerges from stories such as those told by *ALT/space* teaching artists.

### *Implications for future research*

This study provides one more example of arts-based research to a growing field. I offer it here also as a training tool for emerging scholars who want to understand how they define arts-based approaches. The wrestling match that I had within my artist, learner, teacher, activist, and researcher identities may provide a sympathetic case study for students of the field. Additionally, I believe that this study provides significant texture to the calls put forth by the arts education field for more narratives and alternative data on teaching artist practices. I hope that it is also used as a small magnifying glass to stories that were not fully told in the TARP study due to the wide and deep nature of that report.

The social and educational implications of this research are deeply intertwined with national political debates around education. At the outset of this dissertation I referenced problems of racism and exclusion associated with policies enacted in the name of education reform. At the completion of this dissertation, I have been reminded by one of my mentors that education “deform” may be a more appropriate description for what happens when we remove the arts from systems of public education. Because work for teaching artists in and around schools appeared has increased due to greater political interest in arts education, this study might indicate that there is a positive trend in education systems to acknowledge the humanizing value of artistic expression in learning. Yet, each of the teaching artists in this study found some way to articulate moments when students neglected or harmed by failure in educational and social systems. They shared what they knew, what they saw, and what they sought to do about it. Their

juxtaposed body of voices provided an indictment of systems that are supposed to be trustworthy. Their corps of critical evidence is real.

One of my deepest hopes for the completion of this research is that it will guide all educators, parents, artists, policymakers, social workers, and allies to education to bring their own evidence of education system failure to a larger forum combine voices, loudly...for critical change. This is what Deborah Meier meant in her call for “alternative data” (in Schniedwind & Sapon-Shevin, 2012). This study makes alternative data very visible. In the meantime, the process has provided reassuring evidence of teaching artists as critical practitioners who are tireless in their commitment to improving systems by empowering their learners and by opting out of standardized professional pathways for themselves. Finally, I have found new tools in this study to arm me in my own work as an influencer of future teachers, artists, arts teachers, policymakers, and of course, teaching artists.

### *Final unfolding*

This study sometimes felt as if it were simply a regurgitation of interesting quotes glued together with an undulating body of observations. That is often the case with ethnography and it is certainly the case with my own artistic practices of assemblage. I have been urged by my research advisor to end articles and chapters with my own voice as a way to substantiate the value of the quote to my own theory. But at this moment, and in this study, I feel that the voices of practicing teaching artists do speak volumes. I end this chapter with an apology to James H. Rolling, Jr., EdD. James, this final voice from ALT/space teaching artist Joan, simply says it all:

“This is my last entry for ALT/space. I have enjoyed reflecting on my practice and my field. It has informed my teaching and my career path in many ways. I thought I would take this moment to reflect on the field in general and my place in it.

I dropped out of education school because I thought it had too little to do with teaching. I just wanted to teach. I had a talent for it. In education school, at the time, the students didn't teach anyone for a couple of years. Instead, we read research about education. And, we learned about how to assess and what kind of posters to put on the wall. (Not that there's anything wrong with that.) It wasn't engaging. I was (and continue to be) the kind of student that does poorly if not engaged in either the content or the teaching. One of them has to get my attention. In education school, neither did. So I quit.

Being an independent teaching artist was the ideal career choice for someone with my learning style. It's a vagabond life where change is required constantly. And, arts integration is the pinnacle of that because I engage kids through theater in order to show them how cool social studies is. My goal has always been to be the teacher that I wish I'd had when I was in school: engaging, funny and smart. My greatest joy is seeing the look of "Huh, I never thought of that before" or "I get it now" in a student's eyes. In that moment, I can see their brains change as they look at the world a little differently than they did before. In my teaching style, I point it out and say, "I just saw your brain get bigger. Did you feel it?"



Figure 51. *Watching a kid's brain grow.* (Joan, 2012)

Unfortunately for me, watching a kid's brain grow is not a measurable assessment tool and I can't put it on the grant application. Over the many years in the field of arts education, both teaching and in management, I've watched the field move closer to my memory of education school. If I want to go into a school to play improv games with kids so that they're more confident, I need to show how that activity meets the curriculum content standards established by the specific school district in which I'm working. And, when the program is over, I must measure the results with an appropriate assessment tool.

I understand why the teaching artist field had to move in this direction and become more professional. Schools are under tremendous pressures to succeed and

fundlers want to see a return on their investments. I have even advocated for the approach, teaching that it was the teaching artist's responsibility to understand what was happening in the classroom so that we could help the teachers meet curricular goals, so that we could show them that we can meet standards in engaging ways. And, I still think that's true. I believe that it's important that schools have certified arts teachers in the buildings who worked in partnership with teaching artists in the field.

But I think we may have been had. As teaching artists became more like certified arts teachers without the certification, many principals in Baltimore City started eliminating certified arts teachers. And, why shouldn't they? Principals can hire a teaching artist contractually (lower rate, no benefits) to come in once a week and teach on a rotating schedule. They can fire them at will without having to worry about a union. Then, they can bring a new one in to jump through the hoops of a grinding hierarchical bureaucracy.

I left education school for a reason and I feel myself disengaging from the practice of being an independent teaching artist for some of the same reasons. My work, like when I was a student, is suffering for my lack of engagement. It may also be that it's almost June and I'm tired from a long, difficult school year. I know it's time for me to re-examine my place in the field. Should I stay on the path of the in-school arts integration residency model or opt for the freedom of after-school and community arts? Should I focus on training teachers and teaching artists? Or take a job with an arts organization and return to administration? I will have a month of teaching in Northern Ireland this summer to decide. The future is fluid.

Please stay in touch.

Joan" (2014)

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## APPENDIX A – Interview Consent



ART EDUCATION - COLLEGE OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS - SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
COMSTOCK ART FACILITY, RM. 043, 1055 COMSTOCK AVE., SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY  
SYRACUSE, NY, 13244 - (315) 443-2355

### *Participant Consent Form: Teaching Artists and Communities of Practice*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Laura Reeder and I am a doctoral candidate at Syracuse University. I am inviting you to participate in a research study. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. This sheet will explain the study to you. Please feel free to ask questions about the research if you have any. I will be happy to explain anything in detail if you wish.

I am interested in learning more about how teaching artists develop professional identities without formal credentialing and training communities. I am studying published *ALT/space* blog articles that you and approximately twenty-five other teaching artists have posted online. You may be asked to participate in interviews via phone. Interviews will be scheduled via email and phone in advance and may last up to one hour. All information will be kept confidential. This means that I will assign a code for your interview responses, and only I and my faculty advisor, Dr. James H. Rolling will have the key to indicate which code belongs to which participant. In any articles I write or any presentations that I make, I will use a made-up name for you, and I will not reveal details or I will change details about your personal life.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed from blog entries. We will do our best to keep your personal information private and confidential.

I would like to record our interviews with a digital audio recorder. The purpose of the recording is to capture our conversation as a way of collecting data toward the study. All recorded data will be destroyed at the completion of the dissertation study, and your identity will be protected with the use of codes and pseudonyms.

The interviews will be conducted over two months and completed in the winter of 2012-13. A copy of this form will be provided to all participants. The risks to you of participating in this study are minimal. *Possible risks may include:*

- You might not feel at ease sharing information over a telephone.
- You might be unsure about sharing your perspectives for fear of judgment being passed.
- You might feel conflicted with my role as a researcher due to any past experiences with me as an editor for *Teaching Artist Journal*.
- You might be concerned that your identity will be revealed through details of the study.

*I hope to minimize these risks as follows:*

- I will be available to answer any questions, clarifications, or concerns about the project. You will have a clear understanding of my role as a researcher and you will have my support as an experienced teaching

artist in ways that will not compromise my role as researcher or your role as a teaching artist. I will encourage you to speak with a professional in your own community as needed, and I will make recommendations about resources I may have.

- If you do not wish to continue, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

- I will not share any information discussed in formal or informal interviews with people in the teaching artist field.

- All information is confidential. In the case where subject's identities need to be retained or can be associated with their responses, your name and/or identifying information will be kept confidential.

By taking part in the research you may find the benefits of having someone listen to your opinions and experience as a teaching artist.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions, concerns, complaints about the research, contact Laura Reeder ([lkreeder@syr.edu](mailto:lkreeder@syr.edu)) at 315-443-2355 or the Faculty Advisor of the study, Dr. James H. Rolling ([jrolling@syr.edu](mailto:jrolling@syr.edu)) at 315-443-2355. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you have questions, concerns, or complaints that you wish to address to someone other than the investigator, if you cannot reach the investigator, contact the Syracuse University Institutional Review Board at 315-443-3013.

All of my questions have been answered, I am 18 years of age or older, and I wish to participate in this research study. I have received a copy of this consent form.

I agree to be audio recorded.

I do not agree to be audio recorded.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of researcher

## APPENDIX B - Interview Prompts

Semi-structured, improvisatory interviews with professional teaching artists will include prompts and questions that relate to the three key research questions.

1. PAST & PRESENT: HOW DID TEACHING ARTISTS GET HERE? Teaching artists have an emerging professional identity in the United States as alternative practitioners in and around a system of public education. How does the emergence of this profession reflect contemporary educational issues? What are the evolving dispositions and practices that have generated teaching artist professions?

- How would you describe a sequence of events that brought you to your current profession as a teaching artist?
- What were the educational influences?
- What were the artistic influences?
- What were the social influences?
- How can you describe the practices that are unique to your teaching artist work? (as compared to artistic practice alone, or other professional practice?)

2. RELATIONAL IDENTITIES: WHAT KEEPS THE PROFESSION GROWING? Teaching artists have no consistent institutions of professional development across the United States that validate, promote, or regulate the quality of their practices. Additionally, they have been identified as relevant players by existing institutions in policymaking plans for the future. What are the situations that call for teaching artist professional membership? What can be learned from national forums for teaching artist dialogue that have emerged in recent years?

- What keeps you going as a teaching artist?
- Where do you go for professional development in educational, artistic, or social skills?
- Who are your professional peers? What do you gain from your relationships with them?
- What are your thoughts about teaching artists organizing into a more formal profession?

3. MULTI-SCALE EXPERIENCES: WHAT IS THEIR RANGE OF REFORMING PRACTICES? Teaching artists operate in diverse situations. They are overwhelmingly called on to support alternative or reform-driven projects. In a time of social-educational unrest and change, how do the qualities of teaching artist practice respond to varying systems of focus, need, and inequity?

- Where have you practiced as a teaching artist (schools, social/cultural organizations/etc.)?
- What have you found to be the essential skills for success in each different site?
- How do you define successful teaching artistry in those situations?
- What is better or changed about the situation from teaching artist practice?
- What might not be improved as a result of teaching artist participation?

APPENDIX C – ALT/space Participant Content from 8/2011 to 10/2013

TA ID	gender	cultural	art	blogs	site(s)	history	pedagogy	PD	Content Questions (- 0,1,2,3,4+)
TA 1	M	African-American	Writing Therapeutic expression	5 6-12-12 10-20-11	California Prison	criminal justice	learning by teaching, art to survive, rehabilitate, speak out	Prison workshops	Q1 – 4 being a teacher is more Q2 – 4 relationships outside Q3 – 4 humans not prisoners Q4 – 4 writing as art to outside Q5 – inner travels w/other artists
TA 2	M	Cherokee	Visual Photo, Art Ed	1 8-3-11	Missouri, International Higher Ed	academic	equity, spirituality, images from outsiders	BA, MA, PhD Art Ed	Q1 – 3 structure disappointment Q2 – 3 expanded community Q3 – 4 students share voice Q4 – 4 students voice injustice Q5 – academic, TAJ “easy” pub
TA 3	F	Caucasian	Poetry Creative Writing	6 2-21-12 10-4-11	Georgia, Higher Ed, undergrads	academic	empathy, memory	BA, MA,	Q1 – 4 writers/artists face fear Q2 – 4 TA as artist studied Q3 – 3 student identity explore Q4 – 3 student explore, mistake Q5 – artistic process
TA 4	F	Caucasian	Creative Writing Rhetoric Institutions	6 8-13-13 11-14-13	Social Services, Higher Ed	social services, prisons	complications, messiness	BA, MA, PhD candidate	Q1 – 4 misunderstandings Q2 – 4 representation, ID, teacher Q3 – 4 digging for salvation Q4 – 4 emergence, teachers chair Q5 – misread context of prison
TA 5	F	Caucasian	Theater Scriptwriting Online Ed	9 8-13-12 8-9-11	Minnesota Schools/Orgs	state/national AIE	collaborative mentoring, technology	AIE general BFA, M.Ed	Q1 – 4 sobering partnerships places Q2 – 4 TA realities, the road, offense Q3 – 4 student thanks, needed this Q4 – 4 voices that changed worlds Q5 – fundable work?
TA 6	F	Chinese-American	Theater-Visual Outsider Teen	11 11-8-12 8-10-11	Chicago Art Center	community arts	asset-based urban reform, outsider art, youth issues,	BA Art Mgmt MA Art Ed TA PD group w/Columbia	Q1 – 4 path of growth, outsider Q2 – 4 path of growth, blog it out Q3 – 4 taking risks together Q4 – 4 revolutionary Jane Addams Q5 – TA growth leadership self
TA 7	F	Caucasian	Theater Comedy Film/video	7 10-1-13 10-22-12	CNY Schools, orgs, adults, SpEd	performance state/national AIE	gifts, passion, inquiry, struggle	BA, MA AIE general (ESP)	Q1 – 4 questioning, mindful Q2 – 3 partner teachers, non arts Q3 – 4 empowerment, overcoming Q4 – 4 new voice & message Q5 – making a difference, paradigm
TA 8	M	Caucasian	Music General, fun	5 9-24-13 10-30-12	Ohio, schools, orgs, edu performing	PK-grad, music ed	connections, playing together, resisting standards	BA, MA Music Ed	Q1 – 3 conscious of skill orient Q2 – 2 revision, partners Q3 – 3 student direction, path Q4 – 2 confidence, hit a wall Q5 – methods, specifics
TA 9	M	Caucasian	Theater Reflective, social	5 2-13-13 8-11-11	Alaska, orgs, schools, state dept of Ed	engaged theater	rural, indigenous, dialogic, empathy,	BFA NYU Tisch	Q1 – 4 love of work, policy power Q2 – 4 teachers disempowered Q3 – 4 students emerge Q4 – 4 community generations Q5 – recruits allies
TA 10-F	F	Caucasian	Visual/Theater, Museum, puppetry	8 2-4-13 11-6-11	Family orgs, museums,	practice to academic	aesthetics, media, equity, interaction, reality vs academic	BA, MA, PhD candidates Married to TA 10-M	Q1 – 4 critical curiosity Q2 – 3 bert/ernie TA intimacy Q3 – 4 student empathy Q4 – 4 large world struggle art Q5 – staten island reboot
TA 10-M	M	Caucasian	Visual/Theater, Museum, puppetry	8 2-4-13 11-6-11	Family orgs, museums,	practice to academic	aesthetics, media, equity, interaction, reality vs academic	BA, MA, PhD candidates Married to TA 10-F	Q1 – 4 critical curiosity Q2 – 3 bert/ernie TA intimacy Q3 – 4 student empathy Q4 – 4 large world struggle art Q5 – staten island reboot
TA 11	F	African American	Writer, dancer, singer Poetry, performance	1 3-9-12	Charlotte, NC, local/national orgs, Spanish/literacy classrooms	teaching to artistry	literacies, well-lived life, relevance	BA, MA AIE PDF	Q1 – 3 TA as story listener Q2 – 4 TA empathy development Q3 – 3 talk about lives Q4 – 4 listen and listen to Q5 – quotes eric booth
TA 12	F	Peruvian	Visual Painter	3 4-8-13 2-14-12	NY, Lima (Peru) Residencies, schools, galleries	resident artist to teaching artist	differentiation, installation, play	BA	Q1 – 4 radical change environment Q2 – 4 5-30-12 split personality Q3 – 4 why should they care? Q4 – 4 art in bigger context Q5 – FB example,
TA 13	F	Caucasian	Process dance, writing	6 9-30-13	Minnesota, schools	artist to teaching artist	kinesthetic, variety, uniqueness	BA, MA Liberal Arts,	Q1 – 4 make a diff (I got this) Q2 – 3 reference artists, TA ID Q3 – 3 student engagement

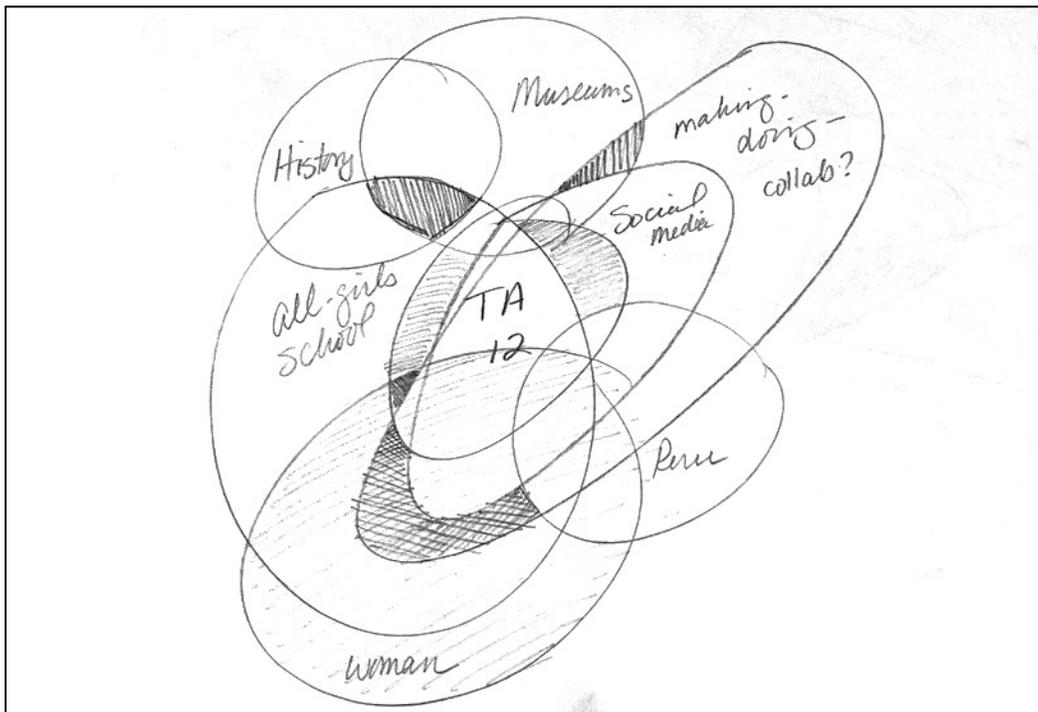
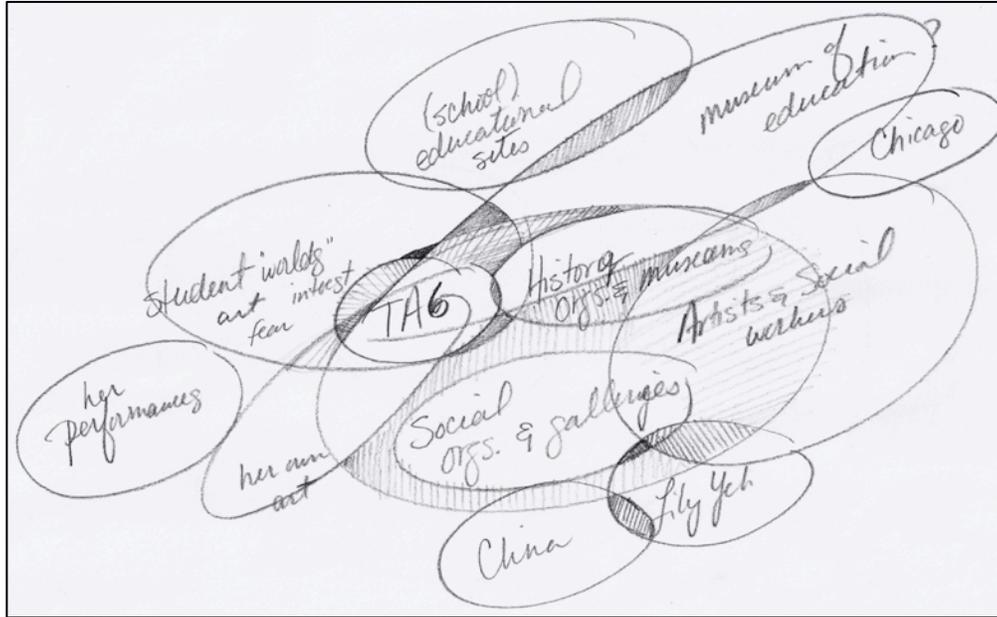
			chance dance	6-19-12						Q4 – 2 methods Q5 – TA identity, newcomer
TA 14	F	Caucasian Canadian	visual general	6 11-12-12 1-16-12	British Columbia, community arts	undergrad	transformation, social systems	MICA undergrad		Q1 – 4 TA learner conflicted justice Q2 – 4 TAs and frustrated systems Q3 – 4 “I am” prison students, God Q4 – 4 student voices other voices Q5 – criminal justice relationship
TA 15	M	Caucasian	Music sound engineering, guitarist	1 11-9-11	Chicago, school, community, orgs, TAJ	aircraft mechanic to TA	integrity, responsive, big picture	TAJ editor		Q1 – 3 art making, learning, equal Q2 – 3 should see larger TA role Q3 – 3 students, their own work Q4 – 2 students define problems Q5 – interest for “me”
TA 16	M	Caucasian	Visual, writing cartoonist	7 6-25-12 9-9-11	Oklahoma, VSA, schools, orgs	ELL, disability	Engagement, ability	BA, ?		Q1 – 3 shared learning, UDL Q2 – 4 mentorship from ESL teacher Q3 – 3 outer space immigrant stories Q4 – 4 autonomy used beyond class Q5 – multiple examples
TA 17	F	Caucasian	theater director	5 6-17-13 9-24-12	Vermont, orgs, schools, slams	social justice, performance	Theater in action	BA, ? AIE world		Q1 – 4 anxiety, relevance, naive Q2 – 4 TAs piecing together ID Q3 – 4 strength in vulnerability Q4 – 4 Theater in action, othering Q5 – “good training for a TA”
TA 18	F	Caucasian	Visual interdisciplinary	7 6-23-12 9-19-11	Hudson, NY, Schools, studios	artist to TA	Meaningful engagement	?		Q1 – 4 critical of product orient ed Q2 – 3 teacher grades shot up! Q3 – 4 self critical good/bad Q4 – 3 self esteem Q5 – defining criticality
TA 19	M	Caucasian	Theater drama	11 7-29-13 7-16-13	Hawaii, India, schools, orgs, state/national	TA, Montalvo	Reflective	AATE		Q1 – 4 veteran student of colleagues Q2 – 4 AATE professional political Q3 – 4 ownership, “happy of me” Q4 – 4 families, ID, call to arms Q5 – not a fan of messages, listening
TA 20	F	Caucasian	Dance movement analysis, IT	7 4-24-12 9-5-11	Seattle, WA, Schools, orgs, state/national	classroom teacher, policy	Curricular, autism	BA, MA, US DEA		Q1 – 4 tells her story thru students Q2 – 4 round peg art ed square hole Q3 – 4 student assessment for self Q4 – 4 autism autonomy! Q5 – cultural struggle with dance
TA 21	F	Caucasian	visual photo	7 4-15-13 1-12-12	Chicago orgs, schools	art educator (Marwen)	Small treasures	BFA (UIC)		Q1 – 4 teaching asst to TA Q2 – 4 common/contrast/collab/isol Q3 – 3 restraint forcing creativity Q4 – 3 public private portraits Q5 – parents and principals
TA 22	F	African American	poetry Slam, literacy	1 11-8-11	Houston, TX, schools, orgs	poet, barista	Literacy, sex, race, body	?		Q1 – 3 privacy poetic shame Q2 – 1 teaching art statement Q3 – 2 conversation/compare Q4 – 2 students argue/discuss Q5 – students define poetry
TA 23	M	Caucasian	Media, writing video/film	6 10-23-12 9-19-11	Oregon (Caldera), youth orgs	artist, business, to TA	Youth empowerment	?		Q1 – 3 summer motivation Q2 – 3 STEAM, transformers Q3 – 4 kids homework complication Q4 – 4 media and real world Q5 -
TA 24	F	Caucasian	Dance step, clogging, math	? 10-8-13 8-1-11?	Indiana, Schools, orgs	artist to TA	Creative problem solving	?		Q1 – 4 mindful, critical argument Q2 – 4, editor, naming field, crit. Q3 – 3 real learning, integrity Q4 – 2 kids learning Q5 – ALTspace at large
TA 25	F	Caucasian British	theater traditional	4 10-9-13 12-13-11	London, NYC, Schools & theater (New Victory)	college TA training	Bridging gaps in art and academics	BFA, MA Theater Ed		Q1 – 4 mindful, wrestle, partners Q2 – 4 gratitude, isolation, TA world Q3 – 3 students transformed Q4 – 3 audience activated Q5 – technique, methods, studio env.
TA 26	M	Caucasian	visual exploratory	10 5-2-12 10-15-13	CNY, Private school, elementary	classroom teacher to TA	Invention, student agency in the classroom, private school	PhD		Q1 – 4, mindless/ful self aware Q2 – 4, mindless/ful art teacher crit Q3 – 4, student agency Q4 – 4, student activism/resist inst. Q5 – identity as private school TA
TA 27	F	Caucasian	Visual/theater early childhood	5 10-1-12 11-1-11	Arizona, Illinois	art/drama teacher to TA	reggio	PhD candidate		Q1 – 3 trusting ourselves, partners Q2 – 2 teachers/TAs as researchers Q3 – 2 describes teacher perception Q4 – 2 student interpretations Q5 – using voices and art as data
TA 28	F	Trinidadian	visual art history, art ed	4 5-7-13 11-27-	NYC schools	art ed to TA, NYSATA	Higher ed & HS	PhD candidate		Q1 – 4 solitary, humbling, poetic Q2 – 4 contemporary Africa comm. Q3 – 4 belonging connection

				12						Q4 – 4 communal bonds Q5 – gaze at ordinary/extraordinary
TA 29	M	Caucasian	visual community	8 6-4-13 8-15-11	Arizona orgs, schools	community activism	Popular Education (activist)	BA, MFA		Q1 – 4 getting goose bumps politics Q2 – 4 teaching artist corps Q3 – 4 student criticality Q4 – 4 community Q5 – world going to hell, purple
TA 30	F	Caucasian	theater creativity	5 6-5-12 8-19-11	Baltimore, MD Schools, orgs, higher ed	arts integration	Policy and NPO admin	BA, MA		Q1 – 4 education dropout Q2 – 4 TA as vagabond profession Q3 – 4 student perspective Q4 – 4 student letter and parent Q5 – “Reflections” profession YES
TA 31	F	African American	textile inclusion, integration	3 3-18-13 10-8-12	VSA international, city school arts reform projects	artist, corporate, author	inclusion	?		Q1 – 4 shared struggle Q2 – 4 heritage of artistry Q3 – 4 freedom, self-determination, Q4 – 3 sewing, hnding down Q5 – perseverance
TA 32	F	Indian	sculpture Cultural archaeology	3 7-9-13 3-25-13	Deccan College, India	Freelance workshops	Sustainability through cultural processes	PhD		Q1 – 4 teaching form vs thinking Q2 – 4 educational agenda Q3 – 4 student stories Q4 – 4 students art & history Q5 – struggles with systems
TA 33	F	Caucasian	Writer poet visual Teacher preparation	2 8-28-13 7-11-13	Philadelphia HS careers, art, writing	schools	Teacher identity development	EdD		Q1 – 4 teaching is a human endeavor Q2 – 4 roles IDs as teacher types Q3 – 4 student visual philosophies Q4 – 4 pre-teachers change agent Q5 – breathing room for spirit
TA 34	F	Caucasian	Dance choreography	2 7-22-13 10-14-13	South Carolina dance professor	Dance companies, higher ed	Somatic training?	MFA, BFA		Q1 – 3 teacher/choreographer ID Q2 – 2 self as teacher/choreog. Q3 – 3 student discomfort/collab Q4 – 2 lessons, indiv. learning Q5 – 21C concepts collab/rules
TA 35	F	Caucasian	Ceramic graphic design HS & social justice	5 9-23-13 4-1-13	Philadelphia HS & summer institute	schools	Craft & technology	MA art ed		Q1 – 4 artists, conflict, students Q2 – 4 change, fellow TAs, Q3 – 4 technology consumers Q4 – 3 students advise adults Q5 – mess masterpiece, making spec
TA 36	M	Caucasian	drama Drama integration	4 8-6-13 5-6-13	Bangladesh MS & Minneapolis theater co.	International programs	Drama and community/culture	BS theater, MA teaching		Q1 – 4 weirdness of TA, Q2 – 4 collaborator non arts Q3 – 4 first person empathy history Q4 – 2 performance awareness Q5 – intersection of art and life
TA 37	F	African-American	Performing arts Opera, voice, acting	3 9-10-13 4-9-13	AL, AR, GA, TN, SC residencies, PD	College, cultural orgs, PD	Arts integration	BFA, MFA		Q1 – 3 learn from students, persona Q2 – 2 PD model FOR teachers Q3 – 2 at risk students interest Q4 – 2 students understanding HER Q5 – Finding Common Ground
TA 38	M	Caucasian	Scenic production, theater tech	3 9-16-13 9-2-13	Texas campus	Schools, camps, college	Human, technology	BA		Q1 – 3 generative comparative Q2 – 2 art world Q3 – 3 student invention Q4 – 3 invention Q5 – improved artistic practice
TA 39	F	Caucasian	Visual TA multi	3 6-24-13	NYC, Brooklyn Free Arts/BAC	Schools orgs	Installation, writing, questioning institutional	MFA, BFA, MA history		Q1 – 4 Responsibility to stretch Q2 – 4 working with other’s curric Q3 – 4 student critical/voice Q4 – 4 graffiti, choices Q5 – what we as TAs should do
TA 40	F	Caucasian	Visual, multi	1 8-7-11	NY, Boston, MA multiple	Schools, orgs, college, community	Social change, identity development, TA policy	BFA, MFA, PhD		Q1 – 4 study of TAs Q2 – 4 communities of practice Q3 – 4 student inequities Q4 – 4 student activism Q5 – 4 advocacy & policy

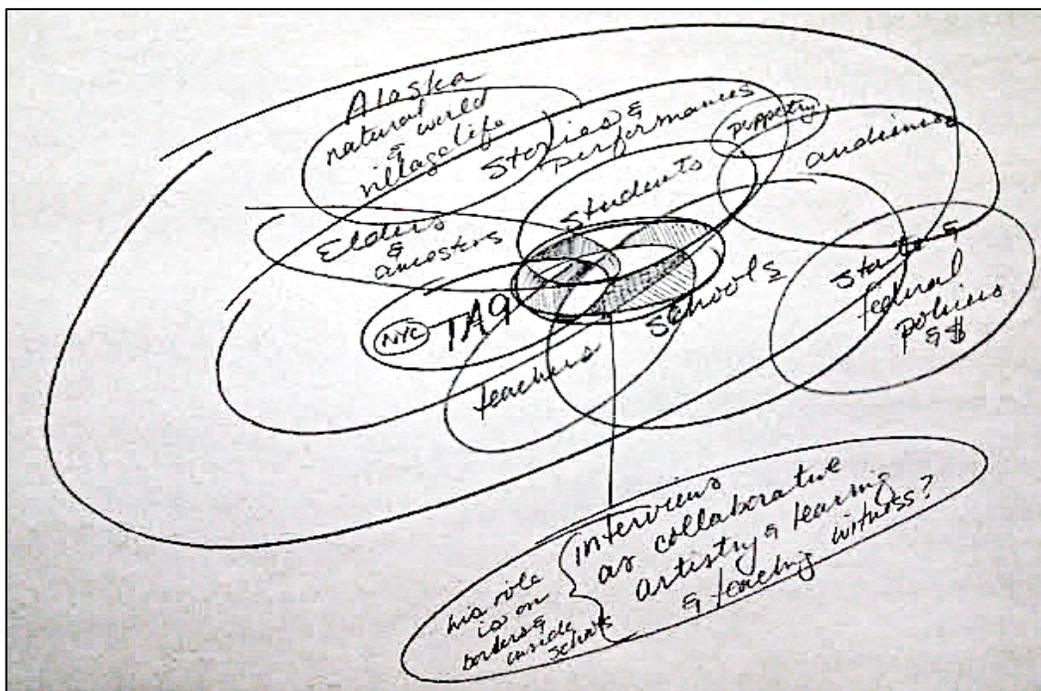
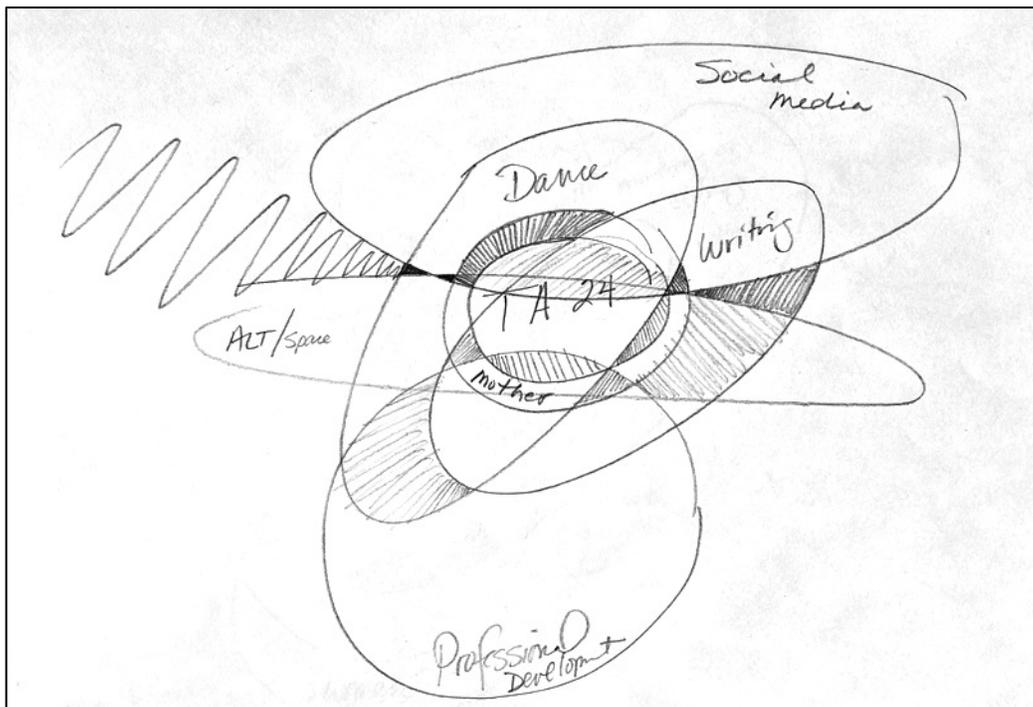
## APPENDIX D – Teaching Artist Situational Analysis Maps

I developed maps to analyze the relational situations for teaching artists that I interviewed. The maps were developed as rough organizing models for data collection. I offer them here as information for future researchers interested in the formative stages of situational analysis. For details on the process see pp. 116-126 in Chapter Three.

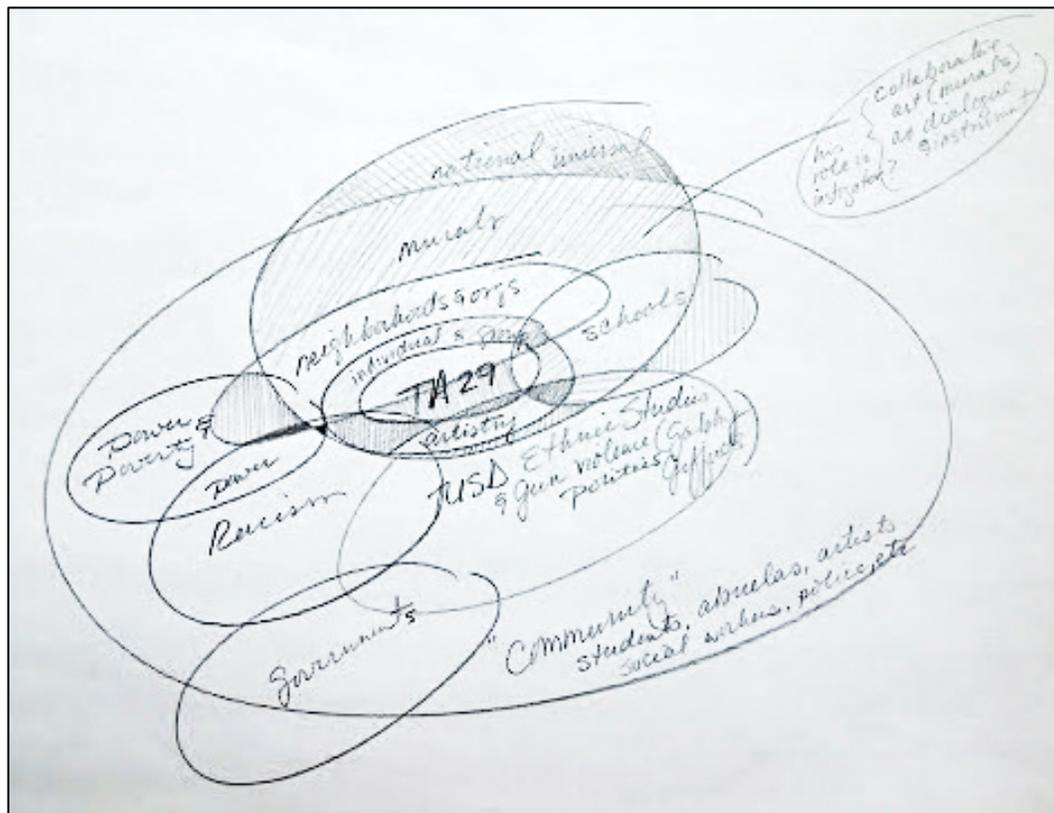
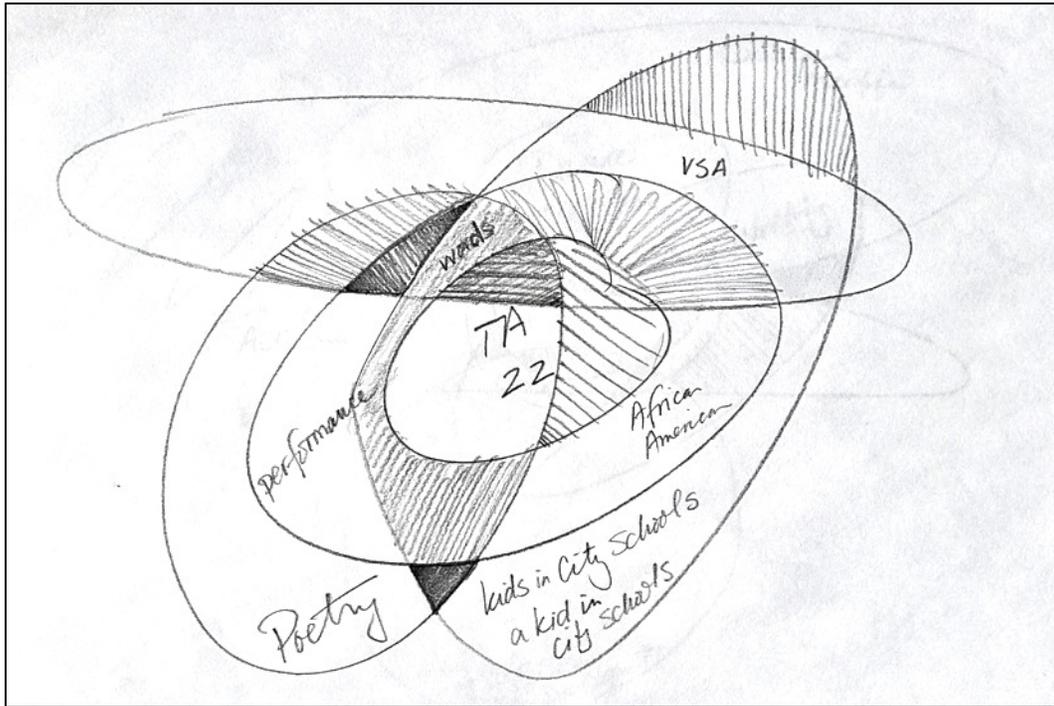
*Teaching artists with affinities to national identities outside of the United States.*



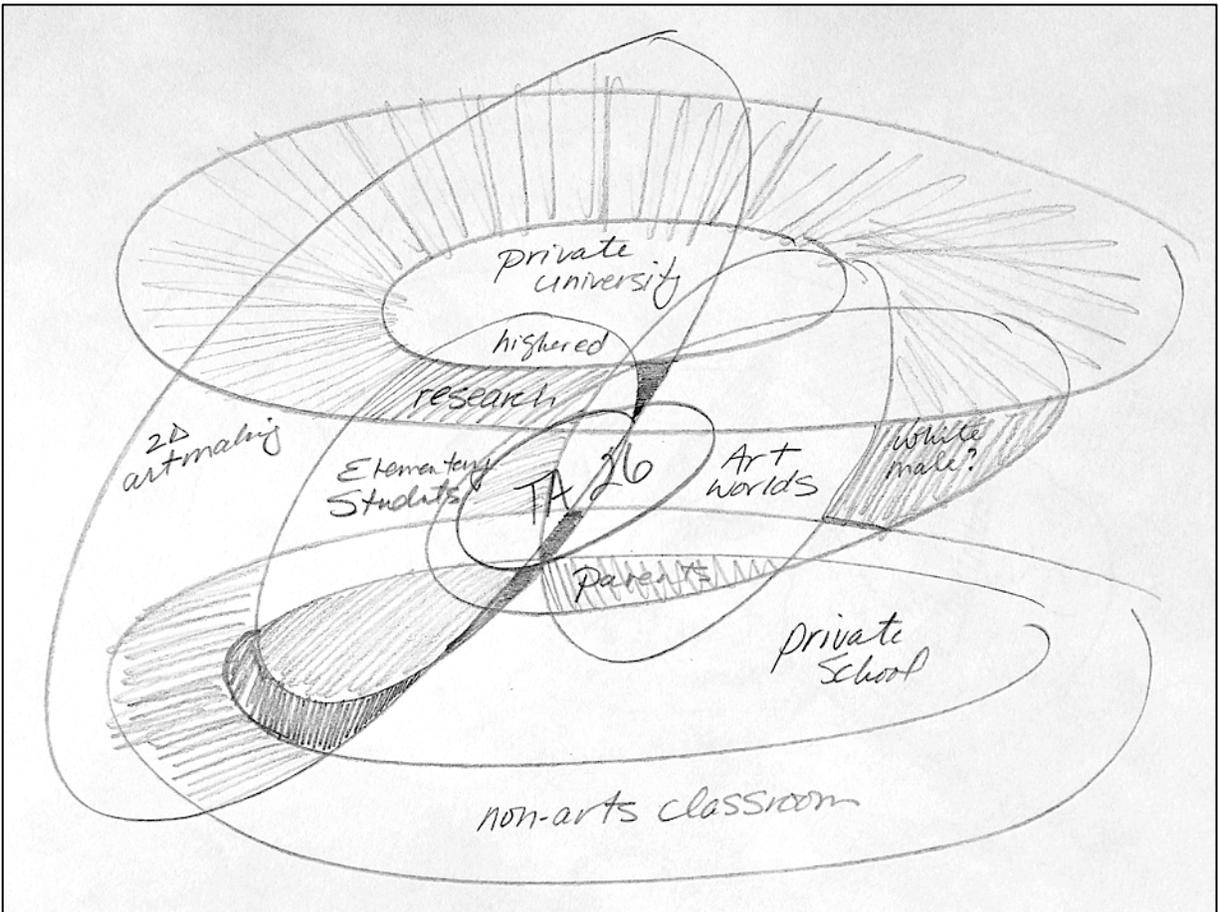
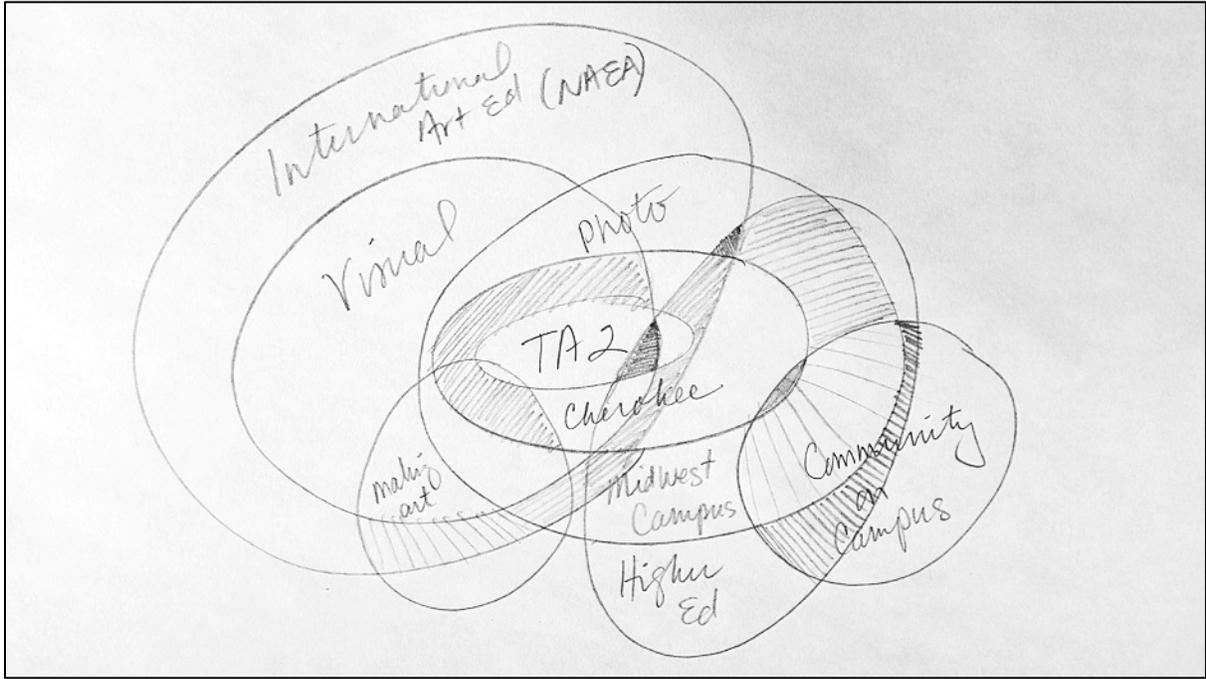
Teaching artists who held administrative responsibilities.



Teaching artists with multiple school-community activist practices.



Teaching artists with relationships to higher education and research communities.



## VITAE

Laura Knieser Reeder completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts with a major in illustration at Syracuse University in 1986. After completing her Master of Fine Arts with a major in art education at Boston University in 1989, Laura worked as both an art teacher in central New York and as a teaching artist in schools and community organizations in the northeastern United States. Laura was Executive Director of Partners for Arts Education until 2009 when she began her doctoral research at Syracuse University. She has been on the art education faculty of Massachusetts College of Art & Design in Boston, MA since 2012.