DRAWING ON EXPERIENCE

by

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Abstract

This dissertation is an autobiographical study that explores how my past experiences related to art and education inform my teaching, and how my teaching informs how I theorize about art. Through the research process, I investigated issues about art and education by "drawing on" personal experience. The study supports the notion that personal experience is the basis of knowledge and assumes that to understand teachers' knowledge it is beneficial to observe it from a teacher's perspective. It touches on issues of teacher knowledge, the role of personal history and attitudes, and identity.

The research involved observation of my teaching in a summer camp setting, layered with the autobiographical project of writing stories based on experiences related to art and education. The methods used to collect data consisted of established approaches to researching one's own practice, such as narrative writing, video documentation, and observation, as well as an arts-based approach to memory work that combined collage and narrative. The experiences that I addressed include my observation of two quilting guilds, my memories of making art as a child at summer camp and in elementary school, my graduate school experience in a Master of Fine Arts program, and my reflections on art that I see in galleries and museums.

Although the original goal of my study was simply to understand my teaching more fully, the process of research has done more than allow me to understand how my lived experiences inform my teaching. The study points out the complex interrelationship between the notion of "place" and my beliefs about art. Autobiographical research has been a process of challenging my beliefs and finding meaning through my own thinking; it has provided a way for me to develop a critical awareness of my practice, to question the taken-for-granted nature of my understanding of art and to imagine other possibilities for practice.

Résumé

Il s'agit d'une étude autobiographique qui explore l'influence de mes expériences vécues en rapport à l'art et à l'éducation sur ma façon d'enseigner et, inversement, l'influence de mon enseignement sur mes théories artistiques. À travers le processus de recherche, j'ai examiné les problématiques relatives à l'art et à l'éducation en puisant dans mon expérience. L'étude soutient que la notion d'expérience personnelle est la base de la connaissance et suppose que pour comprendre les connaissances du professeur, il est bon de l'observer selon son point de vue. Les connaissances du professeur, l'identité et le rôle de l'histoire et des attitudes personnelles y sont abordés.

La recherche comprend l'observation de mon enseignement dans un camp d'été, doublée du projet autobiographique d'écrire des histoires fondées sur des expériences reliées à l'art et à l'éducation. La méthodologie utilisée pour recueillir les données consiste en des approches conventionnelles sur ses propres pratiques, comme la narration, la documentation vidéo et l'observation, ainsi qu'une approche artistique de travail de mémoire qui combine collage et narration. Les expériences que j'ai décrites comprennent mon observation de deux guildes de courtepointe, mes souvenirs d'enfance quand je faisais de l'art dans un camp d'été et à l'école primaire, mon expérience à l'université au programme de maîtrise en beaux-arts, ainsi que mes réflexions sur l'art que je vois dans les galeries et les musées.

Même si à l'origine mon étude avait pour seul but de mieux appréhender ma manière d'enseigner, le processus de recherche a fait plus que me permettre de comprendre l'influence de mon vécu sur mon enseignement. L'étude souligne l'interrelation complexe entre la notion de « lieu » et mes croyances par rapport à l'art. La recherche autobiographique m'a permis de confronter mes croyances et d'y découvrir un sens, de par ma propre réflexion ; elle m'a donné l'occasion de développer une conscience critique par rapport à ma pratique, de remettre en question ma compréhension de l'art que je tenais pour acquise et d'imaginer d'autres possibilités de pratique.

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*Art is not a plaything, but a necessity, and its essence, form, is not a
decorative adjustment, but a cup into which life can be poured,
and lifted to the lips and tasted.*
Rebecca West

Chapter 1

Introduction

Reenchanting Art Education

It is the afternoon of September 11th, 2001 and I have rushed downtown to observe an introductory art education class. The discussion focuses on the requirements for the course and outlines the upcoming lesson on constructing a color wheel. The room is full of pre-service general teachers who are anxious about the level of skill required for the variety of art media presented. I am anxious about the devastating terrorist events literally on fire at that very moment. During this class, there is no mention of this terrorism at all, no questioning as to why people make art, what art is or why we need art. Through the windows, I look with awe at the clarity of the Montreal skyline, which contrasts greatly with the television images of asbestos-filled smoke rising from the New York skyline that I had been glued to all morning. Isn't art about opening our eyes, our minds, and connecting us to what is going on out there? Isn't the teaching of art about encouraging students to open their eyes, learning to share, to expand and reflect upon what they see?

I worry that the focus of art education is based so much on the transference of technical skills that we are forgetting the essence of art- the connecting power of art- art as a heightened awareness of our world. Without that, the teaching of art becomes frivolous and this "education" building, with its windows that literally refuse to open onto that world, remains disconnected and ineffective. (September 11, 2001)

This excerpt is from my journal. The following week I was to present what I had already prepared for the first committee meeting of my doctoral journey, and nothing made sense to me anymore. Watching the towers crumble forced me to think about why I was embarking on something that appeared so unrelated to what was happening in the world. I began searching for a reason why teaching art was not superficial, why we need

art. To not stray from a pre-planned lesson on design, even on that dreadful day, reminded me how formalist aesthetics continue to dominate art education while content remains peripheral. The media coverage of the events that had exploded that very morning had presented such a vivid, overwhelming display of visual images. As an artist, these events cried out for some type of visual response. As a human being, I felt that they demanded attention. While I had originally planned to study the quilting guild as a model for art education, that seemed insignificant at the time. Everything I knew and believed about art no longer fit.

The events of 9/11 were but one signal that things were shifting. Graeme Sullivan (2002) notes that:

> It is hard not to see September 11, 2001, as a frozen moment. A snapshot heard around the world. In the minds of many it was a defining time when 'everything changed'. . . For the many that wrap their reality around a world where art, education, and life all exist in tandem tension these times cannot be denied. . . What does the *big picture* reveal, and how might those of us charged with the task of teaching help to shape its making and understanding? (p. 107)

As an art teacher who comes to teaching with training in studio art rather than art education, all that I know about teaching art comes from my past experiences as a student and as an artist. Unlike other professions, everyone has some conception of what it means to be a teacher; everyone has observed their teachers teach. Not only does our past inform what we believe it means to be a teacher, our experiences shape how we think. For example, what people think or believe about art affects how it will be taught, and even *if* it will be taught. These "theories" influence the nature of art instruction. Our teaching reflects our past experiences; we *draw on experience.*

If we are truly in a period of transition, how do we create new ways of thinking about teaching art? If we teach by looking back on how our teacher taught us, how does that reflect our changing world? What are the goals of art education in this evolving

landscape? If we draw on our past experiences, how can we imagine possibilities for practice?

I believe that art education is not just about teaching students to draw, or to become artists, but to *see*. Arthur Efland noted that "within general education, the purpose of art education is *not* to induct individuals into the world of the professional fine arts community. Rather, its purpose is to enable individuals to find meaning in the world of art for life in the everyday world" (2002, p. 77). My concern is for art education that invites students to see and understand the world around them more clearly. Susanne Langer describes the connection between the sensory system and the mind:

> All sensitivity bears the stamp of mentality. 'Seeing,' for an instance, is not a
> passive process, by which meaningless impressions are stored up for the use of an
> organizing mind, which constructs forms out the amorphous data to suit its own
> purpose. 'Seeing' is itself a process of formulation; our understanding of the
> visible world begins in the eyes. (Langer cited in Eisner, 2002, p. 2)

Seeing is more than just a metaphor for understanding; it is a way of drawing us into the world around us.

Conversations in the Field

The idea that art education can teach students to see the world around them more clearly has led me investigate what the goals of art education at the beginning of the 21st century are. I wanted to know whether my concerns for an art education that is connected to our everyday lives resonated with current conversations in the field.

Efland (2004) comments that the visions of art education in the last one hundred years can be summarized by the following four approaches: the elements and principles of design; creative self-expression; art in daily living; and art as a discipline.
The elements and principles of design approach, which originated in the early 20th century, based on analytic aesthetics, suggests that "the ultimate focus of aesthetic attention and critical meaning is, or ought to be, organization and presentation of the visual elements of works of art: line, shape, color, texture, mass, space, volume, and

pattern" (Feldman, 1992, p. 122). The creative self-expression approach, taught by such teachers as Victor D'Amico and Viktor Lowenfeld, encouraged children to create their own work rather than imitate as a way to promote psychological health. It was popular from the early to the mid 20th century and reflected the post-war era. The art in daily living approach, which developed after the stock market crash of 1929, integrated the arts into the daily life of the individual and functioned as "a service to men living a common life, art as a means of attaining community goals. . ." (Benjamin cited in Winslow, 1939, p. xiii). Art as a discipline, which Efland attributes to the years between 1960 to 1990, features "systematic and sequential learning experiences in four distinctive domains of art [aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and art production] to help students create, understand, and appreciate art, artists, artistic processes, and the roles of art in cultures and societies" (Dobbs, 2004, p. 701). This approach signified a shift from the student-centered perspective of the creativity/self-expression paradigm to the field-centered rationale. Discipline-based art education, or DBAE, became formalized in the 1980s with the support of the Getty Center for Arts Education, and continues to have an effect on art education today.

From the recent literature (Bolin & Blandy, 2003; Chapman, 2003; Duncum, 1999, 2001; Efland, 2004; Freedman, 2000; Freedman & Stuhr, 2004; Garoin & Gaudelius, 2004; Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002; Hafeli, 2002; Siegusmund, 1998; Stuhr, 2003; Sullivan, 2002; Tavin, 2003; Wilson, 2003), a fifth approach can be added: social reconstructionist. A social reconstructionist approach, or an "issues-based" art education (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002), stresses critical awareness and the importance of social and cultural issues for art education:

> Art education, like all subjects, should be connected intimately to students' lives;
> . . . I consider art education to be a caring, social space where critical
> investigation of and through relevant cultural production can be facilitated by
> teachers to help students to inquire into the complexities and possibilities for
> understanding and expressing life and death in new ways. I want an art education
> that helps students actively participate in a world that has reverence for life and
> values social justice. (Stuhr, 2003, p. 303)

Duncum (1999) remarks that we need to incorporate everyday aesthetic sites into the curriculum, taking the mainstream of cultural life in the contemporary world as our subject. Chapman (2003) notes that the "societal curriculum", the extensive, informal curriculum of societal forces that "educate" us throughout our lives, is often ignored in schools. I believe that this is true. I am concerned with the idea of drawing upon the societal curriculum and continuing the dialogue within art education.

When I studied art in the late 1970s, the pedagogical approach was informed by the elements and principles of design. The focus of attention was on the visual elements of the work; we spoke about works of art in formal terms such as line, color, shape, space, and so on, as a way to understand the content of work. Although Efland (2004) suggests that this approach belongs to the early 20th century, Stuhr (2003) comments that art is still being taught this way, which resonates with my own personal experiences.

The goal of the social reconstructionist approach is to prepare students to be socially responsible individuals and informed critical citizens, echoing the ideas of both Dewey (1916) and Freire (2002). Freedman (2000) notes that this approach recognizes that most students will not become artists:

> Art is a vital part and contributor to social life and students have the possibility of learning about life through art. At its roots, the purpose of art education is not to educate people about only the technical and formal qualities of artifacts but to extend those qualities and artifacts to show their importance in human existence. (p. 324)

One of the ways to connect art to students' lives is through a broadening of the subject of art education by drawing upon *visual culture studies* (Duncum, 2001; Freedman, 2000; Freedman & Stuhr, 2004; Garoian & Gaudelius, 2004; Tavin, 2003; Wilson, 2003) and *material culture studies* (Bolin & Blandy, 2003). Hicks (2004) explains that the move to broaden the mission and focus of art education and to include elements of visual and material culture which have not traditionally been thought of as art, is:

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to encourage art education to expand its horizons to include the contextual study of domains of cultural production that it currently tends to ignore. . . [this] transition from an art education focused mainly on traditional fine arts and crafts to a visual or material culture education that would examine the icons, meanings, and forms present throughout our cultural space and social experience. (Hicks, 2004, p. 285)

Barnard (1998) defines visual culture as "anything visual produced, interpreted or created by humans which has, or is given, functional, communicative and/or aesthetic intent" (Barnard cited in Duncum, 2001, p. 105). Visual culture can be described as "un-shrined visual artifacts" (Wilson, 2003), which contrasts with DBAE's focus on high art. "Today images 'convey information, afford pleasure and displeasure, influence style, determine consumptions and mediate power relations" (Rogoff cited in Tavin, 2003, p. 205). The agenda of the visual culture approach assumes a political stance and aims to reveal these power relations. There is both a pervasiveness of images in contemporary society, as well as a lack in our capability for analyzing them (Mirzoeff, 1998). Sullivan (2002) explains:

To create and respond with imagination and insight to the world around us requires the use of a distinctive way of knowing. The art lesson, therefore, explores the language of encoding and decoding visual forms, and art learning exploits the expressive and communication function of art. (p. 108)

By focusing on aspects of visual culture that have meaning in students' lives, the narratives of their lives, through popular culture, learning becomes more meaningful. The teacher is no longer the expert, but learns along with students and co-creates knowledge;

No one would know- not the teacher, not the student, not the administrator, not the parent- into what territory the next discoveries will take them either epistemologically or pedagogically. The content would come from the interpretation of contemporary art and popular visual cultural artifacts. (Wilson, 2003, p. 225)

The Theory/Practice Split

The literature clearly suggests a concern for change in the field of art education; this shifts the focus from a field-centered, discipline-based approach to learning about life through art, a social reconstructionist perspective. If this is true, I wonder how these ideas inform practice, and what art teachers are actually doing in the classroom.

At first glance, it looks as though there is a huge gap between what art educators are talking about and what art they are doing in practice. There could be several reasons for this. Burton (2004) notes that very few studies look at what art teachers actually do in the classroom. With a lack of empirical studies, it is difficult to evaluate what is happening in practice. Studies such as Anglin's (1993) study of the planned, written and actually implemented art curricula of 40 selected middle schools in Northeastern Ohio, and Hafeli, Stokrocki, and Zimmerman's (2005) research on the content and instructional strategies of three art teachers in different states, all examine what art teachers are doing in practice; however, they are so specific that even the authors warn against generalizing the conclusions to other contexts, claiming that additional research is needed to examine art teaching in more diverse ethnic, racial and social contexts (Hafeli, Stokrocki, & Zimmerman, 2005). Milbrant's (2002) investigation of the current attitudes and practices of Georgia public school art teachers with regard to addressing social issues through art education curriculum, found that teachers were wary about addressing social concerns, fearing negative parental reaction to discussion of social issues in the art classroom. There was also a concern about the lack of information about artists or good lesson plans that explore significant social issues, as well as adequate time to research these topics. Art teachers' awareness of current events and the social implications of current events were also voiced as concerns.

Despite the attention to social reconstruction in the literature, there appears to be a continuing emphasis on formalism in the classroom (Feldman, 1992; Chapman, 2005). Feldman (1992) remarks: "Why do so many art teachers confine instruction to identification of visual elements and their formal relationships. . . Perhaps, because they are teachable- like the 'periodic table of art'" (p. 122). Chapman (2005) points out that

"The standards also reflect a formalist emphasis on the so-called elements and principles of design" (Chapman, 2005, p. 128). Besides, art is often offered as a reward (Chapman), and that does not make it conducive to anything more than recreation.

If we are to understand what art teachers are doing in the classroom, there is a need for more empirical studies which document what art teachers do in the classroom. This is just beginning to happen. In a recent text, Atkinson and Dash (2005) present a collection of essays by artists/educators who explore social and critical practices in art education. They comment that traditionally, art teachers have demonstrated particular skills and guided their students to accomplish them; however, in the innovative approaches presented by different authors, "the starting point is often the exploration of ideas and how they might be transformed into visual form (Atkinson & Dash, p. xi). One of the essays is by the artist/educator Tim Rollins, who along with the group, "Kids of Survival" (K.O.S.), have developed a community-based educational project for young people who have abandoned their studies. By using classic works of literature as the starting point, they have created a visual practice to encourage self-awareness and self-esteem. Rollins (2005) explains:

> Through our collective experience together, we've learned that through the transformative power of art, any negative experience in life give weight, authenticity and credibility to positive effect. Through the restorative power of art, the often unspeakable joy of living and pressing on, no matter the circumstances, can be shared to inspire others. Art can be hope made manifest, vision made visible and determination made material. (p. 5)

The Challenge of Art Education

The challenge of art education is to reach *outside* of itself, and to begin addressing concerns that move beyond the traditional concerns of the elements and principles of design approach to art education, where "Art students are expected to master the elements and principles of design and composition, skills such as perspective drawing, structures of formal analysis, or the techniques in ceramics and painting" (Hicks, 1994, p. 285). Hicks also notes that the point is not to deny the value in these lessons, and the

significance of traditional forms of art, but to acknowledge what a social reconstructionist approach to art education has to offer (Freedman, 1994; Hicks, 1994).

The notion that education needs to broaden its agenda and to extend *beyond* the classroom, is hardly a new idea. John Dewey (1916) and Paulo Freire (1978) both emphasized the idea that formal education needed to reflect the social situations of students for it to meaningful. The concern is to prepare students to be informed and critical citizens who are able to contribute to the liberation and enrichment of the lives of others in society.

Patricia Stuhr's (2003) call for social and cultural content in art education echoes the words of Dewey and Freire:

> Art education, like all subjects, should be connected intimately to students' lives. . . .I want an art education that helps students actively participate in a world that has reverence for life and values social justice. If art education curriculum, like life, were thought of in this way, then an important component of it would have to deal with the investigation of social and cultural issues from multiple personal, local, national, and global perspectives. (p. 303)

It "is necessary for students to critically investigate cultural production in a caring, social space" (Stuhr, p. 312) and this is something that art education can provide.

It became clear to me on that afternoon in September that learning how to construct a color wheel had nothing to do with "helping students actively participate in the world". The problem is not in the lesson itself, but that in introductory art classes, which may be the only experience that general teachers have with art, learning about color alone does not invite them into the possibilities of art. It does little to engage them and draw them in. This requires a shift in thinking; "If indeed art education is to be perceived as more than a curricular extra or program of cultural enrichment, it must focus on the 'basic stuff' of people's lives [and the everyday experiences of students' lives], as well as on its exceptional and aesthetic possibilities" (Bersson, 1992, p. 79). Nonetheless, it has been documented that in both art and art education programs the doctrine remains

formalist (Hobbs, 1993; Stuhr, 2003). Besides, teaching the elements of design, the pedagogical approach of formalism, does little to explain the art that we are being presented with today.

Contemporary art has been criticized for being intimidating, incomprehensible, self-serving and offensive to the general public; however, there are those who defend these works of art in that they are vital expressions of our culture. The poignancy of these works of art is in the questions that they raise, such as: What are the boundaries of art? What defines art? How far can we push the acceptable limits of expression? As educators we need to address some of these same questions, to "theorize" art, to better understand why and how we teach as we do (Hobbs, 1993).

Furthermore, if we turn our glance towards the art being made today, the doctrine of formalism does little to help us understand and respond to these works of art. We may find it to be shocking, cynical, commoditized, aggressive, subversive, controversial, as well as boring, forcing us to turn our backs on it. Art today *is* shocking, as in "Piss Christ" by Andres Serrano, cynical, as in "America's Most Wanted" by Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid, a commodity, as in the prints of Andy Warhol, aggressive, as in "Trademarks" by Vito Acconci, subversive, as in the appropriated photographs of Sherrie Levine, controversial, as in "The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living" by Damien Hirst, or imposing, as in "Tilted Arc" by Richard Serra (see Appendix C).

Formalism does offer a useful vocabulary for speaking about art, but it limits and even suspends our ability to interpret such works of art. For example, in Serrano's controversial photograph which depicts a crucifix submerged in a glass of urine, it would be absurd to attempt to analyze it by solely describing its formal elements, such as its predominantly golden color. Another case is Komar and Melamid's painting, which portrays a pastoral landscape. If the viewer does not know that the artists used a market survey questionnaire to reveal the qualities in a painting that America "most wanted", the artists' cynical commentary on aesthetic taste and preference would be lost.

This is also true of Warhol's work; it is almost impossible to understand his work by its formal elements alone. Warhol, who began his career in advertising, started making screenprints of everyday consumer items, using the same techniques of mass production. He even called his studio "The Factory", hiring "art workers" to make the prints, thus disrupting "the mystique of artistry and genius by comparing artistic and industrial production" (Pritchard, 2000, p. 3). Not only does this function as a commentary on artistic authorship, but on the link between art and consumer culture.

At first sight, the work of Acconci appears to be aggressive or even masochistic; the photograph portrays a bitemark on the artist's arm. The image is from a series that documents a performance, in which Acconci bit into his arms and legs, covered the marks with printing ink and stamped them onto various surfaces, "illustrating the body's attack on itself while also criticizing the social institutions of art and the economy, by referring to the commercial practice of branding (marking) a product for the purpose of exchange (trade)" (Ciancimino, n.d., p. 4).

Levine's photograph shows an image of a woman looking directly into the camera; however, the title, "After Walker Evans", lends clues that there is more to image than meets the eye. It turns out that Levine photographed Walker Evans' famous portrait of a disenfranchised farmer after the Depression straight out of an exhibition catalogue. Levine's appropriated photograph raises the postmodern question of authorship, a message that is unavailable to the viewer who is not aware of the full context. Ironically, Levine was able to re-photograph Walkers' work because it is no longer restricted by copyright law, however, her own copy is protected by copyright (Holschbach, n.d.).

At first glance, Hirst's "sculpture" of a shark suspended in a tank of formaldehyde looks as though it belongs in a science laboratory more than a museum. Although the title suggests issues about life and death, the piece, along with his other work involving animals, has been noted for its shock value; even to the point that Hirst has been referred to as the " 'hooligan genius' of British art" (Danto, 2005, p. 53).

Serra's "Tilted Arc", an immense, curving wall of steel that was located at the Federal Plaza in New York caused such heated, public debate that it was eventually removed. The criticism focused on the imposing nature of the piece, hence, it has become a symbol as "the ultimate model of social independence and the radically separate self; the heroic, belligerent ego of modernity, cultivating its decisiveness and lack of connectedness with others, is best known through its refusal to be assimilated" (Gablik, 1991, p. 63).

Much contemporary art may have this alienating effect, refusing to be assimilated. The examples that I have offered illustrate the limitation of the formalist approach for interpreting works of art; we can describe the physical characteristics of the work, but there is more than the eye alone can see. It has become evident that alternate ways of approaching works of art are required, both in the interpretation and production of the work.

It has also been suggested that we need to look to new forms of art that emphasize our interconnectedness rather than our separateness, "an individualism that is not purely individual but is grounded in social relationships and also community and the welfare of the whole; an expanded vision of art as a social practice and not just a disembodied eye" (Gablik, 1991, p. 181). These words reflect what John Dewey wrote in 1934:

> Works of art that are not remote from common life, that are widely enjoyed in a community, are signs of a unified collective life. But they are also marvelous aids in the creation of such a life. The remaking of the material of experience in the act of expression is not an isolated event confined to the artist and to a person here and there who happens to enjoy the work. In the degree in which art exercises its office, it is also a remaking of the experience of the community in the direction of greater order and unity. (p. 81)

The writings of Dewey and Gablik have encouraged me to re-visit and re-search what I know about art and teaching. Eight years ago, at a time when I was discouraged with making art, feeling that what I was making in the studio had little connection to my

everyday life, I was offered a position to direct a summer camp art program for children. The job included directing a staff of twelve in the areas of ceramics, photography, woodworking and general arts and crafts, as well as teaching. I quickly discovered the teaching to be more fulfilling than working alone in a studio, which I had been doing ever since I had graduated with a Masters of Fine Arts many years earlier. The process of making art had become a purely intellectual challenge, where I would set up questions and see if I could answer them in an insightful and witty way. My artwork felt removed from any connection to my everyday life. In contrast, I am certain that for me, the most constructive part of the teaching experience was the connection with others, the strong sense of community. This was lacking in the isolation of my studio work.

I began my doctoral studies shortly after my first summer at camp. I was drawn to the idea of community that I had experienced while teaching; this led me to begin exploring quilting guilds as a model for art education. I assumed that the bi-weekly meetings of the guild were similar to my experience of teaching art at camp each summer in that they functioned as a site of learning with an emphasis on community. I observed and participated in two quilting guilds for a year and a half, and completed a pilot study that explored the idea of community within the guild. I was intrigued that the women still chose to meet in a group, even though most of their work was individual. (Markus, 2001). I knew that the collaborative efforts of historic quilting bees had served the function of getting a quilt out more quickly; the more hands working, the faster the quilting would go. The findings of this preliminary study suggest that women continue to get together for support, encouragement, and a sense of belonging.

Charles Taylor (1991) speaks of the "malaise of modernity", commenting that one of the sources of worry was the modernist concept of individualism. A focus on the individual has developed into a centering on the self, making our lives poorer in meaning, and less concerned with others in society. The consequence of this seeking one's own self-fulfillment leads one to lose sight of the concerns that transcend oneself. Although there is often a misconception that individualism means isolation, it was the isolation that I felt in my studio that made me wonder why the collaborative experience of teaching in a

summer camp seemed more fulfilling; the camp "collective" values the needs and goals of the group over the individual.

The literature on art education also reflects this disenchantment with modernity in much the same way that Taylor describes:

> Our social context, complex and massive in its influence, has caused much of our art and art education to be self-centered, self-referential, or elitist oriented to the point of social irrelevance. Critical contextual analysis makes us aware, in spite of pervasive cultural conditioning to the contrary, that art education can be far more socially relevant and culturally democratic than it currently is. (Bersson, 1992, p. 87-88)

Although this was written over ten years ago, the concern for art education that is more socially relevant is reiterated in the more current literature, as evident in the title of Stuhr's (2003) article "A Tale of Why Social and Cultural Content is Often Excluded from Art Education- And Why It Should Not Be".

Contemporary art has been described as "a practice located 'between': between individuals and the group, between oneself and one's experience of the world, between oneself and the other. . . .an art that reveals what is in common, both sharing and inventing the world" (Pontbriand, 2000, p. 9). As a form of communication, art brings the personal out into the world. From my personal experience, teaching, in particular, teaching art, exemplifies that "sharing between". Teaching becomes the springboard, the starting point, for a conversation of possibilities of connection. Eisner (2002) claims that both art and education teach us how to create ourselves, how to learn:

> Education, in turn, is the process of learning to create ourselves, and it is what the arts, both as a process and as the fruits of that process, promote. Work in the arts is not only a way of creating performances and products; it is a way of creating our lives by expanding our consciousness, shaping our dispositions, satisfying our quest for meaning, establishing contact with others, and sharing a culture. (Eisner, 2002, p. 3)

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I have found that teaching has opened up the potential for learning; learning about my own artwork, learning more about myself, and creating new ways of looking at the world around me.

Through the experience of teaching, I have begun to explore forms of art that do encourage community. Art today does not only encompass forms that alienate and intimidate; there is also art that is inviting and accessible. For example, quilting is often referred to as "the democratic art" (Shaw, 1995), for almost everyone knows someone who quilts. The powerful, informal memorials that were set up in the streets in response to the events of September 11th engaged their silent, reverent audiences; not only artists created these public sculptures. The Names Project, an immense, collaborative quilt which is an ongoing project to memorialize those who have died from AIDS, is another example (Ruskin, 1988). There are artists who take seriously our interconnectedness, not only with other human beings, but whose art is ecological and holds great respect for the land, such as Andy Goldsworthy's ephemeral artworks. There is art that has been inspired through collaboration and mentorship, such as the projects of Tim Rollins and K.O.S. (Rollins, 2005), and Jana Napoli and the YaYa's (Barker, 1996), which are exceptional examples of what Otavio Paz has termed "creative participation" (Paz cited in Gablik, 1991). These art forms provide models for:

> The restructuring of the Cartesian self, and its rebirth as an ecological self-plus-other or self-plus-environment, not only thoroughly transfigures our world view (and self view) but, as I have been arguing myself, it is the basis of the reenchantment of art. (Gablik, 1991, p. 177)

These works of art inspire me; they encourage me to believe that art can be more interconnected with others and the world. They invite me to imagine art education that does the same; that connects and is in dialogue with the world outside of the classroom.

Drawing on Experience

"Drawing on Experience", the title of my dissertation, is the documentation of my process of learning to teach. Since I did not follow the formal process of certification for teaching, I became an art teacher by teaching art. The ideas that inform my practice have

developed and continue to develop through the practice of teaching and making art, rather than being dictated by any set or prescribed academic ideology. These theories reflect my personal experiences related to art and education, functioning in a synergistic way; my past experiences inform my teaching, and those emerging theories inform my ideas about art.

I recognize that the process of learning to teach is ongoing and incomplete; therefore my dissertation is the record of a concentrated period of reflecting on my practice during my doctoral studies, which began in the fall of 2001. However, reflecting-on-practice does not stop when the document is finished; I consider that I will be reflecting upon and adjusting my practice perpetually, learning and keeping the teaching dynamic.

The research explores the decisions that I, as an art teacher in a particular context, make. It touches on issues of teacher knowledge, the role of personal history and attitudes, and identity. I began by examining my teaching, which took place in a co-ed, residential summer camp, located in a wilderness setting. I explored what I do when I teach. Essentially, I was trying to figure out why I teach the way that I do. The research involved observation of my teaching in a summer camp setting, layered with the autobiographical project of writing and telling stories based on experiences related to art and education. The stories written from my own perspective created "texts for professional reflection and dialogue" (Wood, 2000, p. 167) and research into my own practice provided a way for me to examine my pedagogical beliefs in action (Schön, 1983). I selected and pieced together my experiences related to art and education; I became the author of these life stories. Although the research is primarily a personal venture, I trust that the reader can connect to my experiences and also discover something about their own practice through my story.

The study is not intended to be prescriptive in any way, proclaiming that my teaching methods are *the* way to teach art, nor is it a handbook of "how to teach art post

9/11". It was motivated by my belief that teaching art had to be about something more than a discussion about color, line, and composition.

The overarching question that has guided the research is: How do my art-related experiences, theoretical and practical, inform my teaching and how do my teaching experiences inform how I theorize art? The question is designed to function synergistically; by examining the experiences related to art and education, the ideas that are implicit in my practice can become more explicit. In turn, my emerging theories about teaching can contribute to a vision of art as a social practice.

This chapter of my dissertation is intended as an invitation into my world of teaching and making art; I invite readers into this world. I think of teaching and making art as invitations also. When done well, they both engage and communicate.

"Conversations with Others", the second chapter of my dissertation, is my literature review. Basically, I look to the writing of others as possible resources for my practice; in the literature review, I *converse* with theorists, determining whether their ideas resonate with my personal experience. I reviewed the literature on reflective practice (Brookfield, 1995; Argyris & Schön, 1974; Schön, 1983), which suggests that learning happens in the reflective process and proposes that reflection leads to better action. I "reflected-on-action" through writing autobiographical narratives. From there, I turned to the literature on autobiography (Benstock, 1988; Friedman, 1988; Graham, 1991; Watson, 1999). I consider autobiography as a "shaping of the past" (Pascal cited in Watson, 1999, p. 17) that intends to reveal the present in a new light through uncovering and exploring the past. Autobiography as "a second reading of experience. . .[is] truer than the first reading because it adds consciousness of itself to the raw contingencies of experience" (Graham, 1991, p. 29); this is significant since the intention of my research was to learn more about the present through the past, rather than to dwell in the past.

I found it necessary to work my way through the theoretical perspectives from the behaviorists up to the more recent literature on situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991;

Rogoff & Lave, 1984; Scribner, 1984; Wenger, 1998), in which learning is described as a practical activity that is adjusted to the demands of the situation. This perspective was more appropriate to my interest in exploring my learning to teach within the context of my teaching.

The last strand was the literature on theories of art. I believe that as art educators we need to ask the question "What is art?", to theorize art, to better understand why and how we teach art as we do. Through investigating my practice, it has become apparent that the content of my teaching is inseparable from its context. I become aware of how much the context influenced how I conceptualize art, coinciding most with the ideas of Dickie (1997, 2000, 2001) and Danto (1994, 1997).

The third chapter, "Writing the Self", outlines how my autobiography informs my research. The biographic character of teachers' knowledge has been acknowledged by many (Goodson, 1992; Pinar, 1981, 1988; Grumet, 1981, 1987; Berk, 1980; Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Butt et al., 1992), recognizing that personal experience is the root of education (Dewey, 1952). I did not set out to do an autobiographical study originally; I simply wanted to learn more about my teaching. The aim was to articulate my intentions, and, through the research process, to reclaim and reinvent my goals and values as a teacher. I was searching for some validation for what I do in the classroom.

Despite the limits of autobiography, the memory gaps, the obvious bias and selectivity of events, the research functions as a "theory of the unique" (van Manen, 1990). It assumes that "One theory of art is to declare that there is no one theory of art- at least no viable one" (Weitz as cited in Hobbs, 1993, p. 106). In turn, there cannot be one recipe for teaching art. This postmodern approach may be adequate in philosophy, but once I step into the classroom, choices have to be made; it is hardly an "anything goes" approach. My study has examined how I make those choices, as I negotiate between the modernist values of my art education and studio practice and my emerging theories for teaching art as a connected, social practice.

In the chapter, "The Space of Research", I explain how I pieced together methods which define the space of research; I used the metaphor of vision to explain how I "look around" in order to construct that space and to reflect on the experiences that inform my practice; it has been said that as a teacher/researcher "the most important tool you have as a researcher is your eye and your view of classroom life" (Hubbard & Power, 1993, p. 10). The procedure for selecting the methods was a "*bricolage* of a fragmented consciousness" (Kuhn, 1995, p. 120) that aims to honor a way of knowing that has its roots in personal lived experience.

To see what I do when I teach, I "looked in front" by turning the video camera on myself. I continued by "looking in one direction" by observing two quilting guilds and documenting my impressions in a journal. (All journal excerpts in the dissertation are distinguished by an indented format and italic font.) I looked in "then another" direction at events in my life, such as radio broadcasts, music videos, art exhibits, art classes and conversations that I have with friends. I continued the dialogue by writing in an ongoing journal. I "looked behind" through a process of memory work, exploring past experiences related to art and education which I believe play a part in how I imagine my practice. Lastly, I "looked from a distance" by relating my personal beliefs about teaching and making art to the theories of others through a literature review. This offered me a way to connect, argue and re-evaluate my ideas, and also, to see how my "knowledge" is situated within a complex and specific socio-cultural framework.

In order to begin analyzing the data derived from the journals, videotapes, and narratives, I organized and coded it according to the constant comparative method (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). I "unitized" the data by identifying chunks or units of meaning. The units were assembled into collective units, allowing larger categories to emerge. Each set of data was kept separately to be able to see what was going on in each experience that I was examining. Lastly, they were brought together to see how each experience informs how I teach; what I found is that each experience evokes a particular mindset, or "sense of place".

A sense of place suggests that the interactions between people and place are continually evolving. I recognized that art is a social construction that is historically and culturally framed. I mapped my subjectivity through my lived experiences and I witnessed the connection between place and ways of seeing/knowing.

In Chapter 6, "Lessons of Place", I examined the places that inform my practice. To understand the relationship between place and practice, which I believe are inseparable, I examined the particulars of experience, and I questioned what the metaphors that I constructed to describe place mean and I showed how each remembered place has its own definite personality; each place embodies a spirit of place.

I found that I was not always able to simply "draw on experience" and apply what I knew through these past experiences to my present teaching. There was often a dissonance and the places from my past collided in my practice. I learned to negotiate meaning in the "third space" (Bhabha, 1994; Gutiérrez, Rymes & Larson, 1995), a space located *between* communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). I envisioned myself as a "broker" (Wenger, 1998), moving *across* communities of practice, constructing meaning in the interstitial spaces (Bhabha, 1994).

The last chapter of my dissertation discusses "Possibilities for Practice", which are based on what I have learned through my research; this involves the significance of drawing on multiple art worlds, personal experience in curriculum and art making, reflection and critical thinking. The possibilities for practice included are "Possibilities for Teaching Art", "Possibilities for Teacher Education", "Possibilities for Studio Practice", "Possibilities for Research Methodology", and "Possibilities for Future Research".

The process of writing my dissertation has provided a way for me to challenge my own personal practical knowledge, knowledge that I draw from my lived experiences. In this way, "Drawing on Experience" can be imagined as a type of *third space on paper*, where I have constructed a new understanding of what it means to teach and to make art.

Chapter 2
Conversations with Others

In this chapter, I present and examine the literatures that rationalize my research, an autobiographical study of teaching art in an informal setting. The literatures are drawn from several areas: reflective practice, theories of autobiography, theories of learning, and theories of art; together, these strands form/inform my practice.

It is important to note that I am learning that these theories are neither "useless nor ideal" (Wenger, 1998, p. 48). Perhaps for the pre-service or novice teacher, theoretical literature may act as a guideline for practice, but as a practicing teacher and artist, I rely on the theories that have evolved through my own experiences. I have come to understand that the relation of theory to practice is both complex and interactive. Essentially, I see the literatures as a resource rather than a recipe, something that I can turn to rather than follow. In other words, "Theory can help us 'name' our practice by illuminating the general elements of what we think are idiosyncratic experiences. It can provide multiple perspectives on familiar situations" (Brookfield, 1995, p. 36).

In addition, what I learn through the process of making art informs my thinking about teaching, and the teaching subsequently informs my art making. My personal experiences provide the warp through which the theories of others are woven, constructing a more solid, whole cloth. I look to the literatures to affirm what I already know, but may not have the words for. Holden Caulfield in "The Catcher in the Rye" puts it this way: "What really knocks me out is a book that, when you're all done reading it, you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it" (Salinger, 1945, p. 18). The literatures become the "friends" whom I have conversations with, if only speaking hypothetically.

In my study, I observed and examined what I do when I teach art in an informal setting, and I investigated the underlying beliefs behind these actions by constructing autobiographical narratives and collages. I used the process of reflecting-on-practice as a

way of making sense of my experiences and for telling the story of my journey, an ongoing journey of learning to teach. Therefore, I begin this chapter by examining the literature on reflective practice. From there, I set out to explore the literatures on autobiography, learning, and art, which frame the research. The discussion at the end summarizes my "conversations with others", bringing together the separate strands to show how they overlap, intertwine, and rationalize my study.

Reflective Practice

Brookfield (1995) suggests that teachers who believe that they always understand what they are doing and what effect they have are "teaching innocently", and are inherently naive. He comments that "The cultural, psychological, and political complexities of learning and the ways in which power complicates all human relationships. . .mean that teaching can never be innocent" (Brookfield, p. 1). Critically reflective teaching happens when teachers uncover and examine the assumptions that guide their practice.

The benefits of critical reflection are numerous. As I begin to understand why I believe what I do, I am more able to make informed actions; actions that I can explain and justify to myself and others. This has been a crucial part of my particular study. Since I lack the formal teacher training, I felt the need to justify the curricular choices that I make; not necessarily for others, but for myself. When I know why I do what I do, I can communicate what I do in a more confident way; I discover my voice. Brookfield notes:

> In becoming critically reflective, we also learn to speak about our practice in a way that is authentic and consistent. Speaking authentically means that we are alert to the voices inside us that are not our own, the voices that have been deliberately implanted by outside interests rather than springing from our own experiences. (p. 45)

Argyris & Schön (1974) bring attention to the phenomenon that practitioners often find a gap between what they say and what they do, what they termed "espoused theories" and "theories-in-action". Schön (1983) continues this line of research, focussing

on reflection as the forefront of understanding what professionals do, beginning with the assumption that competent practitioners often know more than they can put into words. He comments that "They [practitioners] exhibit a kind of knowing-in-practice, most of which is tacit" (Schön , 1983, p. 40). When practitioners go about dealing with the uncertainties and uniqueness of their practices, they show that they have a type of knowing *in* action, a tacit and practical knowledge that helps to deal with the situation at hand. When one deals with the element of the unknown, or surprise, in practice, one may "reflect-in-action", which Schön refers to as "a reflective conversation with a unique and uncertain situation" (p. 131). Reflection-in-action not only involves acknowledging a new situation, but it requires "move-testing experiments", a process that Schön sees as manipulable:

> The inquirer's relation to this situation is *transactional.* He shapes the situation, but is in conversation with it, so that his own models and appreciations are also shaped by the situation. The phenomena that he seeks to understand are partly of his own making; he is *in* the situation that he seeks to understand. (p. 150-151).

It is true that most of what I know about teaching art is tacit. I know more than I am able to put into words. My practice did not grow from theory; I was not taught to teach, but I am learning to teach *as I teach*. I am clearly in the situation that I seek to understand. The project of an autobiographical study has encouraged me to make explicit what is implicit in my practice. As I explore the gaps and inconsistencies, I learn.

Reflection-in-action aptly describes the process of teaching. The teacher shapes the situation, but is also in conversation with it. Teaching must be a dialogue; each situation presents itself as distinct and tentative. Learning to teach is about listening to that dialogue, and uncovering the uniqueness of each situation. This is particularly applicable to teaching in an informal setting, where there are no competencies or standards to work towards. For example, my teaching in a summer camp allowed me great freedom in shaping a program. I was able to focus on the type of projects and work with the materials that I felt most inclined to. There were few demands dictating the activities, however, it was crucial to have a dialogical relationship with the situation.

Although no one told me what to teach, I listened to the uniqueness of the camp setting, and followed through accordingly. Camp embodies a strong "spirit of place" (C. Richmond, personal communication, July 5, 2002), which can be described as the "special feel" or the personality of the place. Camp, the camp that I taught at and camp in general, evokes an inherent sense of community, and I believe that the artwork that fits within the tradition of camp, responds to the *spirit of place*, should be accessible and inviting.

What Schön does not make clear is what is involved in the reflective process. He can be criticized for his emphasis on formal theory; I do not find any "reflection" on his part, nor any account of his process of reflection-in-action. It is also suggested that in his theorizing he ignores the situatedness of practitioner experience, a dimension that Lave and Wenger (1991) bring into focus in their inquiry into "situated learning".

The notion of reflective practice has been explored in a diverse range of empirical studies. It has been examined as a way of developing an understanding of practice in fields as different as museum studies to science education (Lemelin, 2002; Reinhold, 1999; Watts, Jofili, & Bezera, 1997; Farrell, 1998), and as a way of exploring the construction of teaching identity (Antonek & Others, 1997, Mueller, 2000). The concept of reflective practice has also been an integral part in documenting teachers' learning (Dexter, Seashore, & Anderson, 2002; Frank, 1999; Kowalchuk, 1999), to show early beliefs and values that affect actions of beginning teachers (Kennedy & Wyrick, 1995), and to learn the significance of teachers' personal histories for their practice (Shanton & Lewis, 2002). Although there has been extensive research in the area of reflective practice in the field of education, very little appears in the literature related specifically to art education.

The research literature suggests that learning happens in the reflective process, advocating that reflection leads to better action. Self-study, as a form of teacher inquiry, allows teachers to practice both reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Teaching is not a prescribed set of actions, but it involves continually reflecting outward and inward,

working from the outside and the inside. One way of understanding this is by looking at ourselves; "our teaching is a continuous, conscious attempt to seek increased meaning and direction in our lives with students, and on in our own personal lives" (Schubert & Schubert cited in Hobson, 1996, p. 4). Drawing on personal experience and understanding becomes a way to "study the world from the perspective of the interacting individual" (Lincoln & Denzin cited in Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 13).

This work has suggested to me that learning to teach also happens in the reflective process. One way I learn to teach is by reflecting-on-action through writing autobiographical narratives. A journal entry that I wrote after teaching a drawing workshop at summer camp illustrates how I reflect on my practice. I had found that the drawings that resulted from the activity were far less successful than the first time I had taught a similar workshop, and I wrote about this in my journal:

> *Last year when I was trying to figure out why the waterfront quilt was successful, I called it serendipity. Now that we have tried to recreate this activity unsuccessfully, I can pinpoint some of the factors. . . .We took the kids out by the horse field near Blueberry Hill, what I think of as my favourite spot in the world. I figured that the horses would be out grazing in the field as they usually are. But this turned out to be an uncomfortably hot morning, the kids were hot, there was no shade, and the horses were hiding in the shade of the forest. And even Amanda, who loves horses, didn't like those horses and reluctantly began (and never finished) a drawing of a daisy. And most of the kids there didn't want to be there and don't like drawing. The results were such a poor copy of that original activity! (July 16, 2002)*

Through the process of reflection and writing, I learned that what had worked well in one class failed in another. The effectiveness of the teaching involved more than what I was doing as a teacher; the unsatisfactory results had little to do with instructional technique. The narrative illustrates the complex nature of teaching; that its success involves more than what a teacher brings to the lesson. The attitudes of the students, their past experiences related to art (often negative), the context, and even something as

seemingly inconsequential as the weather, can contribute to the outcome. The previous time that I had taught a two-hour drawing workshop, it was a perfect, warm, and sunny summer day; the campers were relaxed and comfortable and the drawings reflected the mood of the day.

Through writing, I was more able to understand the complex nature of teaching; writing provided a way for me to bring my experiences into language. Bruner (1986) comments that "Language is our most powerful tool for organizing experience, and indeed, for constituting 'realities'" (p. 8). When thoughts or ideas are transformed into language a deeper level of understanding emerges. Bruner adds that "narrative deals with the vicissitudes of intention" (p. 17). Narratives lend insight into what matters to teachers, and the changing landscape of intentions that inform their actions.

Since the writing that I did in my research is autobiographical, it is relevant to sort out the connections between autobiography and research. In the next section, I refer to several assumptions about autobiography which emerge predominantly from literary theory. It is also important to note that writing the autobiographical narratives is one stage of the reflective practice. The narratives provide raw data, or "field texts", which still need some form of analysis to turn them into research texts.

Theories of Autobiography

Autobiography is essentially writing the story of one's life. Literary theorist Martha Watson (1999) points out that "the notion of autobiography is commonplace. Although the term *autobiography* was not coined until 1797, self-told stories in the form of memoirs and reminiscences as well as diaries have been available for centuries" (p. 15). The genre of autobiography appears to be self-evident, simple, and inherently accessible to its readers, however, different interpretations of autobiography point out that this genre is far more complex than it initially appears.

In the article "Conditions and limits of autobiography", literary theorist Georges Gusdorf (1980) makes the statement that the "I-ness" of autobiography could only be a

product of a society that believed that the individual life was worthy of such attention; "The cultural precondition for autobiography. . . is a pervasive concept of individualism" (Gusdorf cited in Friedman, 1988, p. 34). The individualistic model of Gusdorf is criticized for being too narrow and for ignoring the relational qualities of experience and the differences in the social construction of identities of both women and minorities (Benstock, 1988; Friedman, 1988; Graham, 1991; Watson, 1999). Friedman points out that "The very sense of *identification, interdependence,* and *community* that Gusdorf dismisses from autobiographical selves are key elements in the development of a woman's identity. . ." (p. 38).

The reason why I also dismiss Gusdorf's theory is fairly straightforward. I see teaching, in itself, as an activity that is connected. The process of learning to teach is not done in isolation, but an ongoing process of looking inward and outward, a dialogue between what one brings to the teaching and the uniqueness of the situation. Friedman's approach is far more in line with my understanding of autobiography. In my research, I used narratives to uncover and describe my experiences related to art education. The narratives are stories of connection and identification as Friedman suggests; for instance, "quilting lessons", the stories about my membership in a quilting guild, connect me to women and the history of women's crafts and women's work. Even the recollections of my experiences at summer camp, past and present, describe the sense of belonging that is central to that context.

A definition of autobiography offered by Roy Pascal refers to autobiography as "a review of a life from a particular moment" (Pascal cited in Watson, 1999, p. 17). Pascal's definition involves a fairly lengthy quote, but it is quite insightful and suggests ways to make meaning out of autobiography:

> These distinctions have led us a good way towards a definition of autobiography proper. It involves the reconstruction of the movement of a life, or a part of a life, in the actual circumstances in which it was lived. Its centre of interest is the self, not the outside world, though necessarily the outside world must appear so that, in give and take with it, the personality finds its peculiar shape. But 'reconstruction

of a life' is an impossible task. A single day's experience is limitless in its radiation backward and forward. So that we have to hurry to qualify the above assertions by adding that autobiography is a shaping of the past. It imposes a pattern on a life, constructs out of it a coherent story. It establishes certain stages in an individual life, makes links between them, and defines, implicitly or explicitly, a certain consistency of relationship between the self and the outside world. . . .This coherence implies that the writer takes a particular standpoint, the standpoint of the moment at which he reviews his life, and interprets his life from it. The standpoint may be the actual social position of the writer, his acknowledged achievement in any field, his present philosophy; in every case it is his present position which enables him to see his life as something of a unity, something that may be reduced to order. Autobiography, as A. M. Clark said, is not the annals of a man's life, but its 'philosophical history. . . Autobiography is then an interplay, a collusion, between past and present; its significance is indeed more the revelation of the present situation than the uncovering of the past. (Pascal cited in Watson, 1999, p. 17-18)

Pascal's focus on autobiography as the construction of a coherent story is particularly applicable to autobiographical research within the field of education. Autobiography, as a shaping of the past, intends to reveal the present in a new light through the uncovering of the past. The research process, itself, becomes a learning experience. In my research, I speak from the present, as an art teacher/researcher. I reflect on my past from that standpoint, where my identity as a teacher and researcher are in the forefront. At times in my life, I have identified myself first as an artist, and other times as an artist/teacher. As I review my life from the perspective of art teacher/researcher, the intention is to better understand my teaching. In the process, I redefine and reshape my ideas about art. I use the method of videotaping myself while teaching art at summer camp to chronicle what I do when I teach and I construct autobiographical narratives and collages to explore the "philosophical history" or underlying beliefs of those actions.

Pascal originally states that to distinguish between the forms of autobiography and their fictional counterparts could not be found internally, that is, in the text, but rather externally in the autobiographer's intentionality (Watson, 1999). Pascal modifies this distinction; claiming that an "autobiographical pact" between the author and reader makes the distinction clear. The autobiographical pact is an agreement between the author and reader as to the nature of the written work.

> Such a pact can be established either *explicitly* (the name of the narrator-protagonist is given in the narrative and is the same as that of the author) or *implicitly* (a title such as *The Autobiography of*, which signals the intention of the work or an initial section of the text in which the author signals s/he is also the protagonist). (Watson, 1999, p. 18)

The notion of an autobiographical pact brings into focus another facet of the genre. The pact, being an agreement between author and reader, points out that the genre functions as a form of interpersonal communication between these parties, and because the form often reveals personal details of one's life, it implies a connection between the reader and writer. Autobiographical research is not designed solely for its introspective qualities, but allows readers to learn vicariously through the documentation of personal experience. When I began my research, my intention was to learn more about my practice in order to validate my teaching; it began with a personal, self-serving goal. I can now see how an autobiographical study not only brings another level of understanding to the researcher/author, but also has the potential to inform teacher education beyond the scope of art education, an idea that is discussed in the last chapter of my dissertation.

There is an assumption that autobiography is a mixture of truth and fiction (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1997; Dillard, 1982; Watson, 1999) therefore it is important to understand the author's motivation; "An autobiography may reflect the author's desire to appeal for sympathy, her need to justify herself, her effort to garner appreciation, or her impulse to express herself creatively" (Watson, p. 23). Sometimes I wonder whether I construct my narratives, such as when I write in my journals, to "fit" some underlying concept that I am trying to illustrate, which implies some fictional quality to the work.

Ultimately, I believe that autobiographical research, as much of qualitative research, is less about discovering a "truth", than constructing a likeness. The objective of my particular inquiry is to learn more about my teaching practice through an exploration of past experiences. My research is an attempt to recount these experiences, and to provide a degree of believability, rather than insisting on and claiming their truth.

Another important notion is that autobiography is crafted rather than simply told. It is "the modern idea that human life does not reflect history, it *makes* it" (Spengemann cited in Graham, 1991, p. 21). As I selected the episodes, past and present, to represent myself as an artist and teacher, I began to construct my identity. I learned to question whether these are necessarily separate identities or whether they are really intertwined.

Spacks comments that each century presents its own themes which attend to "a rather impressionistic view of a general pattern of social change" (Spacks cited in Watson, 1999, p. 26). In other words, the context and history shape autobiography. The 20th century "turns its attention to adolescence, a period of defiance and the creation of an identity. Themes of self-discovery and self-invention, of the uniqueness of the individual's experience and inner life dominate this era" (Watson, p. 26). Autobiographical research is about self-discovery and self-invention.

A question remains: Can text even represent a life as lived? Not only does the autobiographer interpret his or her past by transforming lived experience into the written text, but the reader must also interpret these words. Denzin's emphasis on language as a reflection of culture, context and history contributes to autobiographical research. Language can provide clues to social and historical influences, and the examination of language can contribute to a deeper understanding of experience, which is the essence of all research. However, in my study, I did not examine language, for I believe that autobiographical narratives can inform without such analysis by making evident the patterns of experience and exposing what is an integral part of my practice.

The notion of autobiography is not a new concept within the field of education. It has been widely explored as a beneficial way to examine teacher knowledge (Butt & al., 1990, 1992) as a means to improve practice (Davis, 1996; Cunningham Florez, 2000), improve teacher preparation (Ladson-Billings, 2000), and to explore pre-service and practicing teachers personal histories and attitudes related to their practices (Wolf, Ballentine, & Hill, 2000; Nichols & Tippins, 2000). Other areas of research focus on the construction of identity within diverse fields such as science education (Letts, 1999; Robinson, 1995), second language education (Mueller, 2000), and history education (Yeager & Davis, 1994). These studies challenge what counts as legitimate knowledge and knowledge production, as well as expanding what is acceptable as research.

Theories of Learning

Autobiography is founded on experience, and experience is grounded in a particular social and historical context. To identify how I learn within the context of an autobiographical study, I explored different theories of learning. I began with the question "What is learning?"

Behavioral psychologists, notably Skinner, Thorndike, and Pavlov are not only central to the study of psychology throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, but also have a great influence on education. Behaviorism is primarily based on observable changes in behavior and has a tendency to reduce all forms of learning to conditioning. Learning, within this framework, refers to stimulus conditions and their specific responses, suggesting a cause and effect model. Behaviorist notions may explain learning within a laboratory setting, but they provide little insight into learning outside of a controlled environment and it is no wonder that behavioral theories are no longer a focus in education.

In contrast with behavioral theories, where learning is viewed as the end product of a specific process, cognitive developmental theorists explore the thought processes behind the behavior. Piaget views the course of intellectual growth in terms of progressive change in cognitive structures. From his earlier work as a biologist, Piaget

adopts the opinion that one constantly adapts to environmental conditions. This inspired him to view cognitive development as acts of organization and adaption. Organization is the predisposition to integrate and coordinate physical or psychological structures into more complex systems, while adaption involves two processes: *assimilation* and *accommodation*. Piaget suggests that when a child has a new experience, he or she relates and modifies it, that is, assimilates it in accordance with his or her existing schemata, the cognitive structures underlying organized patterns of behavior. Through assimilation, the child's current cognitive structures and level of understanding alter his or her response to the environmental event. Accommodation involves the adjustment of the organism to environmental demands resulting in the continuous modification of schemata. For example, my first summer teaching at summer camp involved much "accommodation". What I had learned through my fine arts training needed considerable adjustment in order to fit a camp art program; even the concept of art in a Master of Fine Arts framework had little to do with art in an arts and crafts setting. I had to learn what art meant within the context of a summer camp arts and crafts program.

Vygotsky (1978) also views learning as an active process, but he defined cognitive development as revolutionary qualitative shifts rather than as incremental quantitative shifts as Piaget claims. Each developmental transition point is defined by the mediational form utilized. Vygotsky explains that "along with processes of organic growth and maturation, a second line of development is clearly distinguished, the cultural growth of behavior. It is based on the mastery of devices and means of cultural behavior and thinking" (Vygotsky cited in Wertsch, 1985, p. 22). The changes are no longer determined by biological factors alone, but also social ones. Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes the role of social interaction in the learning process;

> Every function of the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, *between* people (*interpsychological*), and then *inside* the child (*intrapsychological*). . . .All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals. (p. 57)

The notion that "humans are internalized culture" (Blanck cited in Efland, 2002, p. 33) and that higher psychological functions are acquired by internalization of cultural influences separate Piaget's theories from those of Vygotsky. Piaget views the social environment as "a set of external influences with which the individual interacted, affecting the development of the individual. In the course of cognitive development, individuals construct representations of the social environment, which take the form of personal constructions or schemata" (Efland, 2002, p. 33). Vygotsky proposes that "higher mental life begins *only when cultural influences are internalized. . . .* culture determines both form and content" (Efland, p. 33).

It is not difficult to understand that an autobiographical approach to research is constructed upon the notion that learning is an active process. Through the act of reconstructing my past experiences related to art education, I actively construct my identity as an individual and a teacher. The knowledge required for teaching is not something that can be handed over and received passively, but requires the act of reflection. Freire explains it this way; "The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in their turn, while being taught also teach. . ." (cited in Grundy, 1987, p. 101). I learn as I teach; I adapt to the situation at hand. I am taught by my students, the context of my teaching and reflecting on my actions.

My learning does not occur in isolation; it is influenced by social interactions, a notion that is central to the concept of "situated learning". Rogoff and Lave (1984) remark that cognitive developmental theories have focused on the changes within individuals, often ignoring contextual influences. Their concern with contextual influences on cognition was prompted by studies involving cross-cultural observations of people who had difficulties completing skills within laboratory settings, while they had displayed the same skills in their everyday activities. Their findings suggest that learning is a function of the activity, culture, and context in which it occurs; in other words, it is "situated". Situated learning is the notion that learning involves social interaction, and the use of the tools and schemas that the culture has provided for solving problems. To

explain what is meant by "tools", Rogoff (1984) uses the term in a literal way, such as the example of norms for the arrangement of groceries on shelves to aid shoppers in finding what they need. This is different from Vygotsky's (1978) use of the term, which refers to psychological tools such as language, works of art, diagrams, and varied systems for counting.

"Thinking is intricately interwoven with the context of the problem to be solved" (Rogoff & Lave, 1984, p. 2). To investigate this idea, Rogoff and Lave present several studies, ranging from a study that illustrates how ski instructors adjust their instruction according to their students' needs (Burton, Brown, & Fischer, 1984), to another study that explains how arithmetic is structured by the activity of shopping (Lave, Murtaugh, & de la Rocha, 1984). These studies illuminate a type of "practical thinking" (Scribner, 1984) where, essentially, thinking is described as a practical activity which is adjusted to the demands of the situation.

Lave and Wenger (1991) recommend that we shift the emphasis of learning from a focus on individuals to situations of co-participation, "in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world" (Wenger, 1998, p. 3). Learning is not seen as a separate activity that is situated in practice, but it is an integral and inseparable aspect of practice. Learning involves participation in a "community of practice", which is essentially a community, created over a period of time, that is joined by the pursuit of a shared enterprise. As individuals engage in practice, they tune their "relations with each other and with the world. In other words, we [they] learn" (Wenger, p. 45).
Lave and Wenger (1991) present five studies of apprenticeships to show how "access to practice [functions] as a resource for learning, rather than to instruction" (p. 85). The diverse studies include the varied apprenticeships of Vai and Gola tailors, naval quartermasters, and Yucatec midwives. The examples provide concrete examples of how learning in practice takes place and what it means to move toward full participation in a community of practice.

Within a community of practice, a newcomer moves from the periphery of the community to its center as he or she becomes more active and engaged within the culture or context; a process that Lave and Wenger refer to as *legitimate peripheral participation*. Legitimate peripheral participation emphasizes the "gradual process of fashioning relations of identity as a full practitioner" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 121). Learning in terms of participation focuses on an evolving, continuously renewed set of relations that are based on "situated negotiation and renegotiation of meaning in the world" (Lave & Wenger, p. 51).

The examination of learning that occurs outside of formal schooling has become a significant facet of educational research. Kindler and Irwin (1999) comment that:

> Understanding education in contexts broader than schooling has important implications for art education and calls for an examination of alternative venues, initiatives and strategies that facilitate artistic development, encourage aesthetic growth and promote reflection about the role and value of art in a society. (p. 1)

In this sense, informal learning sites are not meant to undermine formal education within school settings, but to contribute to ongoing dialogue and

> to explore ways in which learning that begins at school can be extended and supported by resources that reside within the broader community, highlighting ways in which learning can be enriched through the participation and involvement of new, outside partners able to contribute expertise, insight, and funds not readily available in schools. (Kindler & Irwin, p. 1)

There has been little focus on informal art education, however, recently, there has been an interest in museum-related studies (Soren, 1993; Williams, 1996; Stone, 1997; King, 1998; Marsh, 1999; Lemelin, 2002) and the idea of connecting schools with local community as partners, such as local artists (Walker, 2001) and folk artists (Moonsammy, 1992). Art programs in diverse settings have also been explored, such as programs for adults (Barrett, 1993), night school (Edelson, 1994), prisons for women (Mullen, 1999), community centers (Saldivar, 2000), and recreational centers (Lackey, 1997, 1999). Other alternative sites of learning that have been explored are the home,

with parents as the "invisible" art teachers (Ulbricht, 1999), self-constructed learning by visual artists in the studio, (Bowen, 2002) and learning and visual culture in the gallery setting (Dubinsky, 1999). What these studies have to offer is that they expand and validate these alternative settings as valid sites of learning within the field of art education.

In my study, I examined how my ideas about art and teaching have been influenced by my membership within different communities or sites of practice and in relationship with others; I reflected on my art-related experiences in primary school, graduate school, family, museum/gallery community, quilting guilds, camp of my childhood, and the camp where I taught. Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that each community of practice "leave[s] a historical trace of artifacts- physical, linguistic, and symbolic" (p. 58). I explored my understanding of the visual arts of the different communities of practice that I have participated in though narrative accounts. What is unusual in this study, is that I show how I move from one community of practice to another; a process that involves transferring elements from one practice to another and constructing meaning across the boundaries of these communities.

One of the elements of my practice that I have learned to adjust to the different contexts in which I participate is the concept of art. In the following section, I examine literature related to theories of art.

Theories of Art

For centuries, philosophers, art critics, historians, and theorists have been asking the question "What is art?" I believe that as educators, we need to ask the same question, to theorize art, to better understand why and how we teach art as we do. Essentially, what people think or believe about art affects how it will be taught; these theories of art influence the nature of art instruction. As I reflected on the diverse contexts in which I have practiced as an artist and taught art, I found that the answer to the question of what art is varies. Art educator Steve Elliot (1997) remarks that "As art educators strive to prepare their students to perceive, produce and appreciate works of art with greater

clarity, a deep and comprehensive understanding about what counts as art is not only desirable, but critical to their activity" (Elliot, 1997, p. 44).

As I began to investigate my practice, it became apparent that the summer camp setting frames the teaching; the content of my teaching is inseparable from its context. An excerpt from my journal illustrates this:

The art at camp cannot be separated from the camp experience. Camp art is gimp, friendship bracelets, and objects. Children do make drawings, but they are more interested in making things. Useful things. Pillows, and more pillows. (July 10, 2003)

I see how much the context influences what and how I teach, and how this unique environment is more congruent with particular theories of art more than others. I explored this in my journal:

I refer to Becker's "Art Worlds" and think about the setting of teaching art in a summer camp- a place built upon tradition, reluctant to change, steadfast in its belief in tradition and how all those ideas set the stage for how I set up my art program. The "world" of camp, definitely particular, influences the choices made. The "camp world", based on tradition, is the "society" in which I mold an "art world" within. (September 3, 2002)

In this section I look at several traditional and contemporary theories of art, looking for a definition or some type of classification that specifies "what counts as art". What I term as traditional theories include art as imitation, art as expression, and art as significant form, while contemporary theories include anti-essentialism, the institutional theory and historical theories. In no way am I assuming that this list is definitive or all-inclusive; I explored a wide range of theories of art, searching for a place to situate and clarify my own ideas about art. As I engaged in a process of self-reflection, I tested the theories in light of my own experience. Critical reflection became a way of making meaning for myself rather than accepting the theories outright. This is an essential part of

my process of learning to teach; learning to analyze the range of possibilities and to construct my own identity as a teacher.

Philosophers as early as Plato and Aristotle speak of the mimetic character of art. The term *mimesis* comes from the Greek word that means imitation, suggesting that art is an imitation of nature. Plato views the changing, natural world as a inferior copy of a perfect original one; even nature itself such as the beauty of a sunset could only be an imperfect copy of "Beauty". Justice and Beauty are examples of what Plato refers to as Forms or Ideas. Art, which imitated nature, could only be a copy of a copy of a Form. Besides, art appealed to the emotions rather than the intellect, a notion that Plato considers dangerous to the individual and the state. Aristotle, on the other hand, praises poetry for its goal of representing that which is universal, emphasizing the intellectual and philosophical capabilities of art.

Although Plato and Aristotle agree on the mimetic character of art, it is difficult to see how much of 20th century art can be categorized as imitating nature, particularly non-objective or abstract art. Also, since the invention of the camera in the mid-nineteenth century, the skills for imitating nature accurately, or photographically, no longer remain the most significant criteria for defining and evaluating art.

The mimetic theory of art continued to dominate discussions well up until the 20th century. John Dewey (1934) recognizes a flaw in the imitation theory, suggesting that we look at the expressive qualities of art. Dewey believes that because works of art are expressive, they function as a language. Art, like language, communicates and "Communication is the process of creating participation, of making common, what had been isolated and singular. . ." (Dewey, p. 244). Dewey explains:

> The fatal defect of the representative theory is that it exclusively identifies the matter of a work of art with what is objective. It passes by the fact that objective material becomes the matter of art only as it is transformed by entering into relations of doing and being, undergone by an individual person with all his

characteristics of temperament, special manner of vision, and unique

experience. . . (Dewey, 1934, p. 287)

Art, from Dewey's perspective, is not nature, but "nature transformed by entering into new relationships where it evokes a new emotional response" (Dewey, p. 79). The signs and symbols within art forms have no intrinsic meaning of their own, but stand for things connected to other experiences. Although Dewey wrote his reflections on art early in the 20th century, his words continue to contribute to the meaning of art today.

In 1914, Clive Bell presented his formalist theory of art in the text, "Art". Formalism suggests that art produces an "aesthetic emotion" in all viewers that is essentially the same and therefore there must be something common in all works of art that produces this effect. Bell claims that what produced aesthetic emotion was "significant form" or the relationships of forms. Examples of these forms are line, color, and shape. Bell's aesthetic theory contributes to the defense of abstract art; the aesthetic value of a work of art no longer had anything to do with how well it represented or imitated nature.

Bell's theory of significant form is useful in providing an uneasy audience with an introduction to abstract art, but it has been criticized for resulting in "art for art's sake", or art with little connection to everyday life and society. Formalist theory was prevalent when I was studying art in the 1970s and the writings of Clement Greenberg (1961, 1971) were highly influential. Greenberg's formalist approach focused on the aesthetic values of works of art, as opposed to a sociological interpretation of art. Formalism suggests that "the ultimate focus of aesthetic attention and critical meaning is, or ought to be, organization and presentation of the visual elements of works of art: line, shape, color, texture, mass, space, volume, and pattern" (Feldman, 1992, p. 122). Art was taught through synthetic universal elements such as line and color, organized by specific principles of composition, the "elements and principles of design". Stuhr (2003) criticizes the point that formalism is based on analytic aesthetics, in which aesthetics is not generally taught as if it were a socially constructed and culturally located stance. I believe that formalism has provided us with a vocabulary to talk about art that I think is still

useful, although ignoring the content of the work and essentially separating art from any real life experience tends to emphasize the entertainment value of art, and overlooks much of art's pragmatic possibilities; the possibility of learning more about ourselves and even as a instrument for social change.

When I was teaching art in the summer camp setting, I brought along my essentially formalist-informed art education. I tried to adapt this knowledge to fit the camp context, however the process could hardly be described as a seamless transition. The concept of art, as framed within my graduate school experience, viewed art as cool, conceptual, and formal, is incompatible with the camp setting and this creates a tension. Years after finishing graduate school, I felt a similar dilemma while sitting alone in my studio:

> *My work in the studio felt lifeless at that moment in time. The making of art had become a purely intellectual challenge where I would set up questions and see if I could answer them in an insightful and witty way. It was primarily a personal challenge and felt removed from any connection to real life. (Fall, 2001)*

At the time, what I had learned in graduate school no longer made sense to me in the context of everyday life and family. I turned to the process of critical reflection to provide the space for a dynamic dialogue between what I learned in art school and how I practice as an art teacher in the summer camp setting.

The critic Suzi Gablik's (1984, 1991) work ties in poignantly to what I was feeling in that studio. Gablik points out that there is a problem when the aesthetic experience becomes an end in itself; when the aesthetic replaces social values. She proposes that we "reenchant" art by emphasizing our interconnectedness rather than our separateness, calling for art that is essentially social and purposeful. Gablik (1991) suggests that what is required is "an individualism that is not purely individual but is grounded in social relationships and also promotes community and the welfare of the whole; an expanded vision of art as a social practice and not just a disembodied eye" (p. 181). The artist/teacher Joseph Beuys once referred to his teaching as his greatest work of

art (Shartin, 2002). I assume that he was referring to communicating and connecting with his students as a work of art, in the same way he would reach his audience with art.

Communication and connection are an essential part of my teaching; they are why I teach. Art educator Arthur Efland (2002) writes: "within general education, the purpose of art education is *not* to induct individuals into the world of the professional fine art community. Rather, its purpose is to enable individuals to find meaning in the world of art for life in the everyday world" (p. 77). Through teaching and making art, I try to find the place for art in the everyday world.

The underlying philosophy of summer camp is also about creating a strong sense of community, as evident in the following journal entry:

Adam was asked to write up and recite the history of camp and instead of reading off a list of dates, when the first building was built, the exact date of the camp, he chose to make a few comments about the informal history. He mentioned that Jen's mother had been my counselor (but forgot to add that now Jen will be my son's unit leader). It is humorous to be included in the "history" of the camp. I am touched. Without resorting to only sentiment, he has touched on an essential part of camp. The part of belonging. Of being family. (June 19, 2002)

Similarly, the arts and crafts program is designed to create those connections between people. The activities are designed to be inviting and accessible. An excerpt from my journal illustrates this idea:

I wonder why people come here. I wonder why people continue to come here. I talk to Jan again, wanting her to go further into her terms of "spirit of place" and "sense of place". She talks about her love of camping and hiking and how camp allows her to do those things and how those activities are tied to a sense of place. She mentions the word leisure. She mentions comfort. I think of how what I do, in teaching art, is less directly tied to place, but this environment, this magnificent place in the woods, affects the interactions that we have. We lie on the docks at midnight looking for shooting stars. Watching the stars while lying on these cold,

wet docks, provide us with the time to talk, to build friendships. The activity that goes on in arts and crafts provides us with the same framework for conversation. A ten year-old girl from Venezula, would sit next to me and diligently work on her projects. As she worked, she began to talk in her not-so-confident English. She said that she loved to do crafts. And she kept talking. A closeness, a security, has been established through this time together. Making crafts has been the vehicle to this closeness, this sense of comfort and security. (August 5, 2002)

The idea of interconnectedness is an integral part of why I teach, but it only partially answers the question of what art is. I refer to the literature on contemporary theories of art to explore the question further. The mid-twentieth century is noted as a transition point from traditional to contemporary theories of art (Carroll, 2000). Wittgenstein inspired the theorists Morris Weitz and William Kennick who propose an *anti-essentialist* theory of art. Both Weitz and Kennick claim that it was impossible to set out necessary and sufficient conditions for defining art. Weitz concludes that "Art itself is an open concept" (cited in Carroll, 2000, p. 5). This is an interesting idea in theory, but when I step into the art room I need something to teach!

Arthur Danto's article, "The Artworld", first published in 1964, is considered pivotal to contemporary theories of art (Carroll, 2000). Danto (1994) believes that it was necessary to turn to philosophy to qualify or "enfranchise" something as art, stating that "To see something as art requires something the eye cannot decry- an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld" (p. 477). He refers to Andy Warhol's "Brillo Boxes" to explain his position; "What in the end makes the difference between a Brillo box and a work of art consisting of a Brillo box is a certain theory of art. It is the theory that takes it up into the world of art. . ." (Danto, p. 479). The artwork cannot be interpreted by its formal characteristics alone, but "rather it resembles the structure of a metaphor, consisting of the complex relationship among artistic intention, the work, and the viewer . . ." (Hobbs, 1993, p. 109). The problem with defining art by its formal characteristics is that when the intentions behind works of art shift, the definition also shifts. It is not that definitions are irrelevant, but it is crucial to consider them in their

cultural and historical contexts. In one of his most recent texts, Danto (1997) adds this historical component to his theory referring to art as being in relation to previous art. He claims that "there is a history, enacted through the history of art, in which the essence of art- the necessary and sufficient conditions- are painfully brought to consciousness" (Danto, p. 95).

In an attempt to define art, George Dickie (1997, 2000, 2001) discusses the "institutional theory" which refers to art as a collective, cultural invention. The main point that is presented in his earlier and later versions of the institutional theory is that we should look to the relation between works of art and their cultural contexts; the institutional theory is a contextual theory. Dickie (2000) explains that "The general claim of the institutional theory is that if we stop looking for *exhibited* (easily noticed) characteristics of artworks such as representationality, emotional expressivity, and others that the traditional theorists focused on, and instead look for characteristics that artworks have as result of their relation to their cultural context, then we can find defining properties" (Dickie, 2000, p. 97). Dickie does not clarify what those defining properties may be, and as a result, has been criticized by other theorists. For one, Danto (1997) believes that the decisions of the art world as to what constituted something as a work of art required reasons, rather than being chosen arbitrarily.

Although there has been research that explores the connection between art theory and art education on a theoretical level (Bersson, 1992; Hobbs, 1993; Efland 1995, 2002; Neperud, 1995; Elliot; 1997), there seems to be little research from the practical standpoint. From the perspective of teachers, studies focus on understanding practice ranging from inquiries into teaching art criticism in primary school (McSorley, 1995), balancing traditional and aesthetic values through a study of a Navaho art teacher (Stokrocki, 1997), negotiating beliefs and identity in public school system (Cohen-Evron, 2001), where art teachers put their emphasis in teaching (Burton, 2001), examining perceptions of the educational value of teaching crafts (Mason, Nakase, & Naoe, 2000), to why and how teachers use art in the classroom (Oreck, 2000). Other research includes pre-service beliefs about art education (Grauer, 1998) and attitudes towards using

multicultural and interdisciplinary materials (Lechner & Barry, 1997). Very little appears in the research literature about art teachers' knowledge and what informs their thinking. Therefore, I believe that a study that explores how my experiences inform my practice contributes to the current dialogue in art education.

When Weitz points out that "One theory of art is to declare that there is no one theory of art- at least no viable one" (cited in Hobbs, 1993, p. 106), he is right. There may be no single theory that can adequately define art in every context throughout history, but in specific settings at specific times, artworks do have particular meanings. Dickie and Danto express this theoretically. In my research, I examined how my personal knowledge about art has been constructed and reconstructed over time and I show how my understanding of art has been influenced by the context and history of my personal experiences.

Discussion

What does it really mean when one says that autobiography, learning, and art are historically and culturally influenced? My research "Drawing on Experience", an autobiographical study of teaching art in an informal setting, will show in a very tangible way, how my learning to teach art has been and continues to be historically, contextually and culturally influenced. The way that I define art affects what I teach and how I teach it. How I theorize art is complex; it is composed of multiple perspectives that are based on personal experience. Through an autobiographical study, I have investigated some of the past experiences that inform how I teach art. These formative experiences are inseparable from the intuitive part of teaching and the research aims to make these intuitive choices more explicit so that I can use them in a more purposive way.

The concepts presented in the separate strands of this literature review overlap and intertwine. It is almost as if the theories from one strand are transferable to another. Contextual theories refer to art as being historically, contextually, and culturally influenced (Danto, 1981, 1997, 1998; Dickie, 1997, 2000, 2001). Learning and autobiography are defined in the same way; characterized by the social context that

produces them (Benstock, 1988; Cixous, 1997; Dillard, 1982; Friedman, 1988; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff & Lave, 1984; Watson, 1999; Wenger, 1998).

Pascal puts it so clearly when he writes that "Autobiography is then an interplay, a collusion, between past and present; its significance is indeed more the revelation of the present situation than the uncovering of the past" (Pascal cited in Watson, 1999, p. 18). My interest in autobiography was inspired more out of the need to better understand my present teaching practice, than from the desire to reveal my past. I am far less concerned with providing a narrative account of the events of my life, year by year, in a historical manner, than discovering the meaning behind those events.

Although there has been research that examines why and how teachers use art in the classroom (Oreck, 2000), and where they put the emphasis in their teaching (Burton, 2001), very little appears in the literature that examines what informs the practice of teaching art or how teachers negotiate conflicting beliefs about art in their practice. The observation and continuing analysis of my teaching identifies what I actually do and has provided a way for me to examine my pedagogical beliefs in action. Narratives are constructed from my remembered past in the attempt to unearth the roots of my personal theories about art and teaching. The reflective process, thinking-in-action, reflecting-on-action, and reflective writing, all draw upon and examine the formative experiences that have contributed to my practice. The theories, my own and those of others, *tell* ideas. The inquiry *shows* how what I think and do as an art teacher in an informal setting is inextricably linked to particular experiences. It also demonstrates how critical reflection provides a space for an ongoing, dynamic dialogue between what I have learned about art in different settings and how I practice as an art teacher in an informal setting.

The educator Paulo Freire (2002) understands dialogue, or the conversations with others, as a process of learning, although he warned about dialogue in which individual lived experiences are given primacy. He believes that "the over-celebration of one's own location and history often eclipses the possibility of engaging the object of knowledge by refusing to struggle directly, for instance, with readings involving an object of

knowledge, particularly if these readings involve theory" (Freire, 2002, p. 18). He explains this idea further in a fairly lengthy quote that I believe is worth quoting:

> Curiosity about the object of knowledge and the willingness and openness to engage theoretical readings and discussions is fundamental. However, I am not suggesting an over-celebration of theory. We must not negate practice for the sake of theory. To do so would reduce theory to a pure verbalism or intellectualism. By the same token, to negate theory for the sake of practice, as in the use of dialogue as conversation, is to run the risk of losing oneself in the disconnectedness of practice. It is for this reason that I never advocate either a theoretic elitism or a practice grounded in theory, but the unity between theory and practice. In order to achieve this unity, one must have an epistemological curiosity- a curiosity that is often missing in dialogue as conversation. (Freire cited in Machedo, 2002, p. 19)

From this quote, I appreciate the relevance of moving between theory and practice, ultimately *conversing* with the theorists; that is, dialogue with a critical edge. The epistemological curiosity that I bring with me is grounded in my research questions. I come to theory to learn more about my practice as an artist and a teacher. This curiosity frames my conversations.

To return to the original question in this chapter, "What literatures rationalize an autobiographical study of teaching art in an informal setting?", the answer may be the literatures that speak of art, learning and autobiography as being culturally and historically situated. In practice, I wonder whether it is really the lived experiences, explored in my autobiographical narratives, which authenticate the literatures. There may not be a linear relationship between theory and practice, where theory informs practice, but there is a dialogical relationship between the two, and each builds up the other. I teach, I learn; I become.

Chapter 3
Writing the Self

Through the research process, I investigated issues about art and education by drawing on my personal experiences. The study supports the notion that personal experience is the basis of knowledge and assumes that to understand teachers' knowledge it is beneficial to observe it from a teacher's perspective (Bullough, 1998; Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Goodson, 1992; Grumet, 1981; Mitchell & Weber, 1999; Ritchie & Wilson, 2000).

In this chapter, I explored autobiography as a research methodology. I discussed the quantitative/qualitative debate in research and I outlined the parallel debate within education. The point of this was to explain my decision to examine my practice through qualitative methods using an autobiographical approach. In order to decipher where autobiography is situated within this debate, I found it necessary to define the concepts of self-study, narrative inquiry, and the relation of autobiography to education. Some examples of empirical studies are introduced as a means to see where my study fits in and how it can contribute to current autobiographical research in education. Finally, I explain how autobiography informs how I teach art in an informal setting.

The Quantitative/Qualitative Divide

Traditionally, researchers have distanced themselves from their work, believing that a detached, objective stance could provide a more accurate picture of the world. Research within this paradigm focuses on the verification of hypotheses, searching for direct relationships between cause and effect. Relationships are expressed as "mathematical (quantitative) propositions or propositions that can be easily converted into precise mathematical formulas expressing functional relationships" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 106). Precision, predictability and reliability characterize the quantitative approach and they are useful when the aim of the research is to predict and direct how one thing affects another within a controlled setting.

The belief that quantitative data is more reliable, and therefore superior to qualitative data, is common. In his book, "Billions and Billions", Carl Sagan (1997) refers to mathematics as a language that is universal, simple, free from errors and obscurities, and therefore it is worthy of expressing the invariable relations between things. He argues that quantification has great potential for not only understanding, but also changing the world.

The question that arises is whether researchers should worry about objective procedures to study the objective world. Procedural objectivity simplifies the judging of qualities so that the judgement requires no perceptual interpretation. Although "*Objective knowing assumes that one can stand outside an experience and understand it*" (Denzin, 1989, p. 27), Eisner (1991) concludes that all that procedural objectivity shows us is that people agree. He denies that we can have objective knowledge and argues that what we come to know about the world will be known through our experience, echoing Dewey's (1952) emphasis on experience and education. A non-positivist approach recognizes that knowledge is more complex than a cause/effect model would suggest. The variables as well as the meanings that individuals attribute to specific contexts not only complicate the findings in any study, but they also lend insight into our understanding of human behavior.

A major criticism of qualitative research is that it is unscientific and biased. "The positive sciences . . . are viewed as the crowning achievements of Western civilization, and in their practices it is assumed that 'truth' can transcend opinion and personal bias" (Carey as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 4). From a similar perspective, Maxwell (1996) comments that "Traditionally, what you bring to the research from your background and identity has been treated as *bias*, something whose influence needs to be eliminated from the design. . . the researcher *is* the instrument of the research" (p. 27).

Rather than ignoring the subjective nature of research, autobiography acknowledges, values, and integrates the stance and voice of the researcher. Since I see my teaching as inseparable from my past experiences, it has been essential to include my

own voice. The research was about learning to honor my own voice; to respect what I know and have learnt through my own personal experiences which have travelled a less traditional route to teaching. I believe that this path has given me an advantage; it has made me question what I do when I teach. I feel the need to justify what I do since I lack the "stamp of approval" that accreditation appears to offer.

Although quantitative and qualitative research both try to learn something more about how society works, there remains an ever-present desire to maintain distinctions between the two approaches. The traditional quantitative/qualitative split often falls between the "hard" and "soft" sciences. In the "Art/Science" photograph (Figure 2), which depicts a signpost at the Cranbrook Educational Community in Michigan, the words "museum" are absent and there is a split between the words "science" and "art". This image reminded me of the lingering resistance to cross the boundaries of quantitative and qualitative research that exists between the sciences and the arts. It also led me to wonder whether teaching is a science or an art. Should we use scientific methods to study the sciences, and artful methods for the arts? I ask these questions in a rhetorical way; I use the image of the sign to point out the continuing dichotomy between the arts and the sciences, whereas I am convinced that they have much to offer each other.

Inevitably, the choice of methods not only affects the questions that the researchers ask, but influences what researchers find, and how they make meaning of the findings. My research has relied on the subjective, in fact, it celebrates the subjective. The notion of subjective knowing involves "drawing on personal experience or the personal experience of others in an effort to form an understanding and interpretation of a particular phenomenon. . . ." (Denzin, 1989, p. 27). Ultimately if the goal is to gain insight into my teaching practice, I needed to rely on the vision and the meanings that I have constructed and continue to construct of art and teaching. Learning to teach is about learning to trust one's own voice.
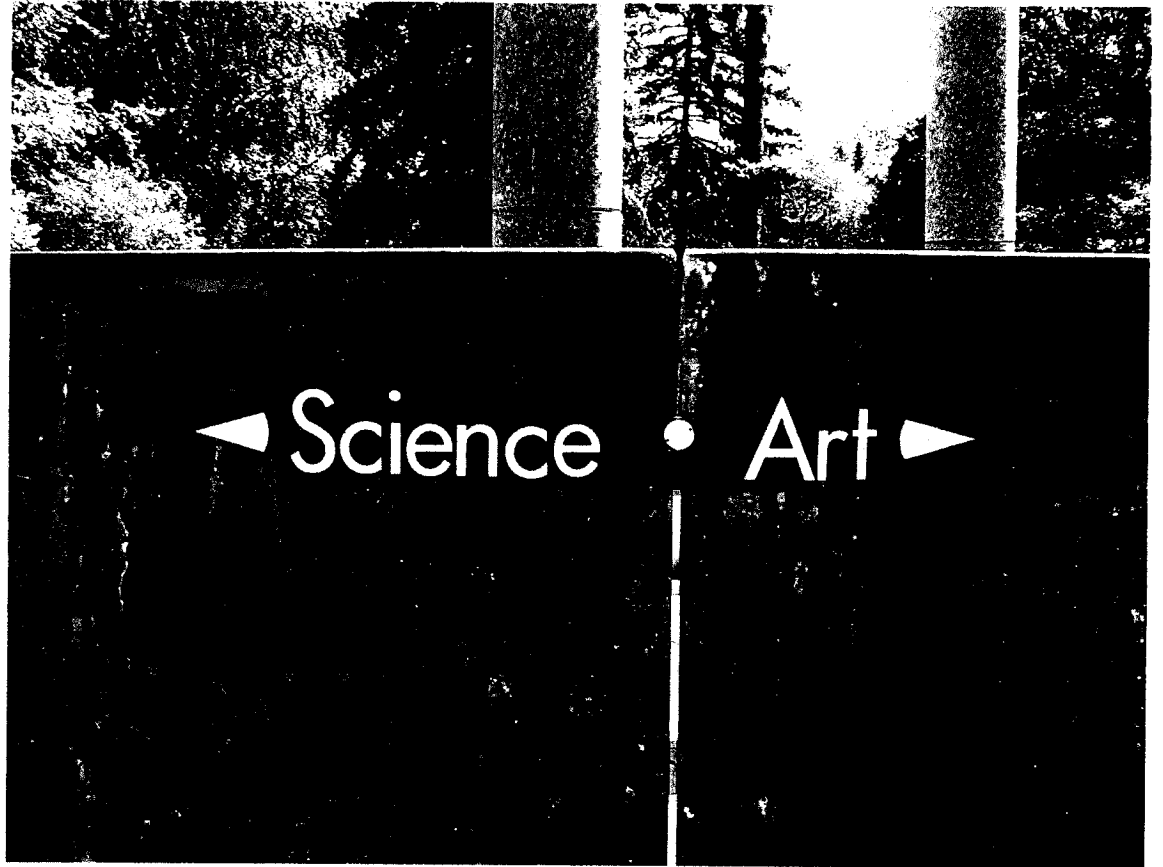
Figure 2: Science/ Art

Research on Teachers/ Teacher Research

Research within the field of education has been dominated by two paradigms, positivism and constructivism (see Appendix D). The influence of positivism has resulted in the predominance of "process-product" research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). The underlying assumption of this perspective is that effective teaching can be explained by exploring the relationship between particular *processes* or behaviors enacted by teachers with the *product*, or outcome, defined as the achievement of students, often measured through standardized tests. This approach has been criticized because it reinforces the view of "teacher as technician" and supports the "banking system" of education (see Appendix D). The notion of teachers as technicians suggests that teachers simply act out a curriculum set by others, rather than constructing curriculum in dialogue with each context/classroom.

A second paradigm, defined as *teacher research*, can be defined as the deliberate research carried out by teachers. Vivid and detailed narratives of teachers are situated within this framework. The writing and telling of stories from a teacher's perspective have the potential to provide rich data for studying the practice of teaching and are more congruent with the notion of teaching as a complex, site-specific activity. This is a unique feature of self-study; the voices of teachers are heard. Stories illuminate the diversity of individual perspectives and "honor[s] the spontaneity, specificity and ambiguity of knowledge" (Grumet, 1987, p. 319) as well as providing insight into how individuals construct that knowledge.

As a facet of teacher research, self-study involves a process of reflecting on the past, allowing teachers to "reappreciate, reinvent, and redraw" (Schön, 1983, p. 104) their own profession. "Self-study represents this trend away from modernism and its assumptions about legitimate knowledge and knowledge production toward broadening what counts as research" (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 13). Based on the belief that one always teaches the self, Pinar (1981) develops a rigorous method for self-exploration, which he refers to as "currere". The method was founded on the idea that if he could

uncover the roots of his self-understanding, he could achieve an understanding of education.

Although deciding on what exactly is involved in self-study appears elusive, "self-study points to a simple truth, that to study a practice is simultaneously to study self: a study of self-in-relation to other. . . . When biography and history are joined, when the issue confronted by the self is shown to have relationship to and bearing on the context and ethos of a time, then self-study moves into research" (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 14-15). Self-study places the researcher at the center, and differs from casual self-reflection through its rigorous approach and making the reflections public.

My research is a form of self-study; I draw on my own experience and understanding, with a goal of personal and professional development. Although I use the terms self-study and autobiography interchangeably, I consider that my research is an *autobiographical* self-study. I think of the term autobiography to be more specific, since I explore my experience through my own understanding, my own lens and I focus on autobiographical data. However, the distinction between self-study and autobiography remains vague, since there are overlaps between the two.

My intention was to gain insight into the intuitive choices that I make while teaching art by reflecting on the past experiences that inform them. The aim was to not only make those choices more purposeful, but to develop a more confident voice as a teacher. This sense of confidence or self-assurance is something that can only be learned through self-reflection. To gain a deeper understanding of my practice required more than just reflecting on my past experiences; it involved becoming aware of the social, contextual and historical influences that have informed my teaching.

In summary, Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) write that:
> A self-study is a good read, attends to the "nodal moments" of teaching and being a teacher educator and thereby enables reader insight or understanding into self, reveals a lively conscience and balanced sense of self-importance, tells a

recognizable teacher or teacher educator story, portrays character development in the face of serious issues within a complex setting, gives place to the dynamic struggle of living life whole, and offers new perspective. (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 19)

Rerouting the Journey

At this point, I find it necessary to take a step backwards and explain my choice of an autobiographical approach to my study. Originally, my research focused on quilting guilds as a model for art education. I was originally drawn to the guild because I had made several collaborative quilts with children while teaching at summer camp. I was particularly intrigued by the fact that during contemporary guild meetings women primarily worked on their own projects, unlike the historic quilting bees, where women worked collaboratively to complete a quilt. My curiosity led me to immerse myself in the world of quilting. I attended the bi-weekly meetings of two guilds and I enrolled in a quilting class. I read novels, histories, and theoretical articles relating to quilting. I completed more quilting projects with children. I became a quilter. I found that the activities of the quilting guild provided an inspiring model for teaching. The meetings were encouraging, inclusive and engaging. I proposed to do a study of the guild as a model for art education for my doctorate.

I had intended to present my ideas about quilting guilds along with their connection to my own teaching and artwork at the first meeting with my committee, but the presentation fell one week after 9/11. I questioned why we even make art at all. One committee member asked me what I was really looking for in the guild. Was I searching out its history? Was I hoping that the guild would validate what I do when I teach? The questions continued and it was suggested that I redirect my research and do a self-study of my teaching practice. The idea of self-study was less than attractive to me; I thought of it as self-centered, self-indulgent and self-serving.

I spent the next few months exploring the suggested redirection of my research. Why was I so intrigued with the quilting guild? Why did I look to the guild as a role

model for my own teaching? I came to agree that a deeper understanding of my teaching practice was the goal all along. I had connected with the engaging and encouraging environment of the guild. It was tempting to look for answers from the outside, through the quilting guild, rather than examining my own innate theories of teaching art. The guild remains a part of my research, although more peripherally; "quilting lessons", along with other experiences, inform who I am as a teacher and as an artist. Besides, my eager and idealized attachment to the guild has proved to have its own contradictions over time.

There are moments that I wish that I had stuck with my somewhat detached study of the quilting guild. I could locate myself within the group when I chose to, or when it was more convenient, on the outside. Self-study is tough. When I uncover parts of my practice that I don't like, self-study is an uncomfortable place to be. Ultimately, what convinced me to embark on a self-study was the idea that it does not focus on the self in an introspective, psychoanalytic way, but rather "on the space between self and the practice engaged in" (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 15).

An autobiographical approach to my research has brought to the surface the many factors of my own personal experiences, which in turn, has lent insight into how and even why I teach art. I used the process of reflection as a way of making sense of my experiences and for telling the story of my journey, an ongoing journey of learning to teach. As I observed and examined what I do when I teach art in a summer camp setting, I investigated the underlying beliefs behind these actions by constructing autobiographical narratives. The use of narrative methods links the work to a particular development in educational research, narrative inquiry.

Narrative Inquiry

The narrative study of teachers' lives includes the stories of classroom and professional practice, but also the stories of self, identity, autobiography, and memory that inform the practice of teaching. The assumption is that the teacher is inseparable from the teaching. Teachers must respond to the complexity of specific

situations in an interactive and often intuitive way, and to each specific setting, teachers carry with them their past experiences.

The stories describe how I teach art in a summer camp setting and are inextricably woven with my personal lived experience, reflecting and illuminating Dewey's (1952) theory that personal experience is the root of education. For example, to even describe what I consider as art, or why I teach in that particular setting, cannot be isolated nor understood apart from my past experiences. Had I grown up in a different culture, or at a different time, I would probably not hold the same understanding of art as I do.

Dyson and Genishi (1994) suggest that "We all have a basic need for story. . ." (p. 2). Stories have evaluative and social functions; we use narrative to continually construct and shape our lives. It is through the stories we tell, through dialogue, that we negotiate "socially established structures of meaning" (Geertz cited in Dyson & Genishi, p. 4). The storytelling self is a social self; stories form the threads that tie people together.

Witherall and Noddings (1991) reiterate the social function of stories, commenting that stories provide meaning and belonging in our lives. We live and invent our lives through our texts. It is through the narratives of the day-to-day particulars of teaching art that an authentic picture of the practice of teaching begins to appear. As I articulated what I do when I teach, I selected stories that have meaning to me, inventing who I am as a art teacher through those texts.

We achieve a sense of continuity through story. "We live immersed in narrative, recounting and reassessing the meaning of our past actions, anticipating the outcomes of our future projects, situating ourselves at the intersections of several stories not yet completed" (Brooks cited in Davies, 2000, p. 22). The narratives of my past experiences related to art and education link my present teaching to a specific history, a history is not only about myself, but includes the stories of others. Through narrative, I have conversations with artists, teachers, students, authors, art critics, gallery owners, family

and friends. In the stories, I am the seven-year-old camper sitting in the arts and crafts lodge and I am the teacher.

Within the positivist framework, individual narratives have had little input. The turn to narrative inquiry as a way to explore and understand educational practice has become increasingly popular as one can note from the recent growing literature (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Dyson & Genishi, 1994; Goodson, 1992; Mitchell & Weber, 1999; Ritchie & Wilson, 2000; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). The researcher is no longer detached and aloof, but has become an active participant in the research. The stories of teacher/researchers reflect a direct and personal engagement with the research; "In this new era the qualitative researcher does more than observe history; he or she plays a part in it" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 7). As an active participant in the research, the narrator/researcher can bring her own voice into the research. Narrative, as literature, derives from the tradition of aesthetic form, which Langer claimed was "Finding form for knowledge about feeling. . ." (cited in Grumet, 1987, p. 320). Narratives provide that form for expressing feeling, where a cool, more detached style of writing would be less effective.

To clarify their own move towards narrative inquiry, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) focus on thinking in terms of the continuity and wholeness of an individual's experience through the "storied moments" of a life; "Narrative inquiry is the study of experience, and experience, as John Dewey taught, is a matter of people in relation contextually and temporally" (Clandinin & Connelly, p. 189). They write that "life- as we come to it and as it comes to others- is filled with narrative fragments, enacted in storied moments of time and space, and reflected upon and understood in terms of narrative unities and discontinuities" (Clandinin & Connelly, p. 17). Clandinin and Connelly explain that narrative researchers "narratively code", looking for patterns, tensions and themes in their field texts in terms of place, plot, tension, narrator, context, and tone; however, they do not specify how researchers carry out this coding.

It is through a narrative lens that I explored how I negotiate the values that inform my teaching. For even when I used visual methods, I "translated" them into narratives, although often incomplete and presented as fragments of narratives.

Autobiography and Education

To explain the connection between autobiography and education, it is helpful to refer to Bullough (1998), who points out that "to understand classroom events, researchers must understand the meaning of teacher and student actions, the conceptual basis upon which teachers act. . . .This work necessitates knowing what beliefs underlie teacher or student interpretations. . .Enter biography. Enter autobiography" (Bullough, p. 21). Both biography and autobiography become the ways for uncovering past experiences that inform present actions.

Autobiography can be defined simply as the record of a life where the author and the subject are the same person. Whether research or even any text can be anything other than autobiographical is argued by Smith (1994): "every text that is created is a self-statement, a bit of autobiography, a statement that carries an individual signature. Such reasoning suggests that all writing should be in the first person, reflecting that individual voice. . ." (Smith, p. 286). Cixous reiterates and expands upon Smith's idea when she writes "I am not separate from writing. I only began to become myself in writing" (cited in Cixous & Calle-Guber, 1997, p. 93).

It was through reflecting and writing in my journals, that the picture of who I am as a teacher began to come into focus. I think back to two summers ago when I had the arts and crafts staff introduce themselves and elaborate on some of their goals for the summer. It was through verbalizing and voicing his thoughts that one young staff member identified himself as a teacher. I recorded this in my journal:

> *Today Mark said, "I'm a teacher. I never thought about that." Camp is what really turned me into a teacher. . . (June 25, 2002)*

Similarly, through my own journal writing, I began to see myself as a teacher.

Although autobiography in education may take on a number of forms, it is essentially "a way of gaining knowledge" (Graham, 1991, p. 3). What autobiography makes evident, is that we are not only drawing upon the experiences that have made us who we are, but through the act of reconstructing our past experiences, and structuring those experiences in a way that we may not have been aware of before, we are actively constructing ourselves. Graham refers to this process, which he considers a fictional representation, "the aesthetics of self-realization", and claims that "By embarking on the unending journey of self-realization, through whatever medium (words, paint, music), individuals can indeed become the authors of their own life stories and in charge of the way they wish to represent themselves to the world" (Graham, p. 66). For this very reason, autobiography becomes both the philosophy behind the methods and a method appropriate to educational research.

The writings of John Dewey (1934, 1952) are pivotal to understanding autobiography in several ways. Dewey rejects the following concepts: the knower as separate from the object of knowledge, knowledge as static and unchanging, and knowledge as constructed in isolation. He was convinced that students have the need to see themselves as connected to the object of knowledge to be able to know it. Similarly, Graham (1991) suggests that for all students, "a primary object of attention and interest is the self", and autobiography provides a means to constructing the self through the "process of constructing and reconstructing the self in language" (Graham, p. 10).

Dewey also believes that education can happen only through experience, and that only certain experiences were educative. The two aspects that made an experience educative were continuity and interaction; continuity, in that an educational experience has some effect on subsequent experience, and interactive, in that the individual acts upon the situation as well as the situation acting upon the individual. While Dewey's work stresses the social dimension of education, it also makes clear that "a conception of identity also contains an ethics of becoming, since the self, constructed as it is through a process of interaction with an environment. . ." (Graham, p. 45). Autobiography, as the

act of writing reflectively on past experiences, functions as an ethics of becoming, actively developing the self.

Through autobiography, I have been able to reflect on the lived experiences that inform my teaching. As an example, I refer to what I wrote after a visiting day. We had set up an exhibition of the work that children had completed and I felt awkward as I spoke with some parents whom I knew were artists. That evening, I wrote in my journal:

> *Is what I do too crafty? Is it not conceptual enough? Too pretty? Not gritty*
> *enough? (July, 2002)*

My uncertainty was speaking loudly. The art/craft debate had gone on throughout my years in graduate school and I was always torn between the skill and beauty of craft and the challenging nature of fine art; as if it were an either/or situation. When I began to reflect on my own camp art experiences, which were heavily influenced by the "craft" of arts and crafts, I understood more fully how camp art had enriched and broadened my ideas about art. The act of writing, as well as revisiting and reflecting upon the writing, made me feel more self-assured about my teaching.

The reflective process is regarded as being critical to education. Berk (1980) notes that, although it is challenging for teachers to predict the outcome of their teaching, they must be able to envision some picture of what they hope to achieve. He writes that "to plan, or teach intelligently one must have a formal concept of education, a vision of the kind of relations that one hopes will hold between a student's conscious experience now and in the future" (Berk, p. 93). To envision the future requires looking back retrospectively to view how earlier experiences have affected subsequent experiences. Through autobiography, I have been able to see how my past influences my present teaching, and I am able to provide concrete examples. Autobiography becomes a way of authenticating Berk's theory.

Graham rationalizes the study of education through autobiography, citing the work of Dewey also, but from a different perspective than Berk. He refers to the influence of Darwin's theories in Dewey's writing. In Darwinian, evolutionary terms, the

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"biological function involves growth, forward movement. . .a neverending process of self-construction" (Graham, 1991, p. 49). This concept coincides with Dewey's statement that "Knowledge itself is no longer an immobile state; it has been liquified. It is actively moving in all the currents of society itself" (Dewey cited in Graham, p. 50).

The concept of looking back is central to the writing of Grumet (1987). She refers to the writing of Schutz to set the stage for her own ideas; he says that "Meaning does not lie in experience. Rather, those experiences are meaningful which are grasped reflectively" (Schutz cited in Grumet, p. 322). These words came to life when I began my fieldwork. The following is cited from a journal entry that I made after my first day of videotaping. We were working on peace flags which were inspired by the idea of Tibetan prayer flags. It seemed appropriate that we begin to imagine what our own images of peace would look like; some took the approach of depicting a peaceful scene such as the countryside, while others worked from the international symbols of peace that I had shown them. The somber atmosphere surprised me and I recorded this in my journal:

> *The idea of making peace flags based on Tibetan prayer flags has been floating around my head since I took a class on Peace Education. September 11th has made these "wishes for peace" all the more timely and meaningful. I have explained to a few people that in coming to camp this summer, I am so aware that as a Canadian teaching in the United States, I am a foreigner and that this country is at war, while no one else talks about it here. I feel as though I am the only one who has even mentioned the events of 9/11. But when I introduced the Peace Flag project to the staff, and now again to campers, they are quiet and working silently. Why would I have thought otherwise? What struck me during the class and is now reconfirmed during viewing the tapes, is that it is so quiet. When I feel as though nothing is happening is it because everyone is completely engaged? No one is walking around, barely anyone is talking. . . . I am so much more accustomed to a hectic art room and feeling as though I am running in circles. I think of everyone talking and loud. Is it the project that "projects" serenity? (June 29, 2002)*

As I reviewed the tape, I began to recognize what had happened while I was teaching. During the taping, I had thought that nothing was happening because the children were so quiet. Viewing the tape made me realize that the reason that they weren't talking or running around, in other words, "doing something", was because they were completely engaged in their work. In this way, videotaping proved to be an indispensable tool for investigating what actually happened in practice, rather than relying solely on what I thought was happening.

Learning from the field of anthropology, Berk notes that when we study another culture, we cannot simply employ our "merely half-conscious habits of interpretation" (p. 94). He equates the use of biography in the study of education to be much the same as an anthropologist studying some other culture. Although we do not face an unfamiliar cultural background, we face an unfamiliar historical background and it is important to look into "the history of what an individual does or thinks. . . . Biographic study is a disciplined way of interpreting a person's thought and action in the light of his or her past" (Berk, 1980, p. 94). To this idea of Berk's, I can add that not only is biographic study a way of interpreting one's present thought and actions in light of his or her past, it can lead to understanding why people think and act the way they do, and add a socio-historical framework to one's actions. In other works, it is impossible to look at autobiographical research without exploring the broader historical context.

Autobiography and Literary Theory

To gain deeper insight into autobiography, Graham (1991) suggests that we turn to literary theory to explore the genre. Different theoretical approaches to autobiography (Benstock, 1988; Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1997; Davies, 2000; Evans, 1993; Friedman, 1988; Olney, 1980) have included a wide range of perspectives, including structuralism, phenomenology, psychology, feminism and post-structuralism (see Appendix D), and this variety has made it difficult to arrive at a single way to interpret autobiography. Each perspective views literature through its own lens and is valid in its own way, although some theoretical frameworks are more congruent with autobiography. For example, since phenomenologists exclude all that is not immanent to consciousness, phenomenology

would hardly be suitable for a study that involves uncovering remembered experiences, as in autobiography. The remembered stories embody their meanings through a tension between the past and present; the author in the present looking back on a past, in a historical sense, and these meanings may not come to the surface through structuralist or phenomenological readings. Structuralism, an approach that is used in many disciplines, is "the theory that societies, languages, works of literature, etc. can be understood only by analysis of their structure (rather than their function)" (Pollard, 2000, p. 796).

Feminist and Marxist readings do offer relevant strategies for the project of autobiography since they view texts as products of historical forces that can be analyzed by looking at the material conditions in which they were formed. Since the goal of my research was to enrich my understanding of my practice by revisiting past experiences, both feminist and Marxist frameworks were appropriate ways to explore the broader, historical influences on those experiences. Besides, to be a woman at the beginning of the 21st century, it would be problematic to ignore feminism and its focus on issues of gender. For example, my mother and grandmothers taught me to knit, sew, and smock; these traditional domestic arts were passed on to the girls in the family, and now compose a part of what I teach and make.

Reader response criticism also provides a promising approach to autobiography by emphasizing the interaction between the text and reader as an active learning experience, acknowledging the reader's role in the production of meaning. The writings of Louise Rosenblatt (1968), Norman Holland (1980), Stanley Fish (1976, 1980), Wolgang Iser (1978, 1980), and Hans-Robert Jauss (1970) all contribute to reader response criticism, but in slightly different ways. Fish (1976, 1980) comments that the text is something that "*happens* to the reader", requiring interpretation. He also notes that a reader's ability to understand a text is influenced by his or her "interpretive community". Holland (1980) adds that interpretation is viewed as "something one can identify oneself with" (p. 360). Iser (1978, 1980) notes that the reading process is always subjective, and that reading becomes a dialectical process between the text and the reader. Jauss (1970) emphasizes that a reader's aesthetic experience is bound to social

and historical determinants. His main focus is on the "horizons of expectations", or the set of cultural, ethical and literary expectations of a reader at a particular historical moment. In other words, the reader's evolving expectations result from changes in the literary, political, cultural, and social conditions of a given society at a time in history.

As I explored my own perceptions of my role as an art teacher and the formative experiences that inform that role, my ability to understand and "read" these experiences was obviously subjective, and bound to the social and historical determinants to which Jauss refers. The reader response perspective acknowledges that the processes of writing and reading reflect each other; recognizing and even honoring the personal experiences that inform them. It recognizes that personal experiences not only inform what we write, but also how we read.

Autobiographical theorists tend to make use of several theoretical frameworks, each stressing particular points in the interpretation of autobiographical texts. I found it important to outline some of the ideas that these theorists present because they raise issues that are pertinent to autobiographical research.

Graham (1991) notes that autobiography is regarded as "a second reading of experience . . . .[that is] truer than the first reading because it adds consciousness of itself to the raw contingencies of experience" (p. 29). This point is particularly applicable to my autobiographical research since the goal of viewing and reviewing my own past experiences is to become more conscious of the past experiences that inform my present actions, in order to make those actions more purposeful.

Cixous (1997) explores the fictional quality of our stories as she writes: "And indeed it cannot be an autobiography, not because there is fiction- every autobiography is fictional- but because it will never be anything but the self-portrait of a blind person" (cited in Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 86). Evans (1999) adds that our need to know about the lives of others is seen as a priority for telling stories, and therefore autobiography functions as the literary equivalent of gossip, which we know is

incomplete and partial. Biography is literally just one story among many possibilities; "All biographies like all autobiographies like all narratives tell one story in place of another story" (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, p. 178). In other words, there may be many versions of the same event. In the last section of this chapter, I explore this idea in more detail when I describe my process of memory work and how I attempted to account for the many ways of telling a story.

Although "biography" and "autobiography" are familiar terms that are widely understood, the terms "(auto)biography" and "auto/biography" require further explanation; Each spelling accentuates particular aspects of autobiography. In an article "(Auto)Biography and Epistemology", Griffiths (1995) uses the bracketed term to encompass the wide range of methods associated in research and teacher education, all which make use of personal experience. These include "autobiography, biography, oral history, life history, dialogic (auto)biography, journals, diaries, logs (where they are accompanied or structured by reflective comments), reflective writing using personal experiences and personal experience presented through the medium of fiction" (Griffiths, p. 76). Griffiths emphasizes that there is no single, or simple recipe to write one's life. In my work, I constructed autobiographical narratives that describe my past experience related to art education, by examining journal excerpts, reflective comments, and collage. I use different ways to analyze each set of data, and I created an interpretation by weaving these stories together.

"Auto/biography" signifies that the self, the "I" in autobiography, is always in relation to others, as Parker explains; "the slash signals this double dialectic in operation within the meanings of the word. . .the intra-subjective and the inter-subjective" (Parker, 2003, n.p.). Basically, the writing of one's own life involves the lives of others. My experiences related to art education includes the stories about my teachers, my students, artists, critics, and the authors I read and relate to. Learning to teach is not done in isolation, it is a social process involving the lives of others.

Denzin (1989) also raises the question of truth in autobiography. He explains that autobiography relies on the use of language as the verbal or written expression of the meanings that one gives to experience. The meanings that individuals give to experience, involve an act of interpretation which Denzin defines as "the act of interpreting and making sense out of something. . ." (p. 28).

All of these issues raise questions about autobiography as a methodological approach to research. Berk (1980) comments that biography, or even more so autobiography, is a troublesome method for research; in autobiography there remains the question of truth, objectivity and the impossibility of language to convey experience. Truth and objectivity do remain questions in my own research since I am the only witness to my past; I am alone in these memories. There is no one to question the truthfulness of my recollections. On the other hand, autobiography is a lifelike reflection of the fluid, neverending process of self-construction, which delineates both the specificity and ambiguity of knowledge.

Exploring the Possibilities

Graham (1991) outlines three facets of autobiography within education that can be summarized through its application to language education, teacher education, and reconceptualization of curriculum studies. Within language education, Britton explains that "we shape our lives into a kind of narrative in order to fully possess our experiences" (cited in Graham, p. 12). Britton's theories refer to "expressive speech" (see Appendix D) or the speech that is close to the speaker. Britton encourages the use of expressive speech because he feels that students learn by articulating their ideas; by putting their thoughts into words. In this way, writing is viewed as a learning process. As I looked through journals that I have kept for personal records of experience, I noticed that the informal and expressive style of journal writing has a transparency that makes the thoughts behind the writing speak in a direct way.

In teacher education, autobiography can uncover and reclaim the hidden aspects of a teacher's past and aims to clarify his or her understanding of the formative experiences that have contributed to how they act within the classroom. Abbs' writing on

teacher preparation strongly advocates autobiography as a means for students to search for "the intimate relationship between being and knowing, between existence and education, between self and culture" (Abbs cited in Graham, 1991, p. 14), emphasizing the *autos* or the "self" in autobiography, and refuting the possibility that knowledge is made up of disconnected bits of information. It is this facet of autobiography within education that most applies to my own research. As I researched the connections between the formative experiences that have contributed to my teaching, I aimed to uncover the "intimate relationship between being and knowing".

Within the facet of reconceptualization of curriculum studies, Pinar and Grumet challenge what they considered conservative theorizing of the curriculum; they seek to reconceptualize the curriculum by exploring the intuitive, personal, political, and social experience that they claim have been neglected by positivistic approaches (Graham, 1991). Pinar and Grumet claim that autobiography can be used as a methodological tool "to argue that only through heightened consciousness and individual self-understanding could a major goal of education be achieved" (Graham, p. 15).

All three applications of autobiography within education have informed my own autobiographical research. An autobiographical approach provides me with a way to explore the disconnected bits and pieces of the past experiences that inform my present teaching, and allows me to articulate my ideas about teaching. The writing process has become an integral part of learning to teach. The connections between personal experience, learning and teaching will become more evident through concrete examples of my own past experiences and present teaching. Autobiographical research draws upon personal experience, emphasizing and reclaiming the intuitive, personal, experiential nature of learning.

Empirical Studies

Empirical studies are based on observation or experiment, deriving knowledge through experience. An overview of the autobiographical studies related to the field of

education allows me to see where my study fits within the current dialogue in education, and also to evaluate what is missing in the research.

The empirical studies related to autobiography and education are both extensive and diverse. Although each of the following studies exemplifies different issues related to education, they do have common features; they all make use of personal experience as a starting point for acknowledging, exploring, and respecting the contextual, social, historical foundations of constructing knowledge. Nichols & Tippins (2000) use photographic essays to challenge the "biomythographies" of prospective elementary teachers by exploring their stories of science and science education. Wolf, Balentine & Hill (2000) document a study in which preservice teachers use a reading-autobiography assignment to explore their own literacy backgrounds. They argue that the combination of autobiography and reflective field experience helps to bridge cross-cultural differences between students and teachers in multicultural education. Dillard (1996) explores the role of autobiography as a creative presentation of one's life story, recommending autobiography as a pedagogical strategy in multicultural teacher education settings. Tierney (1997) uses autobiography, case studies and fictions to provide a picture of gay identity in university life.

This preliminary search suggests a dearth of autobiographical research carried out in the area of art education. A possible explanation could be that art education research often takes the perspective of defending the role of the arts in education, necessary when arts programs are constantly being cut, and such a subjective and ambiguous approach as autobiography may appear too unscientific in that defense. In his text "The Arts and the Creation of Mind", Elliot Eisner (2002) recommends exploring what art teachers actually *do* when they teach, claiming that "teachers can and do have a hand in shaping the design of that situation" (p. 216). Autobiography is an appropriate approach to begin investigating these concerns. I used personal experience as the starting point for exploring the contextual, social and historical foundations of my own knowledge construction. The work is not only about what I do when I teach, but also served to discover the connections between my practice and the experiences that inform it. The·

methods of this autobiographical exploration will be outlined in more detail in the next chapter.

Implications for my Research

Autobiography functions as the theory behind the methods that I used to explore how I teach art in an informal setting. Autobiography has the potential to not only describe what teachers do when they teach, but also considers how teacher's personal practical knowledge is constructed and reconstructed (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Autobiography assumes that there is no single way to write a life and relies on "crafting a method" (He, 1999, p. 6). My research combines fieldwork, memory work, and a literature review. The fieldwork involves observing and documenting the art classes that I teach at a summer camp; data is gathered through videotaping my classes, along with descriptive and reflective memos recorded during the same period. The descriptive memos document what is going on in the videotapes, while the reflective memos are more interpretive. Reflections on my experiences related to art education are recorded in an ongoing journal; these experiences include my observation and participation in two quilting guilds and my observation of several introductory art education classes for pre-service general teachers.

The memory work uncovers my personal experiences related to art and education; and it is inspired by the work of Haug (1987), Mitchell & Weber (1999), Kuhn (1995), and Spence (1995). I constructed collages primarily as a way to find the words for the narratives of experience. I began with pivotal memories connected to art education, such as first memories of making art in school or of experiencing art in a museum, as the prompt for the collage work. I worked from the "snapshot" of the memory- my memories are often pictures in my head. I drew from my collection of magazines, selecting and cutting out images that express what those experiences felt like. I cut apart the images presented in the magazines to break apart the meanings that the magazines offer.

The collage aims to portray the *feeling* of the experience rather than visually representing the snapshot. The choice of images is intuitive, spontaneous, giving shape to

the memories. As Hampl comments, a careful first draft is a failed first draft; spontaneity is key (Hampl cited in Mitchell & Weber, 1999). The second part of this process was describing the images by translating the visual symbols into metaphors, which depicts remembered embodied experiences in text.

Autobiographical research has helped me to discover, connect and better understand the past experiences that inform my practice. Through the act of reconstructing my past experiences, I am actively constructing myself; I am learning. In the following chapter, I explain how I approach my autobiographical study and I outline my methods of research.

Chapter 4

The Space of Research

Crafting methods: Constructing space

Unlike traditional autobiography, which is composed of "written life stories composed of narrative whose beginnings, middles and ends are held together through the telling of an ordered sequence of events" (Kuhn, 1995, p. 148), this autobiographical study offers no clear beginning nor end. Rather, the "story" unfolds as questions emerge. If viewed as a story, this study begins somewhere in the middle, at the time these questions began to surface:

> *What was the moment that I started the research process? I think of sitting in my studio some 7 years ago. I am sitting at a huge work table and thinking about how disconnected what I do in the studio is from the routine of my everyday life and family; the art of everyday experience includes making quilts, knitting sweaters, the so-called domestic arts familiar to the lives of many women. A gallery director recently came to see my work (a contact from my studio mate) and all she commented about my work, which happens to include text, is why didn't I do it in French. I wonder, does she not get it? Does she not understand it? What does language or my position as part of the English minority have to do with it? She misses the point. But I'm beginning to question, what is the point? (September 20, 2004)*

All research begins with questions. "Drawing on Experience" began with questions that arose out of my personal/professional life. During that brief meeting with the director of a gallery, doubts about my role as an artist were set in motion. Shortly after, I was asked to direct a summer art program for children at the same camp that I had spent each summer of my childhood. I wrote about the experience:

> *It was the place that I had first experienced my love for making things and this chance to go full circle was an emotional adventure. I related to an article written by Iris Krasnow (2000) in The Washington Post, ". . .I just started to cry. It was*

this karmic moment of total rightness where my life was coming full circle; the
best of childhood was suddenly dangled in front of me (Krasnow, 2000, p. 4)."
Besides the attraction to that overwhelming nostalgia, my work in the studio felt
lifeless at that moment in time. The making of art had become a purely
intellectual challenge where I would set up questions and see if I could answer
them in an insightful and witty way. It was primarily a personal challenge and felt
removed from any connection to real life. The role of teaching was instantly more
fulfilling than working alone in a studio. I am certain that for me, the most
constructive part of the teaching experience was the strong sense of community
and connection.

The metaphor of a full circle now seems inappropriate. We do not return to the
place of our childhood as children and camp is no longer that camp of the 1960s.
A winding spiral, where each turn crosses over previously travelled paths can
replace the metaphor of a circle. The spiral turn that I am looking at now is
where I am exploring the need for connection and how it can be brought into the
art process. The artist alone in a studio, like Rodin's "The Thinker", isolated in
thought, no longer wholly satisfies my role as an artist. (January 16, 2002)

The autobiographical approach to my research involved collecting the bits and
pieces of experience with enough detail from which I could construct narratives that
delineate the whole of my teaching and studio work. Emily Carr (1966) calls the
manuscript of her journal entries "Hundreds and Thousands", explaining that it is:

> made up of scraps of nothing which, put together, make the trimming and
> furnished the sweetness for what might otherwise have been a drab life sucked
> away without crunch. Hundreds and Thousands are minute candies made in
> England—round sweetnesses, all colours and so small that separately they are not
> worth eating. But to eat them as we ate them in childhood was a different matter. .
> . .It was these tiny things, collectively, taught me how to live. Too insignificant to
> have been considered individually, but like the Hundreds and Thousands lapped
> up and sticking to our moist tongues, the little scraps and nothingnesses of my life
> have made a definite pattern. (p. v)

The way that I pieced together the "hundreds and thousands", and how I learned throughout the research process did not evolve in a straightforward nor structured fashion. The procedure for selecting the methods and their assemblage into a more complete document was a "*bricolage* of a fragmented consciousness, a body of knowledge and a way of knowing that spring[s] not from something imposed from outside but from what is rooted within" (Kuhn, 1995, p. 120). The underlying method of piecing together fragments reflects the spontaneity and ambiguity of knowledge that Grumet (1987) writes about.

Essentially the methods in any research are crafted around the research question or the focus of the research. In this case, the overarching question that has guided my research is: How do my art-related experiences, theoretical and practical, inform my teaching and how do my teaching experiences inform how I theorize art? I found it helpful to draw on the metaphor of vision to describe how I assembled the methods for exploring that question. The writer Georges Perec (1997) explains:

> We use our eyes for seeing. Our field of vision reveals a limited space, something vaguely circular, which ends very quickly to left and right, and doesn't extend very far up and down. If we squint, we can manage to see the end of our nose: if we raise our eyes, we can see there's an up, if we lower them, we can see there's a down. If we turn our head in one direction, then in another, we don't even manage to see completely everything there is around us; we have to twist our bodies round to see properly what was behind us. Our gaze travels through space and gives the illusion of relief and distance. That is how we construct space, with an up and a down, a left and a right, an in front and a behind, a near and a far. (p. 81)

I might say that "Drawing on Experience" is a study of how I got to where I am; it is those glimpses of what is in front of me, looking up and down, and the twisting of my body to see what is behind me that creates the space of research, as well as the space of practice.

The process of crafting the methods for my research has been a lot like vision; it has been said that as a teacher/researcher "the most important tool you have as a

researcher is your eye and your view of classroom life" (Hubbard & Power, 1993, p. 10).
I looked around and my eyes moved in an uneven set of motions. I focused and
concentrated on one aspect and moved on to another that I may have focused on for a
longer, more intense time. This is how we come to know; it is hardly a steady and linear
process. When I could not find what I was looking for in one direction, I turned to
another. Meanwhile, my eyes continued to dart around, looking for meaning in the space
of research.

It was through the gathering of the bits and pieces, the organizing, categorizing,
framing, and constructing of those fragments into a manageable whole, that I tried to
better understand my world; the world of teaching and making art. The intention was to
uncover and rediscover the familiar. There is a belief that "none of us give enough
attention to what is truly daily in our daily lives, to the banal habits, settings and events of
which these lives almost entirely consist. The infra-ordinary is what goes, literally
without saying" (Sturrock in Perec, 1997, p. xiv). The fieldwork, the first part of the
research, was an attempt to pay attention to the "infra-ordinary" of my teaching practice.
In order to examine the influences on that teaching, I needed to "look in front" of me,
look at what I do when I teach, something so ordinary, that it is difficult to into words.

Looking in Front

What do I actually do when I teach? How do I interact with children while
teaching? Do I teach the way that I think I do? How do I draw the picture of myself as art
teacher? These are all questions that arose prior to turning the camera on myself. The first
step in my research was documenting what I do when I teach art at summer camp by
videotaping my teaching and "looking in front".

I began with all the fears of having that intimidating eye of the camera set on me.
Silent conversations floated around my head: Will the camera call my bluff? What do I
know about teaching, particularly since I was not trained in any formal sense? What will
that critical lens of a video camera, recording every move that I make, show me? Will I
learn anything? I had seen myself on tape before, doing a presentation in front of peers in

a graduate level course, and my discomfort showed through vividly. I spoke too fast and my voice was flat and monotone. I hated the way I looked. On top of all that, I am a technophobe at heart and I would have to learn how to use a video camera.

It is also important to understand the context of camp where I did the videotaping. At camp, I hardly ever look in a mirror, I don't care what I wear, I usually sing along with the music playing in the background, and I certainly didn't want such a public and permanent record of that on tape! Mitchell & Weber (1999) express these cumulative insecurities in this way: "We might be uncomfortably aware of the camera's *listening* gaze, a gaze that forces us *to imagine ourselves simultaneously as we act with others*" (p. 190).

With all the initial skepticism, why did I choose to go along with the video taping? My advisor recommended that the camera is the best teacher, providing the push that I needed. My goal was to improve my teaching practice and the videotapes provided me with the opportunity to see myself in action. I became an observer of my practice myself, rather than having an outsider come in and tell me how to improve on what I was doing or not doing. In this way, I was able to observe, evaluate, and basically decide for myself what I wanted to work on. Besides, my fears surrounding the tape as some type of permanent public record was counteracted by the fact that, for ethical reasons, the tapes would be solely for personal viewing.

There are several ethical issues involved in any social science research. For one, in working with children, the principle of *voluntary participation* is not entirely clear. Although no one was coerced into participating in my study, there is always a question of whether children really feel that they have a choice. A second point is obtaining *informed consent* for all participants; the letter that I sent out to parents is attached in Appendix B. The letter fully explained the procedures involved in videotaping the classes, and emphasized that if they chose not to sign the letter, in no way would it affect their child's choice of activities. I realize that the issue of anonymity is impossible in an autobiographical study, however, as a way to make the people and places that I mention

less obvious, I use *pseudonyms*. As a final note, all documentation from this research is kept private in order to assure the rights of the participants.

In the chapter "Turning the Video Camera on Ourselves", Mitchell and Weber (1999) outline several distinguishing characteristics of the self-video experience which I found quite helpful and I summarized based on their writing: 1. The video camera produces images and sound and movement over time, appearing to be more fluid than frozen, which allows for a wider range of images that we can choose the ones that we think capture us better; 2. We can only have a partial view of the teaching experience, through our own perspectives and experience. The camera may give a wider view, offering a look from "without"; 3. What is usually a private experience between the teacher and students may feel public and may call attention to things usually taken for granted; 4. It is more difficult to "pose" for the video camera. The "only script that is captured, that counts, is the *lived script*!" (p. 194); 5. The immediacy of the image, the lack of editing and developing enhance authenticity and spontaneity; and 6. No matter how preoccupied we may be with the camera, we must focus and continue teaching.

The first step in videotaping was to become familiar with the camera long before taping; I quickly learned that the logistics of taping are less intimidating than they first appear. Months before the first day of taping, I drove down to the camp to check out what would be the best way to set up the camera and get a comprehensive view of the art room. The second step was deciding on what to tape and for what period of time. Rather than accumulating mountains of raw data, I chose to tape the first period that I taught each day. This 45 minute period, known as "Hobby", extended over a period of 6 consecutive days. I limited the taping to the first session of the summer, a three-week period; this included 3 separate groups of children who had selected arts and crafts as their hobby period. I requested the attendance sheets prior to the first class of the week so that I would have time to telephone parents, introduce my project, and obtain the ethical permission required for filming their children. Subsequently, I mailed the written form to each parent to be returned (Appendix B). I wrote about my hesitation with calling parents:

I still feel anxious calling parents, although most are completely receptive, quite
friendly and send warm greeting to their children; "Tell her I love her" or "Is she
happy?" are the repeated messages. The occasional drilling throws me off guard
and I feel as though I will be tripped up. What are you doing? This is asked even
after I explain that I am doing research in art education and I wish to videotape
to learn more about my teaching practice. I emphasize that the tapes will focus on
me. Most parents reply that if their child wishes to participate, they may. No
parent refuses. (July 7, 2002)

The night before the first taping, I began my ritual of checking the batteries for
the camera, charging them if necessary, labeling a blank cassette, and placing the tape in
the camera. For the sake of simplicity, I used a separate tape for each day even though the
session does not fill the hour-long cassette; the idea is that it makes the cataloguing of the
tapes easier. The camera was set up on a tripod sitting upon a table in the corner of the
room, in the least invasive way as possible and well out of the way of traffic. Before I
began taping the first day, I introduced the idea to a small class of enthusiastic girls, who
apparently had no shyness in front of a camera. With this acceptance, I turned the camera
on. The rest of the week, I had the camera running before the children even entered the
class so there would be less of a distraction. I quickly learned the importance of doing a
sound-check each morning:

I learnt an unfortunate lesson today- test the tape (+ _sound_) every day before
shooting an entire hour. I began the tape as soon as I heard the bell ring for
activities today and let it run throughout the entire class time- but each part of the
wireless mike was set at different frequencies so there was no sound! (June 30,
2002)

It would be nice to be able to say that I learned to be comfortable in front of the
camera; I almost did. The first day of taping I wrote:

I am anxious to turn the camera off. I cut the taping short, turning the camera off
before the end of the class, because I don't think anything is happening and the
period is going too slowly. (June 29, 2002)

My anxiety surfaced in other ways too:

> *The campers start singing along to "Fly Like a Bird", one of my favorite songs. I*
> *explain that I can't sing because of the microphone. (July 1, 2002)*

I wore a wireless microphone so that I would be able to distinguish my own
words from those of the children, and I would be able to focus on my interactions with
them. The children seemed to enjoy the presence of the camera:

> *What concerned me before I started taping- what activities to choose, what to*
> *wear (!!), how I will look- don't come into play while reviewing the tapes. It is*
> *easy to focus solely on just viewing the activity of teaching. I am also far less*
> *stressed about working in front of the camera, although I feel clearly aware that it*
> *is "on". The kids are able to ignore the camera more easily, although today they*
> *became acutely aware of it and wanted to turn the viewing screen in order to*
> *watch themselves on tape. I invite them back to view the tapes and hear their*
> *comments. Camera play is the most fun part of the taping! (July 10, 2002)*

As I viewed the videotapes each evening, I opened two notebooks. One was for
the daily notes which describe what is going on in the tapes. This was the denotative
"cataloguing" process in which I tried to be objective and not add any interpretation. I
chose cataloguing over the more detailed process of transcription since I was not
planning to focus on an analysis of language. While transcription helps to get at the
nonverbal communication in the classroom through examining the pauses, the
overlapping, and misunderstood speech, I found it to be an unnecessary step in my study.
Hubbard and Power (1993) note that "since most readers of teacher research are not
professional linguists, using all of the [transcription] marks can hinder a reader's sense of
language in the classroom" (p. 45).

The second notebook was my journal, in which I wrote more interpretive
comments. This journal functioned as a type of "memoing" or the "theorizing write-up of
ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike a sentence, a paragraph, or a few
pages. . .the analyst's momentary ideation based on data with conceptual elaboration"

(Glaser cited in Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999, p. 3). I alternated writing in each of the notebooks. The excerpts are from the notebooks; the first example (Table 1) is from the tape catalogue and points to what is going on in the videotape at different times:

Table 1

Excerpt from the Tape Catalogue

Digital counter	Description of what is going on
0:24	They ask if I have finished the quilt that I am folding up.
0:48	Campers enter and take out projects.
1:25	Settling in. Coffee. Walking around. They ask if my coffee's hot.
1:55	Explain to Alison what to do. Take out scissors and frame. Get her set up.
1:57	Get sandpaper and explain how to sand off bubbles.
3:47	"I'm just trying to organize where people are".
4:10	Show students who were absent yesterday what to do. "I'll show you the next step.
4:50	Get materials out of the cupboard. Help open bottle of paint. Pour paint into cups and walk to the sink. (July 10, 2002)

The second example is from my journal from the same day, and shows how I began to interpret what was going on:

Step by step. I work with each camper at their own pace, step by step. Campers

arrive at intervals; campers were out on trips and missed yesterday. A. is here for

the first time in Hobby. Everyone is at different stages and I evaluate each

individually and give instructions, step by step. (July 10, 2002)

The possibilities and advantages of the video process became evident quickly. The camera points out angles that I would never have considered before. An example of this surfaced in a journal entry:

I think that I am not interested in technique, but I find myself repeating how to

glue down paper properly, or how to let the paper dry so that it can be cut

cleanly. I am surprised at how focused I am on the technical aspect of the

découpage project. Where is the "process" that I have been talking about over

and over again? Glue down. Flat. Flat. To the edges. Let dry so that paper can be cut cleanly. Clean. Clean. Clean-up. How to wash brushes. Wash brushes. Wash brushes. Clean. Clean. (July 1, 2002)

Although the camera provided alternative points of view, there was also much that the camera did not see. Mitchell & Weber (1999) note: "Let's get this straight: a video tape of me teaching is not equivalent to me" (p. 192). If the question that I set out to answer through the method of video taping myself teaching was "What do I do as an art teacher?", much remained invisible through video documentation.

For example, the camera is blind to what is involved in preparing the activities and even more basic, how I develop the curriculum for a summer camp arts and crafts program. I comment in my journal:

As I watch the video, I am in awe at how calm and interested the campers are. I think that part of this relaxed atmosphere has to do with having prepped these activities at home. (July 1, 2002)

In summary, during my nightly ritual of checking the camera and viewing the daily taping, I wrote in two notebooks; the "tape catalogue" described what I observed while watching the videotape and functions as a easy reference to what I saw in the tape, while the journal provided the space for interpretation and for filling in some of the camera's blind spots.

Out of this experience, three sets of data emerged, the video tapes, the tape catalogue and the journal. To learn more about what informs my teaching, I turned my head "in one direction", towards my two year association with quilting guilds. I chose to look at the guild first since I had intuitively sensed that the activities of the guild resonated with my own teaching.

Looking in One Direction

Prior to making the decision to do an autobiographical study of my teaching practice, I had spent some time looking at quilting guilds as a model for art education. I observed and participated in two local quilting guilds from March 2000 to May 2001. I set out to learn more about the experience of the quilting guild. What resulted from this was a pilot study outlined in a paper, "Between theory and practice: Initiating research" (Markus, 2001). In the paper, I discussed how I gained entry into the world of quilters, how I collected data, and outlined some of the characteristics of the guild experience that emerged; such as the quilting guild as a supportive, inspiring group that blurred the boundaries between the private and public spheres.

I had been drawn in by the beauty of quilts, much the way that Finn was in the novel "How to Make an American Quilt" (Otto, 1991). Finn says that "We are all drawn to beauty. I think that it is a beacon for us; makes us want to listen. Well, I am ready to listen" (Otto, p. 6). The inherent beauty of quilts attracted me and inspired me to "look in one direction" and find out more about the stories behind the quilts, the stories of the women who made them. The artist Miriam Schapiro (1983) writes:

> What is a quilt? Among other things, it is the history of women, a receptacle of passions, attitudes, largesse, and anger. It is a reassembling process, which in itself may embody a solution to human problems. It is inspiration, a connection with self, the dogged will to make something extraordinary in the midst of family routine, a sense of wholeness, the wish to please, to succeed, pleasure in the act of working and knowing the power of 'making'. (Shapiro, p. 26)

Traditionally, quilts have been confined to the domestic sphere and speak of family, the skills and products are handed down from generation to generation. They serve as reminders of the past and hopes for the future. The first image that people think of when I speak of quilts is of their grandmothers. It seems as though everyone has a grandmother who quilted. Since the 1970s, with the influence of feminism, the quilt has become a tangible symbol of women's lives, of women's culture (Lippard, 1983; Ice & Shilimson, 1989). "The quilt is a diary of touch, reflecting uniformity and disjunction, the

diversity within monotony of women's routines. The mixing and matching of fragments is the product of the interrupted life" (Lippard, 1983, p. 32).

What does a quilt mean to me? It became the focus of my initial research. It was the heart and the soul of the research. Within a quilt, each stitch embroiders and binds together a story; it is that "diary of touch". The quilt, itself, engaged my imagination and invited me to listen to the stories of those who made them.

My fascination with quilting comes from many angles. I had always been interested in textiles. My mother taught me to knit, I learnt to sew clothes at the age of ten, and my grandmother taught me to do smocking, using the kettle in the office of my grandfather's hardware store to press the pleats into the fabric. My educational background is a Bachelor of Arts in literature and a Masters of Fine Arts in textiles. Quilts connect those two interests, storytelling and textiles. I had concentrated on studio work for the past twenty years and my artwork reflected a sensitivity to the tradition of textiles, using fabric in sculpture, pieces of cloth in collage, and more recently, paper in collage and bookbinding.

At the time, I had been teaching at summer camp for a few years and the role of teaching seemed to be more satisfying than working alone in a studio. I am certain that for me, the most constructive part of the teaching experience was the strong sense of community. This was evident in both the art projects worked on individually, but in a group setting, as well as in the more collaborative work such as group quilts. This may have been what was lacking in the isolation of studio work, and what I was searching for in the guild experience.

The choice of investigating the community of quilters within guilds evolved from my lifelong involvement with textiles and the arts, combined with some knowledge of the historical references to quilting bees as a social experience. References to "quiltings", quilting "parties", quilting "frolics" and quilting "bees" have been richly described in periodicals, publications, diaries and paintings of the nineteenth century (Fox, 1995).

Inspired by the lack of central heating and the not easily available commercially made bedding, women invited neighbors to bees to work collaboratively and get the quilt out more quickly; it is said that "a fast group could finish a quilt in one day" (Propps cited in Fox, 1995, p. 10). The descriptions of these social gatherings focused around the quilting frame often reflected a festive atmosphere of music, dance, food and refreshments, celebrated in mixed company, where "creativity was often secondary to companionship" (Fox, p. 9) and providing a social arena for women who were otherwise often isolated.

Unlike quilting bees of the past, what distinguishes contemporary guild meetings, is that members often work on their own individual pieces within the group setting and that the quilting guild is an exclusively female experience. However, benevolent projects still joined the women together in collaborative efforts. The contemporary quilting guild illustrates the modernist concept of individualism combined with the continuing need for community.

Planning the research was similar to learning to quilt. The traditional quilt to learn with is the sampler quilt where pieced squares "sample" a variety of patterns. One does not necessarily know what the next pattern will be or how the pieces will fit together in the end. What links the work together from the onset is the choice of fabric colors. What "colored" my quilt of research, and provided a place to begin was my belief that art can promote social values and have meaning in everyday life, a notion that John Dewey writes about (1934).

Eisner (1991) suggests that an understanding of how a community functions can only be achieved through direct contact. We must be able to see what occurs in the particular community, and relate what we see in an insightful way. In order to explore the world of quilting guilds, and to familiarize myself with the terminology and techniques of quilting, I enrolled in an introductory quilting class. The course provided an immersion into the world of quilters. Where one purchases supplies, where work is exhibited, by what criteria quilts are judged, who quilts, and why people quilt were some of the issues discussed. During the fall of 2000, I contacted a quilting guild to see if I could attend a

meeting. My initial intentions were to observe the interactions of the members and to write about the experience. I was surprised by the skepticism and hesitation that this was met with, but I did attend one meeting. I found that the casualness of the experience was infused with much humor. Women were there to have a good time. I knew that I wanted to observe more. In January, 2001, I began attending the bi-weekly meetings of a guild, and later, I alternated weeks with a second guild. To dissipate the skepticism surrounding my role as a researcher, *researching them*, I prepared more of an introduction to explain why I wanted to attend.

I spent a lot of time thinking about how to present myself. I did not want to viewed as what I have heard referred to as a "hit and run" researcher (B. White, personal communication, March 9, 2001), coming in, getting what I needed, and leaving. Concerned with the hierarchical relationship traditionally set up in research, I searched for a way to equalize the relationship between myself and the participants.

Early on, I was often asked whether I was interested in joining a guild. I didn't know. At times, I clearly felt outside of this community and I began to understand the problems of standpoint in research (Bannerji, 1991). Who was I to talk for these women? What did I know about their lives? The common ground was that we were all women. I felt as though I had been invited to a party where everyone had known each other for years, and I was being warmly welcomed. Reception into people's lives is a privilege.

What became apparent quickly was that *women* quilt. I do realize that there are exceptions to this, but I felt that it was necessary to address the literature that describes methodological concerns that arise from this uniquely female experience. Ann Oakley (1981) writes about her experiences of interviewing women and theorized about and acted upon an alternative approach to traditional research method. Oakley's critique focuses on: first, the notion of the interviewing situation as a one-way situation; second, the advice of regarding the attitude towards interviewees as objectified; and third, the idea that interviews are to be confined to the data collected from them, and not as social relationships in themselves. My preliminary experiences focused on observation and

informal conversation rather than interviewing as I felt a concern for building a rapport with the women.

That ticket into their world as a woman was inviting, but it was enough. These were women who love quilting, who *live* quilting. I decided to formally introduce myself through a story; the story of what brought me there. I explained my love of textiles and my educational background relating to that passion. I told the story of how I came to teaching and that my favorite projects that I did with children were making quilts. I showed and told the stories about those quilts, much the way quilters do in "show and tell". I finished by presenting my unfinished sampler quilt and by saying that I hoped that they would share their stories with me. By framing this story, I was trying to make sense of it, both for myself and for this particular audience. The narrative form addresses our need to tell and hear stories, as a part of what creates group cohesion. My narrated self became an insider in this group, and intentionally so. I had not recounted any details or explanations of my research, afraid that might guide their interactions and conversations with me. My introduction served as my passport into the guild. Perhaps the initial skepticism was less about the research, and more about whether or not they found me to be a trustworthy person, which I believe, meant, was I really interested in quilts.

To begin collecting data, I chose to keep a journal about the guild meetings that I attended. Active participation in meetings, such as the collaborative effort involved in quilting the benefit piece for breast cancer research, occasionally diminished my ability to take notes. Guilds function as communities threaded together by a common interest in quiltmaking and a desire for social interaction and guilds become "local communities of storytelling women" (Langellier, 1992). The quilters were keenly eager to provide information. Many guild members recounted stories that they introduced by saying, "Maybe you will be interested in this". They elaborated upon the history of the guild, or the benevolent nature of many guild activities, or generally, whatever aspects they chose to present of their experience. I described some of the collaboration in the following excerpt:

I went to another quilting last night. I brought a homemade cake so as to contribute to the hospitable tone of the quiltings. There were five of us around the quilt. Each time someone new arrived, the technical details were reviewed. The conversation wandered into intimacy, an intimacy included anything that pertains to daily life- stories about a daughter's upcoming marriage, recent and future retirement, vacations, work, partners, and of course, quilting. A couple of the women are also connected with other guilds. Danielle spoke about the Co-op guild for which she was on the waiting list to join for a couple of years. I questioned why they would be in more than one group. They responded that each group has something different to offer.

Robin talked about her on-line quilting friends, whom she actually met up with last year. She said that they now mostly talk about things other than quilting, the usual details of everyday conversation with friends, but they also do fabric searches by sending photos of fabric attached to e-mail, as well as sharing finished pieces the same way. There were jokes made about the intimate aspects of these on-line relationships, but Robin added that if some guy would want to participate for that reason, he would be awfully bored with all the quilting stuff that he would have to sort through and it would be terribly boring for someone who does not quilt. This is how I feel about the whole guild experience, that if one weren't interested in quilts and was looking for the companionship or social aspects of the guild, it would be pretty boring. Although it seems far-fetched at times, quilting is still the thread that ties everything together.

As we were leaving, Marta tells me again that I was welcome to attend; she was surprised and thankful that I helped out. I was thinking yesterday about whether I would still be interested in the guild if I weren't doing research. Before I had attended any meetings, I would never have thought so; I saw myself as strictly outside of the group. This is not so clear anymore. (January 24, 2001)

Like the quilt itself, where pieces form a whole and the quilted stitches form patterns, the details of particular meetings began to repeat themes and form patterns; themes that define the guild as a supportive, hospitable, inspiring, caring and encouraging

community. The data contained in my journals, and in some way, the very quilts that I have made, represent and recall these "quilting lessons"; this helped me locate some of my beliefs about art:

> *I have always said that I chose to make fine art because I find it more of a challenge- my ultimate challenge. But making things that are useful is so appealing. It doesn't remain disconnected as much as art does. For the years that I felt much more connected to making baby clothes, I never felt like that was as valid an activity as making art. There are many more questions about traditional versus fine art- that quest of the avant-garde. The newer the better. The original. (October 17, 2000)*

To discover more, I needed to look in "then another" direction, beyond the community of quilters. I began to record conversations about art that I had with friends, my impressions of introductory art education classes, and the artwork in galleries and art museums.

Then Another

Teaching does not begin or end in the classroom. I carry my thoughts about teaching everywhere I go, continuing the dialogue with what I experience around me. The data contained in my journal, my "running reflections", intertwines the many situations that construct who I am as a teacher, or even more generally, as a person. I focused on the events which I relate to who that self is, and that may be as diverse as how I respond to radio broadcasts, music videos, art exhibits, art classes and conversations that I have with friends. I was interested in learning more about how my everyday experiences informed my practice.

I reflected on my own ideas about practice after I observe introductory art education classes and I wrote about this in my journal:

> *The student presentation of gluing leaves on paper left me confused. Yes, it did in its limited way address the theme of "change" and sub-theme of "the changing seasons", but what did it actually teach? To me, it is as if the hands-on part of the*

project is so beside the point. As much as I think that technique isn't everything, where is the technique? Where is the expression? What about authenticity of materials?

When I talk about the community of the art room in summer camp and how I always said that I focus on the process rather than the product, am I just making excuses for weak projects?

Take the Adinkra cloth. Begin within its history, the funerary cloth of Ghana, the symbols representing a life decorates the cloth. Talk about symbols. What does a heart mean? Think about symbols. Draw symbols. Look at the chart of traditional Adinkra symbols. Learn to carve the safety-cut rubber and print on fabric. Make patterns from the repeated images of personal symbols. Images with meaning. Sew it together into a collaborative cloth. I work from the final product backwards. It begins with the love of cloth. (October 10, 2001)

The dialogue about curriculum and practice carries on in my head everywhere, all the time, even while I watched music videos, as I noted in the following excerpt from my journal:

The definitions of constructed knowledge that emphasize the relational aspects of experience (Gilligan, 2000; Noddings, 1984) help to define my concerns. Watching the video of various artists singing the Marvin Gaye song "What's Going On" also lends some clues. The visual counterparts to the song are scenes around the events of September 11th, from the heroic efforts of individuals, to the devastation and ruins of the collapsed World Trade Center, to the memorials placed around the city. These memorials, composed of photos of missing relatives, drawings by children, American flags, candles and flowers are powerful aesthetic images of grief. They are collaborative messages presented to the public. This ties into the art world of quilters. Quilting as an art form reaches a wide public and has been referred to as a "democratic art". I look for a connection with others, with the public, by teaching, but now it also seems important to address the content of the teaching. It is not only the product of the teaching, the art that I question, but the process of the teaching. Are these two separate issues- the art

that I am teaching and the art that reaches a broader public, and process as being the message? (December 10, 2001)

The question of content in my work continued in my interaction/reaction to art exhibits that I attended:

Other art images that reach closer to home are the Vodoun flags that are currently on exhibit. The flags contain folk images that emerge from the Vodoun religion; the images function as cultural symbols of a particular community, although their similarity to folk art of other cultures is striking. The presentation of these symbols is arranged by individual artists, but the construction of the flags with heavily beaded and sequined surfaces is a collaborative effort.

I feel as though I am searching for a product, an art form that embodies my notions of teaching, but neither the theory of the teaching, nor the art form is clear. Without the product, the theory doesn't hold together. I think that I am searching for a new art form to satisfy what is missing in my own work and at the same time, trying to define my theoretical stance in teaching. (December 10, 2001)

I attended a class on material culture where other students did not know how to react to my contribution of a hand-knit sweater to the conversation of gender and material culture. I sensed the awkward responses to craft and the handmade, and I was reminded of my own ongoing conversation between art and craft. In turn, I related this to a radio broadcast that I listened to:

A CBC radio show on "The Culture of Food" (November 13, 2000) talked about the overrated distinctions between art and craft. A guest commented that she would much rather eat a meal cooked by a craftsperson than an artist. Other comments included that restaurants that are fine-art cooking don't last as long as craft cooking. This may be too much of a generalization. A meal cooked by an artist-chef can be pretty good. (November 15, 2000)

I am never sure which community that I belong to; am I an artist, craftsperson, teacher, or can I keep a foot in each place? Another radio show offered some insight there:

While listening to the radio, I heard a story about a woman who was asked to send in a photo of her family. Her response was, "Which family?" She questioned whether to send in a photo of her two grown children, of her friend who is ill and she spends a lot of time with, her family of friends whom she dances with, and so on. She chose to send the photo of her dance group. In "The Enlightened Eye", Eisner (1991) quotes from Peshkin, who points out that our subjective self views situations in terms that are relevant to it, and that this is different than how others would view the situation. We have many subjective selves. The self which presents itself depends on the situation in which we find ourselves. (December 3, 2001)

These ongoing "conversations" that I kept a record of on paper encompass what I read, listened to, saw, spoke about, or all of the above, such as in my reflections of a trip to New York. I described in some detail because it raises so many questions about my beliefs about art:

The success of this culturally saturated trip visit came from a combination of events. I am still focused on the tragedy of 9/11 and in particular, how the art world has responded to it. The first image that comes to mind is that I saw the Statue of Liberty for the first time. Its meaning has certainly changed in the past year, with all the questioning of what liberties or freedoms that we are willing to give up in terms of having more security, along with a heightened awareness of our sense of freedom when compared globally, and at what cost.

The second image was powerful. When walking around Soho and noticing how it has become one big designer shopping area, I came upon an exhibit called "Here is New York: a democracy of photographs". The "democracy", being that the exhibition in a vacant storefront featured work by both professional and amateur photographers and was organized by a not-for-profit organization dedicated to exhibiting the images and to donating the proceeds to public charities assisting those affected by the tragic events. The many spectators were silently, and intently, viewing the photographs hung informally from wires strung overhead

from wall and salon-style covering all the wall space. I think that it was observing this intense looking, a reverence that I found to be the emotional part of the experience. Was it a type of voyeurism or a sincere attraction to trying to make sense of one's experience? Some of the photos I knew that I had seen in newspaper articles. They made me question the difference between documentary photographs and art. Is the difference only in where they are seen? If they are printed in a newspaper are they documentary, and if they are hung up in a gallery are they viewed as art, or do they remain documentary? To me they are art. They are individuals' attempts at understanding, making meaning, through visual means.

These questions overflowed into the ideas of the painter Gerhard Richter's retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art. Born in Germany, one year before Hitler came to power, Richter's paintings can be seen as reflecting the restless times that he grew up in. Many of his black and white figurative paintings were inspired by newspaper photographs and they question the validity of the "truth" that photographs hold. His paintings are his responses to newspaper media, just as the "Here is New York" show is a collective response to a very public tragic event.

Oddly, I can now see that the Wim Delvoye exhibit "Cloaca" at the New Museum also ties into these attempts at "making meaning". Delvoye's collaboration with scientists from the University of Antwerp developed an array of test tubes, laboratory glassware and electrical equipment that illustrated how the human digestive system works. From the actual feeding stage (at set hours, twice daily) all the way to the elimination of the preceding day's food are all in plain view,. Art and life are intertwined. Art reproduces a human life process. But what do we learn? That we are like machines? Or that machines-r-us? I can see this as Delvoye's humorous (although, so scientific) attempt at making meaning, understanding human life.

This sense of strength in collaboration was also what I learned from the Quilt Inspirations show. This quilting show showcased the work of the largest guild in New York, along with merchants from all over the East Coast. It wasn't

the quilts that I was looking at, but the hundreds of women who were so excited to
be there, to be inspired by the work of others, by the huge display of materials and
the contact with the quilting community. Their positive moods were contagious!
Putting all these images together both makes my ideas about art clearer, and
more confusing. I see that where art is connected and not in its arrogant "Art"
with-a-capital-A state, it makes more sense to me. But I can also not distinguish
art from non-art anymore. The quilting show is a performance to me- a
performance of community.

The Surrealist show at the Metropolitan was packed with an appreciative
audience, and that is "Art" in the formal setting. But nothing touched me as
deeply as a photograph of two young girls holding up a hand-painted banner with
"You are our heroes" written across it. It touched life. It met life with deep
meaning. Like the humbling experience of seeing Ground Zero with my own eyes.
That sight, the act of seeing with one's own eyes can give such great insight into
what it is to be human. Isn't that what art is about? (March 4, 2002)

My running reflections provides the data that locates me temporally and spatially; how I relate to my surroundings in the present. The way that I respond to and interact in this time and place has been influenced by past experiences, and to envision this, I "look behind" and explore the process of memory work.

Looking Behind

The geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) says we are "more than what the thin present defines. . . [and in order to] strengthen our sense of self the past needs to be rescued and made accessible" (p. 186-187). What can reflecting on the past bring? I "look behind" with a desire to learn more about the past experiences that inform my present and to deepen a sense of self.

The question then becomes how one goes about uncovering the past. Unlike casual reminiscing or daydreaming, memory work serves as a methodical and deliberate approach to discovering and articulating memories that often follows a set of rules. I

utilized memory work as a way to investigate past experiences; to re-search and question that past and to explore how I draw on those experiences in the present. Memory work is a form of archaeology (Haug et al., 1987); it functions as an archaeological tool for self-reflection. Kuhn (1995) suggests that memory work is "*a way of reaching for myth, for the story that is deep enough to express the profound feelings that we have in the present*" (p.1). Ultimately, the objective of memory work is to examine the past and unearth the meaning behind present action, taking taken-for-granted elements of practice and making them more purposive.

Memory work arose out of the women's movement and the consciousness-raising groups of the 1960s and 70s, where groups of women gathered to share personal stories with the goal of improving self-esteem. It was further developed by the German sociologist and scholar Frigga Haug as part of a process for women to learn to deal with their own socialization. In 1980, Haug initiated the *Projekt Frauengrundstudium*, an inquiry in women's issues which emphasized collective memory work. Haug envisioned the project as "a refusal to accept ourselves as pieces of nature, given and unquestioned, a determination to see ourselves as subjects who have *become* what they are, and who are therefore subject to change (Haug, 1987, p. 51). As a research method, memory work has also been used to explore emotion and gender (Crawford et al., 1992), teacher identity (Mitchell & Weber, 1999), family secrets and identity, (Kuhn, 1995), and issues of class, gender, identity, family, and health (Spence, 1988; 1995).

Memory work is founded upon the idea that "experience itself is a resource" (Crawford et al., 1992, p. 3) and "subjectively significant events, events which are remembered, and the way they are subsequently constructed, play an important role in the construction of self" (Crawford et al., p. 37). As a method, memory work not only offers a way to explore experience, but also suggests methodical steps to uncovering, depicting, and documenting memories. For example, a collaborative approach (Haug, 1987; Crawford et al., 1992) offers a specific set of rules for writing memories which involves three phases. The first phase includes writing a memory of a particular event, in the third person, with as much detail as possible and without interpretation or explanation. The

second phase includes the collective analysis of written memories, in which each group member expresses opinions and ideas about each memory, looking for similarities and differences between the memories and identifying clichés, generalizations, and contradictions. Finally, each member examines what is not written in the memories and rewrites them (Crawford et al., 1992, p. 49). In the third phase, the material is analyzed further by comparing and contrasting the memories produced in response to particular cues, "relating them to our [their] own understandings of social practice as informed by particular theoretical positions" (Crawford et al., p. 51). The phase is essentially a reappraisal of the initial two parts. Crawford emphasizes that memory work means working with just that, *memories*; it is not based on working with events. The memories may refer to real events of the past, "But the memory is a construction of that event, a construction that changes with reflection, and over time. It is the construction that we are interested in, not the event because the construction tells us something about the way the person relates to the social" (Crawford et al., p. 8).

Haug (1987) describes another method that is useful for writing memory in the following passage:

> I look for a key image, in other words for a tableau, often no more than a fleeting glimpse of a moment from the past, which I have since kept stored in my memory. An example: the furious expression on my father's face as he sweeps aside the personal bric-a-brac I keep on the window-sill in his angry attempts to open the window. The image presents itself to me clearly now. (p. 71)

She notes that the scene unfolds in the process of writing, but warns that this does not work in every case.

Researchers have offered a variety of prompts that may assist in the process of memory work. In their work on teacher identity, Mitchell and Weber (1999) suggest the use of such objects as blackboards, globes, class photographs, and other classroom ephemera as memory prompts for childhood school memories. Martin and Spence (1995) use photographs as a way of examining one's construction of self in their photo-therapy work. It is important to remember that the photograph, or whatever prompt is employed,

is a part of a process of critical reflection, and does not embody the meaning itself. Annette Kuhn explains:

> As with photographs, so with other memory prompts: the democratic quality of memory work makes it a powerful practical instrument of 'conscientisation': the awakening of critical consciousness, through their own activities of reflection and learning, among those who lack power; and the development of a critical and questioning attitude towards their own lives and the lives of those around them. (p. 9)

The approach to memory work may vary from one researcher to another, but all seem to agree that the actual writing down of the memories is essential. Haug (1987) stresses the importance of writing even more for women:

> Writing is a transgression of boundaries, an exploration of new territory. It involves making public the events of our lives, wriggling free of the constraints of purely private and individual experiences. From a state of modest insignificance we enter a space in which we can take ourselves seriously. (p. 36)

Since women often view the events in their lives as banal, and therefore believe that they have nothing to write about, writing can take on a way of validating experience and a refusal to see themselves through the eyes of others.

Perec (1997) also describes writing as exploration: "This is how literature begins, when, in and through language, the transformation begins- which is far from self-evident and far from immediate- that enables an individual to become aware, by expressing the world and by addressing others" (p. 266). Writing itself becomes a tool for discovery as ideas emerge in and through the writing process.

One of the difficulties of looking back on memories and writing about them is the distortion that happens by looking back and applying present-day value judgments. Crawford recommends that "writing in the third person encourages description and discourages interpretation" (cited in Mitchell & Weber, 1999, p. 62), thus neutralizing the tendency to distort and edit. In other words, "a careful first draft is a failed first draft"

(Hampl cited in Mitchell & Weber, 1999, p. 49). The first draft may be full of lies and half-truths, but its purpose is to give shape to the memories. She recommends writing a second draft that "goes over the memory, challenging certain points, questioning certain interpretations and the ways in which detail and images- the specifics- are often contained within the language of the symbol" (Hampl, p. 50). Basically, the second draft "questions" the first draft, searching for contradictions, silences and symbols.

I list these varied methods used in memory work because they have influenced and inspired my own approach. Where I diverge from more established methods is how I accessed the memories. I found that a more spontaneous method uncovered and retrieved memories that are hidden away from the conscious task of "trying to remember". For this reason, I created a method that combines collage and writing.

As an art form, collage offers an accessible method for retrieving memories that thrives on spontaneity and intuition. It presents the concrete evidence from which one can trace out memories. As a method in research, collage is a risky undertaking since one must write a lot of one's own methodology. Although it has the potential for narcissism; it also opens up possibilities for reflexivity and showing the stance of the researcher, an invaluable quality in self-study.

Collage has a rebel history. At the beginning of the 20th century, the *papiers collés* of Picasso and Braque defiantly broke from traditional painting;

> The invention of collage put into question prevailing notions of how and what works of art represent, of what unifies a work of art, of what materials artists may use; it also opened to debate the more recent Romantic definition of what constitutes originality and authenticity in the work of art. (Poggi, 1992, p. 1)

Collage has been about questioning and not accepting the givens; collage incites inquiry.

In some ways, collage and research can be viewed as parallel processes. In an article titled "Art as Research", Rhonda Watrin (1999) writes that "qualitative research, like art, describes and interprets details of lived experience. . .The artist and researcher

strive for integrity in their work wherein rich descriptions and interpretations unlock experiences in such a way as to facilitate fuller understandings" (Watrin, 1999, p. 94). Collage becomes a process of learning to see and seeing to learn; it allows us to explore the expressive visual qualities of the medium. The point here, is not to make the research public through the artistic representation of collage, rather, to use collage as a visual tool for unearthing memories.

The most important part of the collage process is that the choice of images be spontaneous, allowing for a more direct and less distorted connection with memory and the unconscious. It works "on the basis of giving visual form to feelings and making the invisible more visible. . . .In communicating more directly with the unconscious, visual symbols permit the natural bypassing of verbal 'filters' that limit direct connection to memory" (Weiser, 2004, p. 1). We can connect with images more immediately than with words, avoiding the conscious thinking part and relying more on intuition.

In my research, I used collage as a method of unearthing memories and revealing new meaning. Davis and Butler-Kisber (1999) write that collage is a:

> heterogeneous, multivalent, multidimensional medium, it readily produces effects of spontaneity, simultaneity, ephemerality, fantasy, and disorientation. The capacity of collage to promote creative, metaphorical thinking and to trigger new affective response may be attributed in part to the multiple, often divergent transformations which are performed upon the concepts or entities identified in the component images. . . A collage is not defined by an initial mark or series of marks, the imagery being open to continuous revision and renewal. Whatever the original intention or idea of the collagist may be, the multiple levels of processing frequently assure that the result will be 'made strange', opening up the possibility for the emergence of tacitly or intuitively known content and the appearance of unexpected new associations. (p. 5)

In my research, the format that I worked with is based on "Artist Trading Cards", which are original or small edition works of art created on 2 ½ x 3 ½ inch cards

(hockey/baseball card size). It is both the small size that is easy and quick to fill completely, plus the principles behind the cards that intrigued me. The idea behind the cards is to trade them directly with people at trading sessions; the exchange of cards and the interaction between people are considered of equal importance. However, my intention was not to trade them; I continue to hold onto them so that I can revisit the data.

Collage became part of the process of grasping and representing the past experiences which inform my practice; I constructed collages as a way to find the words for narratives of experience. I began the collage process by selecting "nodal moments" (Bullough and Pinnegar, 2001), or turning points related to art education. I tried to include all that came to mind, however, the conscious mind picks and chooses what it wants to remember. I tended to remember my formal art education, and oddly enough, I forgot much of my informal training when I initially listed those memories. Haug (1987) argues that the "basic premise was that anything and everything remembered constitutes a relevant trace- precisely because it is remembered- for the formation of identity" (p. 50). The events that I remembered were ones that I believed held "relevant traces" of meaning to the present, and were subjectively significant.

I selected images from my own collection of magazines to express what the remembered experience felt like, working from the "snapshot" in my head. I tried to portray the feeling of the particular experience rather than visually representing the snapshot; "Peindre non la chose mais l'effet qu'elle produit" (To paint not the thing but the effect that it produces) (Mallarmé cited in Danto, 1997, p. 67). Rebecca Solnitt (2004) comments that: the remembered places surface with "a definite feeling, not an image of a place, but a sense of place. Imprinted: One could think of the mind as akin to photographic paper" (Solnit, p. 40). Remembered places embody a sense of place; they are more than a picture, deeper than the surface of a photograph.

Examples of nodal moments are my early memories of making art in school, the camp art of my childhood, or my memories of my graduate school experience. When I tried to recall the details of these memories textually, I was often unable to find the

words. For example, if someone were to ask me to describe the experience of camp, an experience that I know so well, I would find it difficult to describe. When events are too close to me, temporally or emotionally, I find it difficult to focus properly on them; it's as if I become farsighted. The spontaneity of the collage process attempts to correct whatever is disturbing my ability to "see" so that I can write about the event. I must add that "Immediacy is not to be confused with questions of accuracy" as Crawford (1992) warns (p. 51). The memories may be "true" memories rather than entire fictions, but as to whether they accurately portray the past is not the point. She emphasizes that "the process of the construction of meanings of those events is the focus of memory work" (Crawford, p. 51).

To illustrate how I used collage to find the words in my memory work, I outline the steps that I followed as I created a set of three cards based on my memories of camp art. The first step was selecting the images. I held the idea of "camp art" in my mind as I tore images from my magazines. I worked with these images, cutting apart the composite images presented to me in the magazines, and placing them into a personal narrative. In this case, I worked on three cards which form a single, unified collage. I attempted to use all of the images that I had torn out, and the cards were complete when the space was filled (Figure 3).
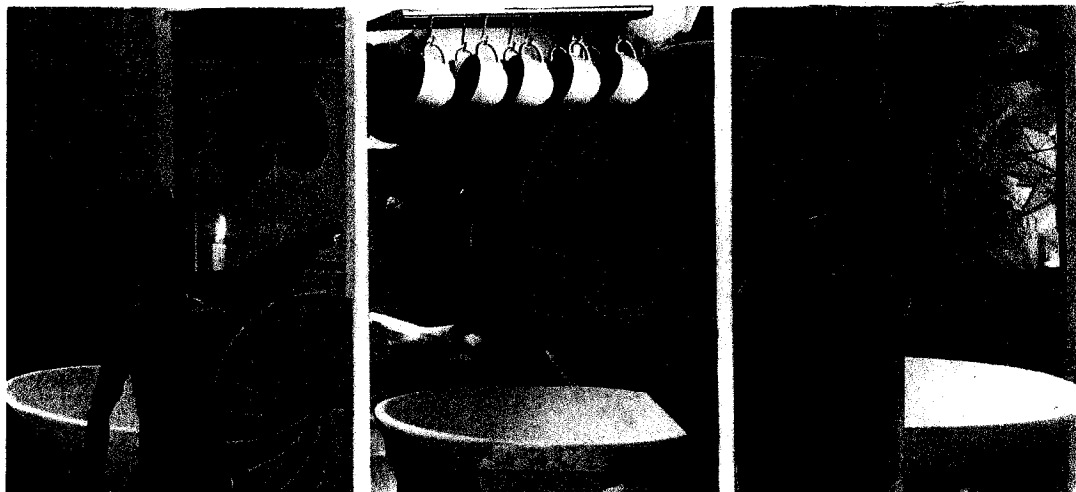
Figure 3: Nature Under Glass

The procedure of "translating" the images into words on a literal level involved describing what is there with as little interpretation as possible. I do acknowledge that there is no direct parallel between words and images, and because images are less codified than words, they have more flexible, open-ended meanings. Collage describes the details of lived experience, but it also "belongs to the nature of art where each element exists in two 'worlds' (the one from which it was drawn and the one into which it is pasted), that it must speak with two voices" (Brockelman, 2001, p. 31). It is allegorical and fits well within the framework of research *because* it retains its double voicing, its ambiguity, as each "element breaks the continuity or the linearity of the discourse and leads necessarily to a double reading. . .Collage intends to represent the intersection of multiple discourses" (Brockelman, p. 2). It highlights the temporal, emphasizing the notion of change; that our readings of collage, or of events, are temporal and unfixed.

I translated the images in the collages into words and I listed them: china cups hanging in a row, a concrete disc, framed botanical samples, a glowing candle, leaves under glass, a three-leaf clover, a stone angel, an empty ceramic bowl, a watering can, a bird in motion, and a basket of apples. In this way, the images were then transformed into textual metaphors of experience.

The next stage was bringing the words/metaphors to a more conceptual level. Table 2 illustrates how the words on the left are the literal translations of the images and those on the right are more abstract.

Table 2

Example of Translating Images into Abstract Terms

china cups hanging in a row.	containers
concrete disc	earth
framed botanical samples.	nature framed
glowing candle.	fire
leaves under glass	nature under glass
three-leaf clover	common
stone angel	the earth, the air
empty ceramic bowl	empty vessel
watering can	water
bird in motion	air
apples in a basket	basic

From the collage and the conceptual interpretation of the images, I began to describe my remembered experience of camp art:

Carved stone discs, garden ornaments; rock, earth, and stone. So entirely opposite to that which is conceptual or ephemeral; literally concrete. Bowls, the containers-containers for ideas. Botanical samples framed like art. Bits of nature under glass. An old watering can, rusted and well-used. Water, so basic, and a rack of plain tea-cups hanging from above. A basket of apples; so down to earth. Nothing complicated; nothing that is not easily understood. Accessible. The bird, the angel, the air. The candle, the fire. The stone, the earth. The watering can, the water. It is all we need: the four basic elements.

To reveal the essence of the experience of camp art, I pulled out the "nuggets of meaning" (C. Hussey, Personal communications, June, 2001). From the narrative fragment, I drew out the words: "Camp art is accessible; it is nature under glass". This becomes a rich metaphor for describing the experience of camp art; it is more informative than my attempt to elucidate the experience prior to constructing the collages:

Camp art is inextricably tied to its context; it cannot be separated from the camp experience. Camp art is gimp, friendship bracelets, and OBJECTS. Children do make drawings, but they are more interested in making things. Useful things. Pillows, and more pillows. (June 10, 2003)

While the initial description remains quite literal, the collage process helped to bring that to a more conceptual level. Once I understood that camp art is "accessible", I can see how that ties into ideas such as Dissanayake's (1988) notion of art as "making special", as well as linking camp art to the "art and daily living" approach of art education that followed the 1929 stock market crash (Efland, 2004). This perspective promoted the arts as a "service to men living a common life, art as a means of attaining community goals. . ." (Benjamin cited in Winslow, 1939, p. xiii) and integrated it into the daily life of the individual.

In the book "Visual Methodologies", Gillian Rose (2001) presents several critical visual methodologies, stating that what she means by critical is an approach to the visual in terms of cultural significance, social practices, and power relations in which it is embedded. Although the text offers some guidelines for investigating the meanings and effects of visual images, she doesn't believe that in the end, visual images totally rely on a sound methodology. I strongly agree with Rose when she writes:

> They also depend on the pleasure, thrills, fascination, wonder, fear or revulsion of the person looking at the images and then writing about them. Successful interpretation depends on a passionate engagement with what you see. Use your methodology to discipline your passion, not to deaden it. (p. 4)

Other theorists have made similar remarks about visual methodologies in research. For example, Malcolm Collier (2001) comments that:

> It is both necessary and legitimate to allow ourselves to respond artistically or intuitively to visual images in research. . . The visual world is rich beyond dreams and each visual investigation must define new approaches. In the end we must play with images until they speak to us directly and from that dialogue we draw our findings. (p. 59)

Martin Lister and Liz Wells (2001) write that "it has become clear that a too rigid application of systematic methodologies for visual analysis, which take written or spoken language as a model, is self-defeating" (p. 73). In the most poetic sense, Barthes (1981) writes in "Camera Lucida" about the *punctum* of a photograph; the punctum is "a kind of

subtle *beyond*- as if the image launched desire beyond what it permits us to see" (Barthes, 1981, p. 59). It is the "sting" that pierces the viewer and that the viewer cannot name. It may not even be present in the photograph, but lies in what the viewer brings *to* the photograph. However one chooses to examine the visual for the concrete evidence of our findings, there remains an unknowable element that resides in the image itself.

In my approach to using images in research, I have respected the "artful unknown" of the visual and the possibilities of art to evoke meaning within the viewer. I opted for images that "spoke" to me, images that drew me in and fascinated me when I constructed the collages. I relied on this passionate engagement with the image to find the words for the past experiences that inform my present teaching, seeking to unearth emotions and "see with the heart" as well as with the mind. I create and I learn.

As I look behind in the process of memory work, the focus on self is inseparable from the inquiry. I begin to see the need to "look from a distance" and to locate my vision and that of others by exploring the literatures that inform my study.

Looking from a Distance

Looking from a distance offered a way for me to touch down, connect, argue, re-evaluate, and strengthen my personal beliefs about teaching and making art. My experiences, past and present, do not exist in isolation; they are situated within a complex and specific socio-cultural framework. It is through the exploration of the writing of others, much like conversing with others, that I can begin to define the cultural conditions that have influenced my own "history". I learned to name my practice as I connected the elements of what may feel like a lonely and idiosyncratic experience to a broader social context.

Irit Rogoff (1998) believes that "we may belong to radically different collectives and cultural mobilizations within the arena of contemporary feminist, multicultural and critically/theoretically informed culture- that historic specificity is a critically important part of coming into cultural recognition and articulation" (p. 33). Looking from a distance

provides a path to uncovering and documenting the social nature of cultural production. Intersubjectivity is then a critical aspect of the work. As I examine my "self" in the present and the past, I find that my multiple selves "are the creation of the collectivities in which they live and act" (Crawford, 1992, p. 51). This section is not intended as a replication of the literature review in which I analyzed three strands of literature that rationalize my study; the purpose is more to illustrate how looking from a distance allows me to locate myself within a historic specificity by connecting and interweaving the literatures to my research.

I reflected on what drew me to research in the first place; the initial questioning my practice and feeling skeptical about the role of the artist as an individual, isolated from community. I learned that these concerns are not mine alone. When I read Charles Taylor (1991), I saw elements from my personal experiences reflected in his writing, which I write about in the following excerpt:

> *When the philosopher Charles Taylor speaks of the disenchantments of modernity, he commented that one of the sources of worry was the modernist concept of individualism. In contemporary society people can decide their own pattern of life, decide what they believe, which in turn, determines the pattern of their lives that their ancestors couldn't choose. People used to see themselves as part of a larger order and as much as this hierarchical ordering of the universe restricted deviation from one's place, it gave meaning to the world and the activities of social life. The focus on the individual has developed into a centering on the self, making our lives poorer in meaning, and less concerned with others or society. The consequence of this seeking one's own self-fulfillment leads one to lose sight of concerns that transcend oneself. (April 11, 2000)*

The idea community is the subject of current literature; it is also reflected in the conversations that I have with friends, in particular, women. Isolation and the lack of a sense of connectedness mirror societal values, where individualistic goals are more highly valued than those of the group. The image of what I see out there, in reality, is both confusing and conflicting. My fine arts background imparts one perspective; it is

through the lens of individualism that I have been taught to look at the world of art, where the notion of individual genius-artist, untouched by society, has supported the high value placed on the fine arts. But the practice of teaching that gives me hints of a different vision; art can promote social values and have meaning in everyday life. The sense of connection that I felt while teaching was the most constructive part of my teaching experience; there was a strong sense of community. I see this in contrast to the isolation that I had felt in my studio.

Contemporary art has been described as:

> a practice located 'between': between individuals and the group, between oneself and one's experience of the world, between oneself and the other. . . . an art that reveals what is in common, both sharing and inventing the world, an infinite practice in a finite world. (Pontbriand, 2000, p. 9)

The role of art is seen as interlinking, possibly its only role, a sharing between (Nancy, 2000). I find that teaching, and in particular, teaching art exemplifies that sharing between and creates community.

The art critic Suzi Gablik (1991) believes that there is a need for new forms in art that emphasize our interconnectedness rather than our separateness. I relate to her writing since the "lens of individualism" no longer generates a clear image for me:

> *Reading Suzi Gablik's "Has Modernism Failed" and thinking about the art projects that we do at camp. Gablik's provoking text comments that contemporary art has collapsed upon itself. Contemporary artists, such as Sherrie Levine, who have posed questions about the high value placed on so-called individual works of art have challenged those notions, but in turn, their own artworks have become a successful part of the consumer market. In "Conversations Before the End of Time", she interviews two artists who have chosen to sell their home and give away all their artwork and return to the lifestyle of hunter-gatherers, to "live" art, to be connected with the land, the environment. Although I understand this conceptually, how does this connect with teaching art? What can children understand of this "folding in upon itself" of modernism, without all the prior*

contextual knowledge required to understand this? What connection does making baskets have to do with these concerns? When the work of graffiti artists is bought up by galleries and corporations, and the original intentions of the artist are so strongly contradicted, is it still art? I would be curious to know what Gablik thinks about traditional work, and the teaching of craft. (November 16, 2001)

Writing serves as a process through which I put my thinking down on paper; I "think aloud" by writing. A month later, the conversation that I have in my head with Gablik continues:

Reading Gablik's "The Reenchantment of Art" where she comments on the disconnection of postmodern art from society, from life, and calls for the re-connecting of those two realms. She questions the notion of art for art's sake and the idea that art has no need to answer to society. Gablik's particular concerns focus around ecological issues and searches for answers through artists who address those concerns, artists who reconnect art with the environment. Closer to my own thoughts are the artist who create collaborative work; Tim Rollins and K.O.S., the group work of the quilting guild, and artwork that reaches the public through more accessible means than the formal museum/gallery networks. But this is still not what I am looking for. What is it that holds the research together? What is social reconstruction? We can educate to repeat and reinforce the values of society, or educate for change. I want to educate for change. (December 10, 2001)

Critics who have addressed a dissatisfaction with the myth of the individual artist have provided much insight; the recommendations for art forms that are more connected speak to me. The anthropologist Ellen Dissanayake's (1988) "What is Art For" defines art as "making special", which reflects not only our Western tradition of fine art, but the rituals and ceremonies of many cultures where art is intrinsically interwoven with the whole society. The literature that links the topic of community to the subject of art often reflects a feminist perspective (Ament, 1998; Garber, 1990; Hicks, 1990, 1994; Sandell, 1991). Feminist art criticism is a means through which the social implications

concerning art are investigated, an approach that Garber (1990) advocates: "because it is based in consequential and contextual theories of art, recognizing art as a meaningful element of and response to culture and society" (p. 19).

I began to see myself reflected in the literature; I sensed an imbalance between the individual and society, and I felt a growing concern for artwork that is more connected to society/social issues. The editor of Parachute magazine Chantal Pontbriand (2004) writes:

> the mechanisms of the relationship between art and the public should also be a locus of questioning. Subjectivity and objectification form in this discussion a delicate equilibrium, which is seemingly never resolved. But, could it be that here is precisely where art situates itself, in some way that at least this inevitable tension gives way to art? Art thrives in a space characterized by irresolution, a space constituted of failures, as well as unpredictable meeting points, interwoven with exacerbated moments of open subjectivities. . . .an excursion into the unknown. (p. 8)

Like art, inquiry defines a space for questioning, carefully negotiating subjectivity and objectivity; an excursion into the unknown.

Questioning Subjectivity

In all research, the question of validity does arise; perhaps, even more so in such a subjective study as my own. How can one judge whether the data collected is valid? How can I account for the blind spots that prevent accurate vision? In doing autobiographical reseaerch, do I choose to only present the data that fits a predetermined agenda? The questions are not easy ones. To suggest that the data is in no way affected by a predetermined agenda or my internal dialogue would be naive. In an emergent study such as this one, I may even find that some of the data contradicts itself, or I may see that what I actually do when I teach is quite different that what I think I do, in other words, I contradict myself.

Feldman (2003) notes that:

> In traditional and technical accounts validity usually refers to the degree to which a study accurately reflects or assesses the specific topic that the research is attempting to measure. Because there are few measurements made in qualitative studies, pioneers such as Eisner (1981, 1991) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) developed other criteria, such as believability, credibility, consensus, and coherence, to replace accuracy as a warrant for validity. (p. 26)

The question then becomes, how do I address these issues of believability and coherence within my study?

One of the ways that we can validate our findings is "to acknowledge the existential reasons why we tend to move towards self-study and autobiography. . . [and that] we need to do more than represent our findings; we must demonstrate how we constructed the representations" (Feldman, p. 27). In order to demonstrate how I constructed the representations, in this chapter, I provided detailed descriptions of the methods that I used to collect the data. By using the metaphor of vision and recounting how I looked in front, behind, and around myself, I explained how I created the space of research around the research question: How do my art-related experiences, theoretical and practical, inform my teaching and how do my teaching experiences inform how I theorize art? The space of research has raised sub-questions, such as: What do I actually do when I teach? What is the experience of the quilting guild? How do my everyday experiences related to art and education inform my practice? What past experiences inform my practice? What literatures inform my practice? In the following chapter, I identify the methods that I used to analyze what I discovered as I looked around in the space of research and I present the results.

Chapter 5

Unfolding the Data

Organizing the data

The space of my research has extended in many directions; I looked in front, in one direction, then another, behind, and from a distance. By looking in each direction, I have accumulated much data; each direction forms a "data set" that is framed by an overarching question, as illustrated in Table 3:

Table 3

Organizing the Data

Data Set	Framing Question	Data Source
Looking in front	How do I teach art in summer camp?	Videotape and tape catalogue (TC) Journals- summer 2002, 2003, 2004 (JS/02, JS/03, JS/04)
Looking in one direction	What is the experience of the quilting guild?	Journal- quilting guild (JQ) Collage (C) Collage narratives (CN)
Then another	How do my everyday experiences inform my practice?	Journal- running reflections (RR)
Looking behind	What past experiences related to art and education inform my practice?	Collage (C) Collage narratives (CN)
Looking from a distance	What literatures inform my practice?	Literature review

The videotape of myself teaching at camp, the corresponding tape catalogue, the reflective journals that I wrote during the summers of 2002, 2003, and 2004, the journal about my observation of two quilting guilds, my running reflections about ongoing experiences related to art and education, and the collages and collage narratives based on past experiences all provide significant data. Initially, the first four data sets were kept separately in order to answer the questions that frame them. Subsequently, they are intertwined since the goal is to see how each experience informs the other. The last data

set is threaded throughout, although it becomes more relevant as I tried to understand how the experiences inform each other, examining how I learn to teach as I move between different communities of practice.

Teaching Arts and Crafts

To begin untangling the large amount of data collected by "looking in front", I found it necessary to organize it in some way. Therefore, I organized the data according to the constant comparative method (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). I began by identifying chunks or units of meaning and using verbs to show the function of the data. The constant comparative method fits with the data that I have collected since it allows for analysis of the narrative fragments that make up part of my data. In structural types of narrative analysis that focus on form, such as Mishler's (1986, 1992), the object of analysis is plot, therefore reducing the stories to general structure. This is hardly applicable to the often incomplete stories I share, which, in the traditional sense, would not even be considered as narratives; I refer to them as narrative fragments. This is also true of Reisman's (1993) focus on the formal properties of a fully-formed narrative, which includes 1.) an abstract, 2.) orientation, 3.) a complicating action, 4.) evaluation, 5.) a resolution, and 6.) a coda. Furthermore, Labov's (1972) or Labov and Waletsky's (1967) linguistic analyses are "written primarily for linguists, and many readers in broader questions may not find them accessible" (Labov, 1972, p. xv), which in Labov's own words explains why linguistic analysis is not the most useful method of analysis in my study.

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) comment that "the search for meaning is accomplished by first identifying the smaller units of meaning in the data, which will later serve as the basis for defining larger categories of meaning" (p. 128). These units are literal, describing rather than explaining what is going on; they are handwritten in the right margin of the typed data. Several examples of how the data is transformed into units of meaning are illustrated in Table 4:

Table 4

Examples of Line-by-line Analysis of Data

Tape Catalogue	Tape Timer	Data Excerpt	Unit of Meaning
Week 1, Tape 3 07/01/02	28:21	Show how to leave extra paper and cut after the glue has dried to get clean edges.	Demonstrating technique
Week 3, Tape 4 07/19/02	34:51	A camper shows me her necklace. I say "Oh it looks wonderful! Are you happy with it? Cool. Beautiful."	Encouraging
Week 2, Tape 5 07/13/02	47:16	I mention that I am going to a quilt show during lunch. S. tells me that her mom likes to do that sort of stuff.	Sharing stories
Week 2, Tape 5 07/13/02	5:53	"First let me get a couple glue brushes out. The varnish has a special brush that I want everyone to use."	Handing out materials
Week 2, Tape 1	17:47	Someone asks about using black for a background color. I explain that black will make the images stand out.	Talking about formal elements of art (color)

After dividing the data into units of meaning, I photocopied all the pages, putting one copy aside. Then I cut apart all of the data into the identified units of meaning and proceeded to group them together by gluing them onto 5 inch by 8 inch index cards titled with the unit of meaning on the top left side. By pasting the units of meaning together on separate cards, they could be reassembled into collective units by combining units that have criteria that looks or feels alike (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). This step allowed for larger categories or themes to emerge, collapsing the data further, and making it more manageable. This sounds easy enough, however, when I looked for themes that could include such units of meaning as "preparing materials", "handing out materials", "working on a sample project", I knew that they were connected to teaching art, I found that they did not fit directly into the category of "teaching art". In order to figure out how these units of meaning could be combined into a larger category, I found that it was helpful to free-write as I did in these notes:

What is the function of the prep work? Related to teaching art skills. Art as tangible. Tangible- evidence of experience, trace, residue- don't like this word- means "leftovers" rather than intentional trace. Representing experience. Object as a way to retrieve (trace back to) experience. Without materials- cannot make the object, the concrete, the tangible. Without prep- teaching is more chaotic. With prep- relaxed about teaching. Prep- setting the stage. Maintenance? Seeing that everything is in order? Why do I spend all that time preparing the materials- so they can relax, work, talk, so they can do- so they can *focus on the making.* What is unique about this sort of prep work? It is organizational- it affects the flow of the teaching. The result of the art lesson is an object- a tangible thing- the thingness of art- the object of the lesson- the objectives and object of the lesson. (March 28, 2006)

The train-of-thought writing pointed how important the preparation of materials was to the focus on *making art* at camp. I was then able to collapse the following units of meaning into a single larger category:

Table 5

Example of Forming Categories

Units of Meaning	Category
Preparing materials Handing out materials Working on sample projects Describing materials Demonstrating technique Helping with technique Evaluating their progress Talking about elements and principles of design Talking about concepts	Making art

What the tape catalogue quickly revealed to me is that the camera does not show much of what is involved in how I teach art. The videotapes do not portray what happens during the hours outside of the actual teaching, and during the months leading up to the

summer program, nor do they reveal how I believe that what I do in my teaching is a function of the larger picture of camp. I began to understand Denzin's (1970) idea that it is necessary to continually evaluate the methods and the usefulness of the data that has been collected, therefore I turned to the journals that I wrote during the summers of 2002, 2003, and 2004.

Unlike the tape catalogue, the summer journals are more reflective than purely descriptive. I examined chunks of data rather than the nearly line-by-line analysis of the tape catalogue because in the journals, I expanded on a single idea, which forms larger, coherent chunks of meaning as opposed to the literal descriptions of what I did in the tape catalogue. This is illustrated in Table 6:

Table 6

Examples of Analysis of Chunks of Data

Journal	Page Number	Data Excerpt	Unit of Meaning
Summer 2002	9	It is tiring watching these videos at the end of a long day. I hear myself sharpening each of the dozen pencils, again. I am tired. The usual evening activity of prepping the next day's activities, cutting squares of fabric, making sure that all the silk resist bottles are unclogged, sharpening the special, washable pencils for fabric, finishing samples, sewing together the pieces of a quilt, all still have to be done.	Preparing materials
Summer 2002	2	The idea of making peace flags based on Tibetan prayer flags has been floating around my head since I took a class in "Peace Education" two years ago. September 11th made these "wishes for peace" all the more timely and meaningful.	Doing projects that are meaningful
Summer 2003	5	J., a young counselor who is studying to be a teacher, looked around the arts and crafts room and asked whether *continued*	Including craft as art

		the peace flags that were hanging (a project from last summer) were art. He seemed to just want to know what I thought. I said "yes, of course"... Why wouldn't they be art? Because they were traditional? Did art have to be a painting, a picture, original? The peace flags are art because they are filled with meaning. The flags communicated. They spoke.	
Summer 2002	12	A 10 year old girl from Venezuela would sit next to me and diligently work on her projects. As she worked, she began to talk in her not-so-confident English. She said that she loved to do crafts. And she kept talking. A closeness, a security, has been established through this time together. Making crafts has been the vehicle to this closeness, this sense of comfort and security.	Connecting
Summer 2004	1	Vulnerability. How do we get to that place so quickly? G. says that we yearn for that place, but in our everyday lives people hold onto a professional mask. A. also used the word vulnerability to describe the openness of camp. Could it be the intense working situation that makes people let their guard down?	Being vulnerable

Right away some of the huge amount of prep work that has to be done for teaching art surfaces when I looked beyond the actual period of teaching. This does not even get to all the planning, ordering, and preparation that goes on before the camp season which is an integral part of the process of teaching art, of *making art*. Art as a *tangible* expression of experience requires the preparation of *tangible* materials. It also begins to get at what frames how I teach, illuminating themes such as art as meaningful, broadening the definition of art to include craft and connection.

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) also suggest that when the data has been grouped together according to the look/feel-alike criteria, the researcher can begin searching out

the properties or characteristics that have formed each group. They state that the "goal here is to distil the meaning carried in the cards, and write a rule that will serve as the basis for including (or excluding) subsequent data cards in the category" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 139). When the rules of inclusion are stated as propositions, they reveal and reflect the meaning that emerges from the data; this is illustrated in Table 7:

Table 7

Examples of Rules of Inclusion

Units of Meaning	Data Source	Category	Rules of Inclusion
Preparing materials Handing out materials Working on sample projects Describing materials Demonstrating technique Helping with technique Evaluating their progress Talking about elements and principles of design Talking about concepts	Tape catalogue	Making art	Teaching art at camp focuses on *making art*; camp art is "doing", making tangible objects. This involves a great deal of preparation and organization of materials.
Connecting Caring Belonging Working together Being flexible Being vulnerable Respecting and encouraging Sharing stories Engaging	Journal Summer (2002, 2003, 2004)	Creating community	Teaching art at camp is about promoting positive social skills and building community.

The two main themes that arise from the data are: "Making art" and "Creating community", forming clues to how I teach art in the summer camp setting. This begins to answer the question that I was asking when I began the videotaping: How do I teach art at camp? However, one of the details that neither the tape catalogue nor the journals provide, is *who* I teach. The summer camp where I teach arts and crafts is an all-around, traditional sleep-away camp that is located in the northeastern United States. By "all-around" program, I am referring to the point that the camp offers a wide selection of activities that are divided between three main areas, the waterfront, athletic field, and arts

and crafts. Campers come for either 3 ½ weeks, or the full 7 weeks. While the camp is co-educational, and both boys and girls regularly attend arts and crafts, the campers that happened to register for the periods that I taped were all female, and between the ages of 11 and 15. They are generally from affluent, urban families who can afford to offer their children a chance to get out of the city and try new activities. The campers select their own individual activities, apart from the required swim instruction. I believe that this is a relevant aspect of the context; they attend arts and crafts because they *choose* to.

Making Art

The emphasis of camp arts and crafts is on the "making". A significant aspect of "making art" that I did not mention in the tape catalogue or journals is *what* we were making. I re-viewed the videotapes to see exactly what projects we were working on. The first week, the project was découpage clocks, the second week was découpage mirrors, and the third week was painted silk pillows. These activities are representative of the program, perhaps of all summer camp programs, where there is a strong emphasis on crafts. There are projects that are drawn more from the tradition of fine arts, such as landscape watercolors and drawing from observation, but the emphasis is definitely on crafts; handmade articles that are decoratively designed and utilitarian. This includes such activities as jewelry-making, stained glass, textile arts, ceramics, woodworking, and photography, as well as the typical camp traditions of working with gimp (lanyard, boondoggle, plastic lacing, and Scooby-doo are some of the many terms used for this activity) and beads.

I am aware that the term "arts and crafts" is not one that is usually met with positive regard. Expressions such as "artsy-craftsy" are for the most part, derogatory. There are several reasons that can explain this. The first two reasons can be drawn from the history of art education and the second from the history of summer camps. Within the history of art education, there are few references to arts and crafts; one is its connection to vocational training, and the second, its association with the British arts and crafts movement.

In the decades preceding and following 1900, in response to the large immigrant population and the numbers of children who spoke little to no English, schools offered vocational training that would "teach a useful trade, provide nonverbal success to children, and draw on the ethnic traditions of the immigrants" (Chapman, 1978, p. 9). Vocational training associates crafts with manual skills, which are viewed as inferior to intellectual skills:

> This bias is reflected in the common assumption that children who do not succeed academically are likely to be good at working with their hands. Further, this attitude implies that art is not intellectually demanding, that only academic achievements lead to success, and that nonacademic endeavors are second-rate activities. At best, this view perpetuates the concept of an elite class of intellectuals whom society should revere. At worst, it causes people to judge themselves and others as "superior" or "inferior" by an extremely narrow standard of human achievement. (Chapman, 1978, p. 9)

The attitude of prioritizing intellectual over manual skills certainly persists throughout education today. Schools value linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences, ignoring Gardner's (1993) theory of multiple intelligences, which also includes: spatial, bodily kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist intelligences. Articulate, logical people are more valued in our culture, often putting aside what artist, musician, designers, dancers, and so on, have to offer.

During the same period, the British Art and Crafts movement began as a social mission that set out to correct the errors of the Industrial Revolution. It was regarded as a social movement that aimed to improve the quality of life of the working class and "to make culture available to everyone and not just the few" (Efland, 1990, p. 151). The leaders of this movement attempted to counteract the mechanical methods of production and the "insincerity" of the overly ornate designs of the Victorian era, by proposing that beauty could be found in the simplicity of the well-crafted, hand-made work. In Britain, working people were a part of the movement, however, once it moved across the ocean to America, it became a middle to upper class phenomenon, thus, watering down the

movement's social criticism and altering many of its central ideas. "In the United States, advocates of arts and crafts included social reformers, tastemakers who focused on the appearance of objects, and those who saw arts and crafts as a hobby or leisure activity. Guiding ideals in the American Arts and Crafts movement included work, taste, and therapy (Stankiewicz, Amburgy, & Bolin, 2004, p. 44). Although the movement failed to reach its original objectives of making culture available to everyone, the regard for beauty in simplicity carries on in handicrafts today.

As a legacy of the arts and crafts movement, crafts form the core of the summer camp experience. Like crafts, summer camp is that "return to simplicity" and an appreciation of the beauty of living in the wilderness. However, within many camps, the arts and crafts program is often undervalued and therefore marginalized. This may be a result of the original agenda of summer camps where the focus was on outdoor education (Paris, 2001), a priority that continues today.

Irvine (1985) points out there is an ambiguity about the term craft, citing the definition given by "The Dictionary of Art Terms and Techniques" where craft is defined as:

> '1. Technique of skill, considered apart from the aesthetic aspect of a creation,' and '2. a constructive manual activity performed by artisans or craftsmen, as distinguished from the specific group of techniques know as FINE ARTS that are practices by creative artists as aesthetic expressions'. (cited in Irvine, p. 44)

Furthermore, the term "Arts and Crafts" is defined as:

> the art of forming handmade articles which are usually decoratively designed and often useful or purposeful' and which are 'professionally taught. . . in schools, camps, and other institutions, sometimes, as a hobby or recreational activity and sometimes as therapy. (Irvine, p. 44)

The criticism of this definition lies in its inherent bias which limits aesthetic expression to the fine arts, and crafts to the realm of recreation or hobby.

Whether we view arts and crafts as a form of recreation or therapy, crafts celebrate skilled technique, and play tribute to the handmade. This is at the heart of camp arts and crafts programs. The emphasis in my teaching is on technique, showing and telling, demonstrating and explaining, how to do crafts. This is evident in the data, where the majority of entries relate to technique in some way. For example, I describe the materials:

> *I show them the dyes. They're great. Extremely vibrant, they're that great. The colors are true. This brand is my favorite. It will come out exactly like that. (July 16, 2002)*

I give details about where to buy materials:

> *The frames are from Ikea. It's a good place to get unpainted wood stuff- great supplies for making art. (July 2, 2002)*

I demonstrate technique:

> *If everyone's watching, I can show you how to glue. We're going to cover it completely in glue, an even coat of glue. (Everyone is watching!) It's very important to get every spot or it will bubble up and it won't lie flat. And rub it smooth. (July 7, 2002)*

I explain technique:

> *All of these colors are accurate. If you paint this, you'll get a bright orange. One thing, when you're opening the bottles, never do it over your work in case it splatters. If you're doing a small area, you want to use a smaller brush, so I'll take out a few sizes. You'll see, when you touch the brush to the fabric, the dye spreads right to the edges. (July 19, 2002)*

I evaluate technique:

> *It's looking better. We can do a light sanding. (July 11, 2002)*

And I help with technique:

> *I'll help you pin. It's just very delicate fabric. (July 16, 2002)*

I rarely speak about the formal issues of art; the elements and principles of design are foreign concepts. Teaching arts and crafts at camp is more about sharing my technical knowledge and focusing on the making. The materials are prepared before the children

walk in the room, as much of data shows; this organization contributes to the flow of teaching, allowing for a relaxing and supportive environment. I am able to teach each camper at his or her own pace:

> *Step by step. I take each camper at his or her own pace, step by step. Campers arrive at intervals; campers were out on trips and missed yesterday and Andrea is even here for the first time. Everyone is at different stages and I evaluate each individually and give instructions step by step. (July 10, 2002)*

I hand over the tradition of camp art as I share my appreciation of camp crafts. For one, there is the aspect of making "something out of nothing":

> *Carnival day preparations. Making something out of nothing. I love the way that out of paper and paint, a carnival is built. Mark is sawing and hammering, three campers and a counselor are watching him work. Close by, I am lying on my back on the grass feeling the hardness of the earth and looking up at the cloudless blue sky. I am exhausted. The day before carnival involves working double-time. I reach regular activities along with handing out materials for carnival day prep. I return to arts and crafts that evening, and one of my staff puts on our song of the summer, the IZ version of "Somewhere over the rainbow". I have introduced this music to people and they like it! They like working here. (July 31, 2002)*

It is obvious that there is more to the teaching here than making something out of nothing. I reflected on this:

> *What am I doing here? I think that I am sharing what I like to do. I am showing them step by step what I have learnt about painting on silk, or about decoupage, or about bookbinding. I am teaching them about my love of these materials. Listen to the sound of silk ripping. Look at this great book on butterflies. Listen to my favorite song. Taste the wild strawberries. (July 15, 2002)*

I realize that I am just handing over my knowledge of crafts, whether I call it "sharing what I like to do" or telling them how to wash a brush properly.

What makes me think that there are values transferred through the lesson? What values? Clean, clean? The proper way to do things- THE way to glue? I do want to know more about the lives of these kids, what they are doing outside of arts and crafts, what they are enjoying, so I try to talk about other stuff also. I want them to tell me stories. (July 1, 2002)

Along with sharing what I know about making art, I share my stories, which is another form of passing on the traditions of camp from generation to generation. Katter (1995) remarks that "One way that craft is learned is by watching and working with family or community members who may share stories as well as skills. Stories are one way that culture is transmitted to the next generation" (Katter, p. 12). Whether this is visible in the videotapes, I am not sure; but I know that I want them to share their stories. I wrote about this in my journal:

When looking at the tape it feels as though I am just giving a bit of technical guidance and letting them get right into the hands-on part. I am always part of the activity, only stepping out to get more materials, put on music, or give guidance. I am part of their activities, a part of their conversation. (June 30, 2002)

Katter (1995) explains that "to speak of crafts in isolation is contradictory; the term 'craft' implies connectedness" (p. 9). Unlike the fine arts tradition, where originality and individualism are highly valued, crafts retain that sense of connection to the past and to others, to community. Arts and crafts within a summer camp setting may be a way of "learning to appreciate local culture [camp culture] with no intent of social reconstruction" (Ulbricht, 2005, p. 10), but it can also be viewed as more.

To fully understand the meaning behind that simple friendship bracelet made out of nothing more than string, one has to understand camp and the meaning of crafts in the camp context. It is necessary:

to develop understanding of craft objects in the social context of the lives of the makers and their customers. By examining the shared values and beliefs of particular cultural traditions, and considering questions of cultural meaning,

significance, and aesthetics, students as both makers and perceivers come to understand the complex relationships of people, objects, and social meaning. (Katter, 1995, p. 12)

I agree that one can only grasp the value of making such crafts through examining the shared values and beliefs of the culture of summer camp.

Creating Community

There is a parallel between arts and crafts and the social context of camp. The meaning of crafts cannot be reduced to what we see in the object itself. Although crafts have always been something to look at and to use, they are also speak about connection. "Crafts are living traditions" (Katter, p. 10); they connect us to the past and to others. It is important to look at them as embedded within a particular culture. Crafts as connection is a reflection of the larger picture of summer camp:

While working, I make small talk. I ask what kind of dance they are doing in their dance activity. I try to connect. Conversation intertwines family, history, camp history the same way that we braid our friendship bracelets. The task is this weaving together of private and public lives. At camp, there is no division. There are no boundaries. (July 23, 2002)

As we make art, we share the stories that connect us to each other. We do not work alone.

I allow the kids to switch from special to general arts and crafts where there is less formal instruction because I know that what they really want to do is hang out and talk with their friends. . . I appreciate the completely social atmosphere here since I spend the other ten months of the year working alone. I love sitting and working at night with people chatting, working, hanging out in the welcoming atmosphere. (July 23, 2002)

Camp is defined by relationships and working together:

Camp is about relationships. I have staff who come up to me and give me big hugs. How did we get here in 2½ weeks? I have campers who come up to me and say "I need a mom hug". How did we get here? Why is the physical touch so

acceptable here? Why or how are we given this permission to care, to express
emotion? And why do we make the time to go for a walk and listen to each other?
(July 5, 2002)

Working together also involves care and respecting each other's ways:

Sometimes I watch my staff completely engrossed in their own work and I want
them to be more active in looking out for the kids' needs. But then I see the kids
copying their ideas, modeling, and I realize that they are teaching in another way.
I think of the campers' drawings as the "copycat drawings" of Ann's original
one. We are teaching in our own way. (July 9, 2002)

This respect and sense of belonging extends past the walls of the arts and crafts
lodge; it is what camp is about. This is something that I talked about with my staff the
first day that we got together:

I want to sit briefly as a complete arts and crafts staff; to pull together as a group.
I explain that I think that we are first trying to educate children to work together,
communicate and create community; the aesthetic possibilities are secondary. I
think that it's more about "doing art together". (July 3, 2002)

Arts and crafts is not the only place that we do things together. I looked back on
what I wrote about the physical work that we did preparing camp for the season:

The exhaustion of opening camp each summer- the physicality of the work- just
plain hard work. The heat, the dirt, the bus exhaust and the companionship.
Making a hard job fun. There is some satisfaction in that though. The working
together. (June 30, 2003)

It is necessary to work together when there is so much to be done in a short
amount of time, but it can also be done in an encouraging way:

I do encourage, with words like "cool", "fun", "great". When I feel the need to
criticize such as repeating over and over again for them to clean up, I work with
them, encouraging and helping each other; participating. (July 3, 2002)

I sometimes confuse these ideas, of whether it is about the process of working together in an encouraging, inclusive way, or about the product:

I spoke with Sara about the show that will be going up in less than two weeks. The truth is that if we put in no effort and just quickly put together the work that children have done so far, it would be fine. But each year, we seem to put in a greater effort. Sara has purchased plate holders to display ceramic plates and wooden trivet for the tiles- they give a much more finished and professional look to the work. I am working on a quilt pieced together from a "sunprint" project which was not entirely successful because it had turned out to be overcast that afternoon. Great effort is put into turning a not-so-successful project into a finished piece. Sara thinks that she does this extra work for herself- she wants to be proud of the show. And as much as I talk about the "process", that show means a lot to me too. (July 9, 2002)

The product is not only a reminder of the experience, but it is inseparable from the experience. Crafts are accessible to everyone in a way that the fine arts are not. I think about the way that those who feel that they cannot draw, do not draw. Crafts do not intimidate in the way much of contemporary art does for those who do not "get" it. Crafts are a way of inviting people into the world of art; a way to encourage people to try art. Teaching arts and crafts is "giving permission" to make art. Teaching arts and crafts is a way of connecting, caring, belonging, working together, respecting and encouraging, sharing stories and engaging others. Teaching arts and crafts is a way of creating community.

Aspects of care, respect, sense of belonging, pride, self-esteem and building community are all themes that arise in the literature on organized camping (which comprises residential, day, and travel camps), however, none of the studies refer specifically to the activity of arts and crafts. One study explores the links between the concepts of community and caring with the teaching and learning strategies associated with outdoor education (Quay, Dickinson & Nettleton, 2000). Another describes a wilderness trip, where youth with histories of social isolation, depression, and family

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instability found themselves to be part of a supportive and reciprocating community (Quay, Dickinson & Nettleton, 2000). These two studies are representative of much of the camp literature, where the focus is on outdoor education. In broader terms, Chenery offers a suggestion about how caring is nurtured in camps:

> [W]hat we may be seeing in camps is a synergistic effect of support for the development of caring through many different channels. Caring appears to emerge through the combined impact of support from written, spoken, and sung statements; from the modeling of caring directors, counselors, older campers, and peers; from feedback about caring; from planned and unplanned opportunities to care; from participation in teamwork; from looking for the positive in people; from learning respect; and from personal restraint with respect to the environment. (cited in Quay, Dickinson & Nettleton, p. 11)

Nonetheless, there is no link between the nature of making crafts and the idea of building community in any of this literature.

Quilting Lessons

In the previous chapter I wrote about the pilot study that I did on quilting guilds as a model for art education (Markus, 2001). In this section, I examine some of the literature on the phenomenon of the quilting guild and the quilt itself, the journals that I kept from March 2000 until May 2001, in which I wrote about my observations of two local quilting guilds, and a collage that I made about the guild. For the journals, I used Maykut and Morehouse's (1994) constant comparative method to draw out the units of meaning and begin interpreting the data. Since journals were already interpretive, the units of meaning were more conceptual right from the start, lending compelling clues to the meaning of the guild experience.

The two guilds that I observed were similar in nature. All of the members were women, whose ages ranged from their twenties all the way into their eighties. Meetings were held bi-weekly, in community centers, where members talked about their current quilting projects, shared information about new fabric stores and quilting exhibitions, and occasionally, demonstrated technique. For the most part, one of the criteria for

membership was geographical; since the meetings were held at community centers, a certain percentage of members had to live in the particular community.

The heart of the guild meetings that I attended was on "sharing stories". This was something that I sensed right from the start, and the reason that I initially chose to introduce myself to the guild in the form of a story:

> *I am re-reading "How to Make an American Quilt" and looking over other texts that talk about how quilts tell stories; I will approach the guild from the idea of sharing stories. I will share my story of what brought me to want to research the guild- how I have always been interested in textiles and how quilts have been my favorite project to do with kids. I will show the quilts that I have made with children. I will share my story and end with hoping that they will share their stories. (December 18, 2000)*

Even when members begin by talking about quilts, the conversation always wanders into the personal as described in the following excerpt that describes a meeting focused on a collaborative quilt:

> *Initial conversations focus around the quilt. Individuals tell me how friends gave them a piece of fabric to include in their square and will come to see the finished piece and pick out what part they contributed. I love that one selvage is exposed in a square, that of a fabric made by a company called "Quilt for a Cure".*
> *Details of how the pattern for this quilt will be done are discussed. Decisions are made collaboratively, and a crisscrossed football-shaped pattern is agreed upon. Even how the pattern will be transferred to the fabric is debated.*
> *Once some decisions are made, everyone get to work pinning the fabric, lashing together the batting to make it large enough to cover the quilted front. Then conversations become less focused on quilting. Tales about the holidays are intertwined with other bits of personal stories. While attempting to center the batting over the backing, pushing and pulling, the conversation becomes surprisingly bawdy for a group of women, of whom I am probably the youngest.*

Complaints of the heat in the room, despite the sub-zero January temperature, are
explained as hot flashes. (January 10, 2001)

Besides these literal examples of working together, aspects of meetings point to creating community in more subtle ways. For example, each meeting begins with someone reading "what's on", which is a detailed listing of exhibitions, quilting retreats, workshops, and new fabrics stores, sharing and extending the network that makes up the quilting world; this introduction functions as an invitation into that world.

Fragments of personal stories are woven into the conversation throughout. There may be a formal agenda that is followed, that gets down to the business of the meeting, but the private lives of the members are not put aside. This is particularly true of "Show and Tell", where the members can *show* their most recent quilting accomplishment and *tell* the stories related to it; "Show and Tell creates local communities of storytelling women" (Langellier, 1992, p. 146). I was always surprised by how supportive this event was, and how different it was from the infamous, and always brutal critiques of graduate school that I had experienced as a student. It was as if there was an unspoken code of complete encouragement and support. Even when an absolute novice showed their work, the comments ranged from "beautiful!" to "wow!":

> *Monique showed her quilt; it is her first. She asked whether there is enough*
> *quilting. The comments are so positive. "Wow! Look at the colors!", "How*
> *beautiful!", "That's pretty impressive!", "Fabulous!". (March 6, 2001)*

Humor, which is a part of every meeting also, is another way of creating community also; the humor often challenges stereotyped views of how women, and particularly older women, should talk and act. The following excerpt illustrates this:

> *Julie is talking about completing a teachers' workshop for rug hooking that she*
> *did in Nova Scotia. She loved it and became certified, which she says really*
> *doesn't mean anything here in Quebec. She jokes now that she is a certified*
> *hooker. (May 16, 2001)*

This personal anecdote is funny because of its incongruity; for one, the irony of the wholesome, domestic activity of quiltmaking, or rug hooking in this case, and any mention of sex. Naranjo-Huebl (1995) comments "Humor is subversive when it refuses to resolve itself in accordance with the status quo" (p. 10), therefore it is no surprise that women's humor would be subversive. The function of such humor, which may only surface within an all female group, is that it connects women to each other through common lived experiences. "Women's humor is much more context-bound. It is more often created out of the ongoing talk to satisfy the needs of a particular group of women. . . .Women's humor includes and supports group members by demonstrating what they have in common" (Jenkins cited in Naranjo-Huebl, p. 13). In the case of the quilting guild, what members have most in common is gender and a passion for quilting.

Connecting with each other by sharing humorous or personal stories and collaborating on group projects are some of the ways that members create community. An extreme example of this type of collaboration can be seen at the yearly provincial meeting for quilters, where I watched as the members and their guests, were asked to complete a pieced square during the meeting:

> *Everyone had been asked to bring in their sewing kits, as well as medium to dark shades of fabric. Patterns were handed out with pre-cut pieces for the background of the heart pattern. These squares would be raffled off at the end of the meeting, providing enough squares to complete two friendship quilts. Participants with less quilting experience were helped by others more experienced in making their squares. The finished blocked were pinned to bulletin boards as the typically long meeting progressed. The whole process was quite impressive. Hundreds of busy hands get a lot of sewing done. (October, 31, 2000)*

The quilt itself has played a significant role in women's history; it is considered as a tangible symbol of women's lives (Lippard, 1983; Ice & Shilimson, 1989), although its meaning remains ambiguous. On one hand, the quilt is viewed as a democratic art form that celebrated women's handiwork:

Quiltmaking was one of the most important female domestic activities for many
centuries. . . .Transcending the boundaries of class, race, country of origin, and
history, the quilt is a humanized, democratized art form. Even its subject matter-
weddings, commemoration, friendship, freedom, political loyalties, family
records- reflects rituals of community life. (Shapiro & Wilding cited in Hillard,
1994, p. 117)

On the other hand, quilts are "primary symbols of woman's unpaid subjection"
(Duniway cited in Torsney & Elsley, 1994, p. 2), "reinscrib[ing] our nostalgia for a
fictive past" (Torsney & Elsley, p. 5). The meaning of this art form is complex and
contradictory. When I once mentioned that I was interested in examining the quilting
guild as a form of community, I was met with the response that the guild was "benign";
something that I believe it is anything but. This is explained in the following quote:

Because quilting bees have long been a socially acceptable activity in which
women could spend time with others, bees have provided time for women to
discuss issues of importance to them. Just as the quilt itself was dismissed by men
as an innocuous document, the quilting bee was viewed as a harmless, but
necessary, occasion for women to complete work that had meaning to family and
community. Yet it is no small coincidence that Susan B. Anthony chose a group
of women quilting to announce the beginning of her crusade to gain the right to
vote. (Dewhurst, MacDowell, & MacDowell cited in Ice & Norris, 1989, p. 73)

The journals also point out another ambiguity. Quilts are often praised for
technique, such as small and even stitches. However, at guild meetings, the focus is not
on this aspect of quiltmaking. Members do share their technical knowledge, but it is rare
that anyone teaches formally by demonstrating technique. The guild does not present
itself as a place for formal quilting lessons. After attending meetings for over a year, I
only noted a couple of instances where the members demonstrated or explained
technique, as in the following excerpt:

Marta gives a few technical suggestions for quilting; details of how to not lose
one's needle in the patterned surface of the quilt, about not keeping pointed

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scissors around (she recounts the memory of an unfortunate experience on another group quilt), and how to transfer the quilting pattern onto the fabric with the use of a chalk wheel. Each time someone new arrives, the technical details are reviewed. (January 19, 2001)

I need to add here that I do not want to give the impression that everything that goes on in guilds is supportive or inclusive; it became clear that one aspect of creating a "community of quilters" is that, as in any community, there are those *in* the group, and there are those *outside* of it. When discussing an upcoming retreat that was organized by one of the guilds, a member asked if someone from another guild could attend, for which the answer was a brisk,

"We'll take care of our own first". (February 7, 2001)

Negative comments about other guilds surface regularly, pointing out a sense of competition.

Despite the occasional biting remarks, I believe that the phenomenon of the contemporary quilting guild is a constructive one, that of creating community. Guild meetings provide a place for women to exchange ideas and to express feelings. Perhaps quiltmaking is best described by "Miriam Schapiro's term, *femmage*, the feminine equivalent of *bricolage*. This process of collecting and creatively assembling odd or seemingly disparate elements into a functional, integrated whole is distinguished from *bricolage* in that femmage denotes an aesthetic connection to relationships" (Elsley, 1994, p. 78). The quilt must be read in terms of how it functions *in relationship* to women, to their history, to *our* history, and our stories.

It almost seems superfluous to add more here, but besides the journal that I kept about my observations of the guild, I completed one set of collages based on my participation in the guild:

Figure 4: Glow

I will skip the inventory of the visual components of the collages, but I include the narrative fragment that emerged through the collage process:

> It's like a party in a warm room- festive, lit up, glowing. All angles, undulating, dancing naked, comfortable in one's own nakedness. A vulnerability- showing the back side- the structure. Reflections of self. Little bottles all lined up. Glowing, warm, red, and welcoming. All the paintings easy to like, easy to appreciate and understand. A landscape, a still-life, log-cabin- everyone knows the log-cabin pattern, we are all welcome. We float above, unafraid to show ourselves. We welcome. We glow. We celebrate. We are warm. We are hot.

I believe that this narrative fragment reiterates what surfaced through looking at the journals, and therefore, serves as a form of methodological triangulation by showing how the data from multiple data collection sources (the journals and the collages) converge. However, it does present what goes on in the guild from a slightly different perspective. Denzin (1970) explains that this is one of the advantages of combining methods to look at the same phenomenon: "each method implies a different line of action toward that reality [in this case, the reality of the quilting guild] hence each will reveal different aspects of it, much as a kaleidoscope, depending on the angle at which it is held,

will reveal different colors and configurations of objects to the viewer" (Denzin, 1970, p. 298).

As outlined in the previous chapter, collage does not portray the "picture" of an experience, but rather the effect or feeling that it produces; my journals may have pointed out how the guild creates a community of storytelling women, but the collages get at what that experience *feels* like. The guild invites women to *feel* welcomed and to *feel* unafraid to show ourselves. The guild invites women to celebrate, to be themselves/ourselves; to belong.

Running Reflections

The data set "Then Another" comprises my ongoing running reflections about my daily experiences that relate to art education, such as art exhibits that I attend, art classes that I observe, and conversations that I have about art with friends. These reflections are collected in a journal, which functions as a place to jot down such matters as my reservations about doing research, particularly, an autobiographical study:

> *I sense that the entire process of self-study is self-serving and irrelevant to anyone but myself. (November 11, 2003)*

It also functions as a space to work out some of the dilemmas that go on in my head:

> *Henry Giroux's talk about education, "Higher Education, Youth, and the Crisis of Intellectuals", strongly states that rather than being viewed as the future, youth are now considered the problem. Giroux's words spoke to me and allowed me to see a more constructive view of what I was seeing as self-serving about my work, although the connection is indirect.*
>
> *Giroux told a story about his first day of teaching in an inner-city school and how all the theories that he had been taught were of little assistance in that setting. What is important is to know why you are there. Why do you teach? All teaching is political- one teaches to maintain the status quo or for change. This makes me realize that I am "maintaining things as they are". It is certainly not about shaking things up. When I teach crafts in a camp setting it is about holding onto*

tradition. I think of the image of the content craftsperson, not questioning, but
doing, unlike the artist who shakes things up. I like the accessibility of crafts. I
appreciate that it doesn't offend and alienate its audience. It's useful and people
get it. Giroux reminds me of the other side of the discussion, bringing a tension
back into my comfortable acceptance of the craft side of the craft/art dilemma.
Herein lies the power of reflection. Active reflection on practice and connecting
my private thoughts into current educational debate, provides the energy for
keeping my teaching dynamic. (November 11, 2003)

In autobiographical research, where the researcher is also the subject of the research, this type of journaling complicates the singular, subjective viewpoint, and provides alternate ways of looking at things. The running reflections are meaningful in that they are a form of analytic memoing; I jot down thoughts about what I am reading, what I am exploring in my research, and what I see around me in my everyday life. Rather than coming to any immediate conclusions, I think aloud and document those thoughts on paper; the journal becomes a conversation with myself, where I continually interrogate what I think I already know about art and education. Questions about practice surface regularly. To see how this evolves, I have included an entire journal entry:

Reading Gablik's "Has Modernism Failed" and thinking about the art projects
that we do at camp. Gablik's provoking text discusses how contemporary art has
collapsed upon itself; originally modern art posed questions and challenged the
high consumer values placed on individual works of art as well as the idea of
authorship, however those very artworks have, in turn, become successful
commercially. In her "Conversations Before the End of Time", Gablik
interviewed two artists who have chosen to sell their home and give away all their
artwork and return to the lifestyle of hunter-gatherers, to "live" art, be connected
with the land, the environment. Although I understand these ideas conceptually,
how does this connect with teaching art? What can children understand of this
folding in upon itself of modernism, without all the prior contextual knowledge
required to understand this? What connection does making crafts at camp have to
do with any of these concerns? When the work of a graffiti artist is bought up by a

gallery, is it still art? I am curious about what Gablik would say about traditional work and the teaching of craft. (November 16, 2001)

While the question that frames this data set is "What experiences related to art and education inform my teaching?", no clear answer surfaces. It is as though all of my experiences, everything I read, or see, or do, has some influence because I am consciously reflecting on them; and the one thing I know, is that my ideas are constantly in flux, and the teaching must reflect this.

Remembering the Past

To explore my past experiences that relate to art and education, I used a process of memory work that combines visual methods with narrative. The intention was to present the nodal moments that have made an impression on what I believe about teaching art, however, what I found was that memory is an elusive thing. At the time, I sincerely believed that I was examining all the relevant experiences that have informed my practice, but it has become clear that I was only able to see what I was prepared to see at the time. The memories that I selected relied on the formal; formal art in the fine art sense, and the formal art lessons that I had encountered throughout my life.

One of the first memories that I have about art was seeing Monet's painting, "Water Lilies", at the Museum of Modern Art in New York when I was fifteen years old. I can still picture the room with light pouring in through the windows that extended across an entire wall, and the expansive paintings that covered two other walls. This early memory is intertwined with the many times that I have since returned and re-visited Monet's work, forming an inseparable collection of memories. In an excerpt from my journal, I described the process of making a collage to find the words for the memory:

"Water Lilies" is filled with daylight; it is like open windows. I notice a couple of picture of flowers, but I discard them because they do not contain that luminosity. I select an image of fabric flying over the shore with waves crashing in. Monet makes me think of the new energy of spring. I choose a photograph of a tent-like

structure that hangs over a bed, but I cut away the bed. The tent opens up onto the
billowing fabric that hangs from the sky. The bridge also draws you into the
space. Sketches of landscape and a photograph of a clear blue sky fill the collage.
I move between the real (photograph) and the imaginary (drawing). I am
transported into fields of light with the energy of spring. (May 13, 2003)

Figure 5: Like Open Windows

Even my early experiences with art taught me that it could "open windows,"
transport me, and allow me to imagine other possibilities; ideas that I insist should be at
the core of teaching. Although this museum visit was hardly my first art experience, it
was my first clear memory of what is considered as fine art. Other recollections of my
initial encounters with art include the memories that I have of making art at summer
camp as a child. I tried to grasp what art meant in that context by constructing a set of
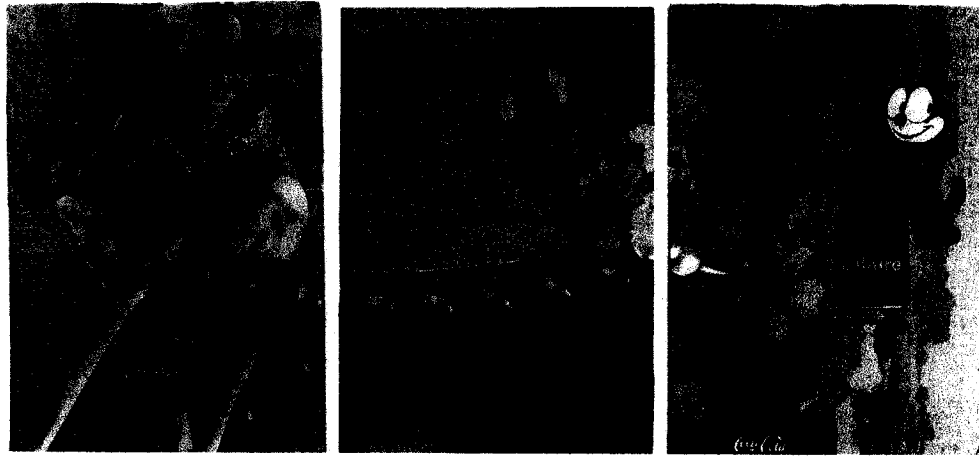collages (Figure 6) and starting the writing process:

Figure 6: Bambi

What is camp art? It's Bambi-oooooh-cute. It's nature. It's the peas in a pod with a propeller. It's Coca-cola accessible- not the corporate stuff of Coke, but the "everyone knows what Coke is". It's culture in the Felix the cat pop-sense that the general public understands. This is my nostalgic view of camp art- the peeling wallpaper- or am I peeling away the layers to get at what camp art is? Camp art is the nature/culture, not fine art; the-nobody-understands-it-culture of high art. Camp, and camp art are the peas in the pod, fitting together. Camp art is camp.

The narrative, although incomplete, points out the connection between the context of camp and the accessible type of art that emerges from that environment, an idea that I explore later in this chapter. The collage and text make apparent my quandary about the fine art/craft dichotomy, which is an ongoing concern of mine. I worked on two more collages to uncover more details of my memories about making art at camp. The first one looks at a specific memory of being included in an art show at camp, where I vividly remember having made small stuffed animals, by sewing together pieces of felt in large, uneven stitches:

Figure 7: Bingo

What does it feel like to be encouraged? I select the image of water lilies in full bloom, exploding. I pick out the image of a mother teaching her daughter to bake. The image of Andy Warhol relates to the idea of being famous for 15 minutes; that is the pride of being encouraged. It's like winning bingo. My focus on the notion of pride is quickly overwhelmed by nostalgia; the bingo numbers, alphabet letters, the 1950s image of a woman, the number 19, mid-century pottery and the Chinese party lanterns. The mother-daughter image is significant; it is the passing on of tradition. I add the words "the reason for this is very simple". It's a natural as the bond between mother and daughter- basic. The way a mother "mothers"; mother as a verb. Mothering her daughter, gently guiding, showing and sharing with care. Camp art is something so simple, something useful, something that is filled with meaning.

To draw significance from the narrative fragment, I followed my intuition and listened to the words that resonated most strongly with me: water lilies in full bloom, exploding, a mother teaching her daughter to bake, pride, nostalgia, and the passing on of tradition. In these words I found the essence of my remembered experiences of being encouraged while doing arts and crafts at camp; the gentle encouragement, the uncritical guidance and care. I continued to explore my memories of camp in the following collage:

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Figure 8: Nest

I am looking at a wall covered with photographs. The background is a lake- it could be the lake at camp. It feels cool, calm, and summery; as relaxing as an old deck chair. Camp is the nest, the safe place; it is as comforting as bread, as welcoming as the old kettle. Memories half fill the bottle in layers. This is more about the process of looking back, with the slightly murky water. Nostalgia, like the summer light behind the trees, is drawing me in. All the images float, in a detached state. Camp is comfort; it is the nest, the bread of everyday.

The theme of summer camp is also explored in other collages. The experience is something that I found so hard to put into words that it was necessary to approach it from another angle. In fact, the collage that follows is an example of the first time that I used collage to find the words for memories; it was what convinced me that visual methods can offer opportunities for learning that are just not available through other means:

Figure 9: High

That's me; the young girl with her hands up in the air, skipping down a country path with the light pouring through the trees. The image of hands clasped together form a canopy above me; they shelter me. I am joyful. I am ecstatic. I am skipping. I am happy. Camp is about many hands held high; many people working together.

I believe that these collages succeed at getting beneath the surface nostalgia that summer camp brings, and begin to develop a "thick description" of summer camp. I continued working with the same theme in the next set of collages and the accompanying narrative fragment:
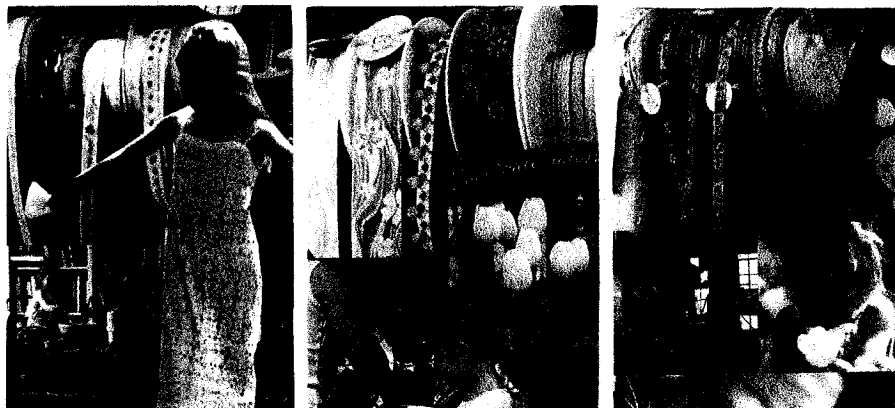

Figure 10: Big Smile Tulips

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Camp of my childhood. I try to make these cards very quickly so that I don't think about it too much and edit. Ribbons, rolls and rolls of ribbons. I love ribbons and I don't know why. I collect bits of ribbon and keep them as precious souvenirs. Camp memories are precious souvenirs. There is an image of blowing glass- I am attracted to the process- how you blow some air into this pipe and as it hits the hot molten glass, the bubble blows itself up. Self-generated activity. A little air, a lot of magic. A young girl, flower in hand, spinning around with arms outstretched. Kids baking together, all hands in one bowl. Messy, joyful. Wonder in looking, concentrated looking. Sun, smiles, and yellow tulips, "Big Smile Tulips". The images are bright, warm, simple, polka-dotted, "forget-me-knot", and child-like. Like childhood should be; doing, carefree, and magical.

I unwind these memories like the ribbons from their spools, and metaphors repeat themselves. The collages function symbolically; they are not pictures of remembered experiences in the photographic sense, but rather, they are evocative of those memories. Efland (2002) suggests that "Metaphor is one of our most important tools for trying to comprehend partially what cannot be comprehended totally: our feelings, aesthetic experiences, moral practices and spiritual awareness" (p. 143). The goal that I had in looking into the metaphors that surface through the collages, was to provide some depth to the pictures of my past experiences, or as Efland suggests, I used metaphor as a tool for understanding more fully, with a greater depth, how my past experiences inform the present.

In the article "Metaphor in Art, Thought, and Learning", Marshall (2004) notes that:

> Artists often generate fresh and novel metaphors that disrupt conventional perceptions and induce new insights and understanding. This is one of art's most important functions. . . . The process of manifesting ideas and metaphors visually involves active exteriorization of thought, brings complex notions home; it internalizes the learning and makes it personal and relevant. (p. 65-69)

In the process of collage and memory work, metaphors do lend insight into uncovering memories and providing a more profound level of understanding experience. The spontaneous and intuitive method of collage in memory work draws out more complex notions about experience, disrupting and challenging safer, more traditional textual routes.

From the collages and narrative fragments of camp, I began to see the experience of camp through such metaphors as "many hands held high", "all hands in one bowl", and "the mother and daughter relationship". I worked on another set of collages (Figure11) that talk about the connections that I make with people at camp, knowing that camp is about relationships. I made an inventory of the visual components, slowly .expanding the denotative into a more connotative reading of the collage:

Figure 11: Objects of Affection

I began with the idea of connection that I make with people at camp. Birds, playful, colorful, cute. Bright colorful designs. Nostalgic Marimekko prints of the 1960s. Pouring tea- teacups- have a cup of tea. Hello my name is. Etch-a-sketch, a childhood toy with a black & white photograph of people. Flowers filling in space. Welcome. Passion fruit tea. A Ferris wheel. What "objects of affection"? Not things, but people. Slowly people are entering into these collages. A plate of jelly beans. The sky is turquoise blue- too blue, and the cherry blossoms are in

bloom. Welcome. Hello my name is. We are ready for this closeness, this affection. We yearn for this. All year long everyone has their professional faces on and cannot and/or will not let that down to be vulnerable. A. & K. wear their pajamas well into the day at camp- too rushed to dress and not really caring. Letting go. The sky becomes brighter, the flowers bloom, we see more, sense more, becoming objects of affection.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) write that "The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (p. 5). I can now see that at camp, people become our objects of affection, and how that differs from desiring things, owning things. Camp is clearly about people, relationships, and connections; what we yearn for all year long.

Several other memories related to art come to mind. The first one is my remembered experience of graduate school, where I completed a Masters of Fine Arts degree. The school that I attended was a small independent institution that offered a two-year graduate program. "Artists-in-residence" mentored students in the disciplines of painting, sculpture, photography, fibers, metals, architecture and design. The school was modeled after the Bauhaus, and there was an emphasis on studio work. In fact, there were no formal classes, other than occasional visiting artist lectures, and weekly critiques. I created two sets of collages based on my memories of graduate school:
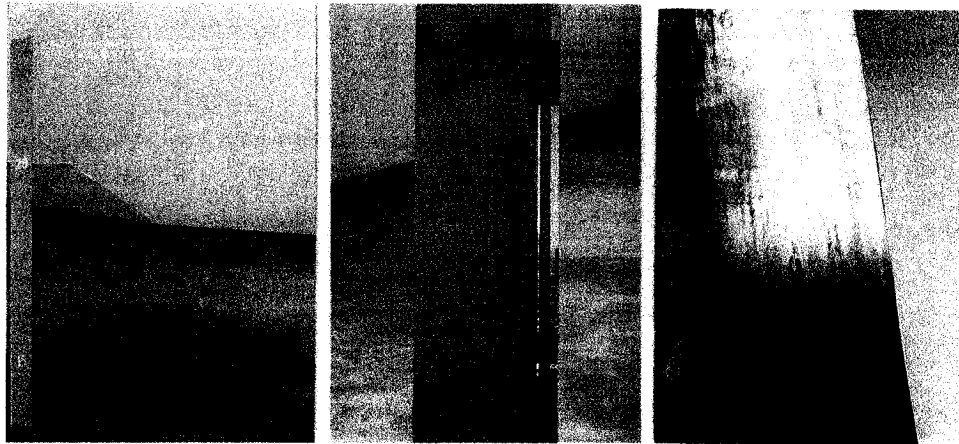

Figure 12: Grey Spaces I

Figure 13: Grey Spaces II

I described the process of constructing the images in the following:

> I am cutting apart architectural elements to remove the context and the meaning
> of the images; moving into the abstract and non-objective. The images depict
> cool, modern architecture; images of tiles in a slate blue become a grid that cuts
> the space. A shaft of daylight becomes a slice of light. Ceiling cornices with no
> decoration form angles. Window frames are unrecognizable. A metallic chimney
> shines silver-grey. Space is broken up into fragments- shifting, there is no ground,
> nothing to stand on. The only clearly recognizable form is of a window or picture
> looking out onto a ladder with its fragmented shadow; where is it coming from
> and where is it going? This is the "remove" of modern and conceptual art, like a
> ladder from nowhere to nowhere. It is a picture, framed and viewed. There are
> empty, grey spaces, confusing, conflicting perspectives, glass, stone, steel,
> numbered strips of painting, and the monumental patina surface of a Richard
> Serra piece; the epitome of art that is disconnected from its public.

Before I draw out some of the words that resonate most strongly, I need to include
an excerpt from my running reflections. After visiting the school several years ago for a
reunion, I had noticed some physical changes in the environment that made me more
aware of how I understood what the place was about. The entrance to the school had
changed, and I had written about this in my journal:

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The drive through the impressive "winged" gates winds around the landscaped grounds. You enter this world set apart by its encircling walls, along a meandering road. The feeling is definitely of entering some type of sanctuary that is removed and disconnected from its surrounding community. (February 3, 2004)

The fact that the school had intentionally isolated itself from the neighboring community reflected the philosophy of the place; "high-culture aesthetics involves a cultivation of distance" (Duncum, 2001b, p. 26). This community was gated just like the high art world; it is elitist, excluding those not worthy of entry. It is also important to understand that this cool, minimalist sensibility in art was typical of the art being produced at the time in the late 1970s. The reference that I made on the previous page to a work by Richard Serra is about an event that has been widely documented; a huge, steel sculpture, literally a wall of steel, by the artist Richard Serra that had been installed in a public space, received so much distain and negative feedback from the public, that it was finally removed. In other words, the public were no longer buying into the cool, distant, and in this case, imposing style that the high art world was offering.

Nonetheless, I believe that I would have described my work as cool and minimal at the time also; I would have spoken in terms of my sculptures in a formalist sense, such as the term "three dimensional drawings in space", which I used in my dissertation (Markus, 1979). The art that I made during graduate school was in sharp contrast with other forms of art that I remember seeing at the time. I constructed a set of collages based on my memories of the folk art collection of one of the artists-in-residence at the school; an art form that is grounded, and exists in the everyday, much like the art of summer camp.

Figure 14: Bread and Butter

Jars of homemade pickles; bread and butter as the label says. Folk art is as comforting as two armchairs by the lakeside, wooden cabin steps, worn trellis, a handmade birdhouse. Even the color palate changes radically, from the cool steel-like colors of the collages based on graduate school to the warm palate of the sepia-toned images, a rich purple-hued canoe, a worn golden bucket. Folk art is the warm umber, natural wood tones, rust, and nature's greens. It's about the comfort, the homemade, handmade, the everyday "bread and butter".

How different folk art looks from high art. Folk art is worn, rusted, accessible, and has the marks of the craftsperson to it; it is always handmade. The images even resemble camp art (the birdhouse, the pillows) in a photographic sense. Folk art, like craft, is connected to its maker and the surrounding everyday world; it is as fundamental as bread and butter. This type of work also is in contrast with what I remembered from my memories of school art, for which I made the following collages:
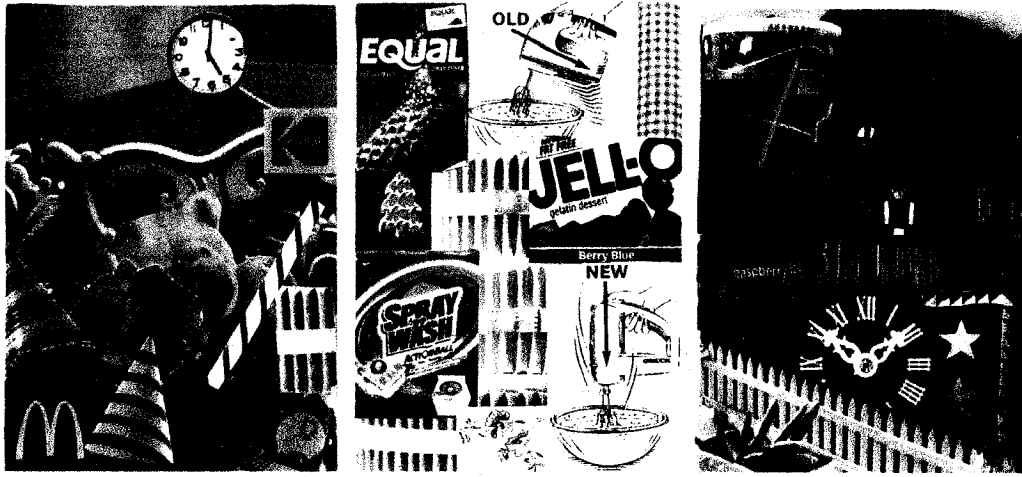
Figure 15: Sugar-coated

School art is McDonald's, Kodak, Kraft, artificial foods, artificial sweeteners, teddy bears, merry-go-rounds, and party hats. These are the frivolous aspects of school art, what I often refer to as toilet paper tube art. It's the candied, gingham, Christmas tree cookie cute, the substitutes, the time-fillers, the cuckoo clock kitsch, stars and stripes and picket fences. School art is mix and stir, the old and the new. Does it fit the school program? Why are my memories of school art so negative? I question whether these are truly memories or a reflection of what I see on the 6th floor of the education building- the pipe-cleaner/ construction paper art that lines the corridors. I recall my distaste for the dream catchers made out of pipe cleaners that I have seen. I think of school art as falling into its own category. It has little to do with anything outside of school. It is a sugar-coated version of art; candied, sprayed and washed- with little depth or substance. I think of the quilted wall hanging that I have been working on, with Marsha McCarthy's poem appliquéd onto it; is it too sweet, to shallow, too pretty, not gritty enough?

My memories of school art are hardly sugar-coated and positive, but they may also be distorted by the art projects that I still see being offered in schools today. In other words, what is my memory speaking and what my present called out is blurred. My criticism of the branding or standardization and artificially sweetened nature of school art cannot be ignored though.

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Just as I see school art as being standardized and sugar-coated, I find that each memory of my experiences with art has its own distinctive "feel" or personality. Art serves as a physical trace of the context in which it is made; art embodies the characteristics or personality of place. Art reveals and reflects a sense of place. To understand how my experiences, past and present, have informed my practice, it is useful to explore the idea of place.

Defining Place

What is "place"? What is a place? In *Space and Place,* the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) tells us that:

> the meaning of space and place often merges with that of place. 'Space' is more abstract than 'place'. What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value. . . .if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place. (p. 6)

The art critic Lucy Lippard (1997) refers to place as the "locus of desire", and expands upon this definition:

> Place is latitudinal and longitudinal within the map of a person's life. It is temporal and spatial, personal and political. A layered location replete with human histories and memories, place has width as well as depth. It is about connections, what surrounds it, what formed it, what happened there, what will happen there. . .A lived-in place is seen from the inside. . . .Space defines landscape. . .[while]space combined with memory defines place. (p. 9)

The writer Wallace Stegner (1992) comments that:

> a place is not a place until people have been born in it, have grown up in it, lived in it, know it, died in it- have both experienced and shaped it, as individuals, families, neighbourhoods, and communities, over more than one generation. (p. 201)

I can hear reverberations of Dewey's (1934) words about the possibilities of art in those of Stegner. While Dewey writes about how art reflects experience and shapes it, Stegner writes the same about place.

The idea of "place" becomes clearer. Space becomes place when people pause and interact within it; it is about values, history, memory, and intimate connections. In the context of summer camp, I pause and place overflows with personal connections and memories:

> *A walk down the road, picking raspberries, mountain laurel, daisies, black-eyed susans, day lilies and clover. The time to walk and talk. I love the openness and willingness to share every detail, every thought opened up and shared/explored. A paper cup filled with hand-picked raspberries, overflowing with friendship and meaning. (August 4, 2002)*

More than the term "context", place reminds me that the interactions of people are an integral part of experience. Place is significant space; place is seen from the inside. But what gives a place its distinctiveness? Through the concept of place, I can show that art, and what counts as art are culturally-bound and locally situated; art is placed.

It is not difficult to imagine that significant space implies more than a well-described setting; place is more than the landscape. I refer again to my summer journals to exemplify this:

> *When I drove down to camp to check out how I would set up the video camera for taping my classes, I brought a friend with me. The first place that I showed her was the new arts and crafts building. It's quite impressive, with its wraparound porches, allowing as much space to work outside as in the bright interior space. We walked all around the camp as I revisited and shared with her, the waterfront where I had learned to swim as a child, the room that I lived in each summer, the athletic field, and the cabins that campers lived in; we even sat up on Pioneer Rock, my favorite spot hidden way back in the woods. Although it was early May, there were already the familiar faces of maintenance people opening camp for the season. As we were leaving, she said to me how glad she was to finally "know"*

the place that I talked about so often. I quickly answered, this is not camp. Without the people, the kids, the staff, it was not camp. Camp is not just a space in the countryside, with its views of the mountains and the smell of pine; the place that I call camp is filled with the voices (loud voices) of people who make it camp each summer. (November 14, 2004)

Sense of Place

A phrase that is often quoted is that "if you don't know where you are, you don't know *who* you are" (Berry cited in Stegner, 1992, p. 199). Stegner believes that what Berry means by this was not that he was:

> talking about the kind of location that can be determined by looking at a map or a street sign. He is [was] talking about the kind of knowing that involves the senses, the memory, the history of a family or a tribe. (p. 205)

"Sense of place" is about the senses; emphasizing the located nature of subjectivity and pointing out the importance of place for creating and sustaining a sense of self. An entry from my summer journal points out how I see camp is so tied to memory and the senses:

> *Sense of place. We are talking about what the essence of this place is. Sara, the ceramics director, comments "He didn't only make a bowl. He made a memory." How do we describe the experience other than saying that we can't describe it to anyone who hasn't experience it. A "sense of place" does describe part of the experience. I am told, like many other settings, what you remember are the people, the relationships that you have had. I think about the walk down that road alone, the comforting solace of that walk down the road, the greenness, the ripe raspberries, the people working up on Blueberry Hill (it's too early for blueberries). Even comparing this experience to the heat controlled atmosphere that we live in at home, in the city- there are even periods that the heating and air-conditioning overlap. Here I wake up in the morning and I feel the coldness against my feet as I touch the freezing wood floor in the bathroom. I feel the cold on my feet. I feel. I hear the thunder and the rain. I see the whiteness of the lightening. I sense. This heightened sensory experience must be contributing to*

the interactions that we have. Take these people and put them into the grey stone
coldness of the city and what grows will not blossom. The sense of the place
infuses an intensity. At camp, we are open to the intertwining of anything and
everything private and public. (July 27, 2002)

Sociologist Jennifer Cross (2001) notes that the term "sense of place" is used so often that it has "become a buzzword used to justify everything from a warm fuzzy appreciation of a natural landscape to the selling of homesites in urban sprawl" (p. 1). Different fields within the social sciences tend to define their own meanings; using such diverse terms as place attachment, topophilia, insidedness, and community sentiment to describe the term sense of place. What I can draw out of these approaches overlaps more than the diverse fields would suggest. A sense of place from an anthropological perspective, is more than a cognitive and emotional experience, and includes cultural beliefs and practice that link people to place; from environmental psychology, the particular experience of a person in a particular setting; from geography, the affective bond between people and place or setting and may be aesthetic, tactile, or emotional; from landscape architecture/history, something created in the course of time as a result of habit or custom; and from sociology, an interpretive, emotional perspective on the environment.

Synthesizing these views, a sense of place can be characterized as: an emotional and cognitive experience; cultural beliefs and practices; a particular experience; an affective (aesthetic, tactile or emotional) bond; created over time as a result of habit or custom; and a subjective experience that is interpretive and emotional. These are all facets of the places that I described in the memory work, and all aspects of place that affect how I think about art and how I teach.

Place and Nostalgia

The emotional aspect of experience is repeated in several of the interpretations of sense of place. Remembered places often evoke a sense of nostalgia. Therefore, I feel that I need to clarify my understanding of the word "nostalgia", which is often regarded as a

"useless type of longing" (hooks cited in Mitchell & Weber, 1999, p. 5). The art critic/theorist Lucy Lippard (1997) writes:

> However out of fashion romanticism and nostalgia may be, I can't write about places without occasionally sinking into their seductive embrace. As I follow the labyrinthine diversity of personal geography, lived experience grounded in nature, culture and history, forming landscape and place, I have to dream a little, as well as listen for the political wake-up calls. (p. 5)

In The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1976), nostalgia is referred to as: "Homesickness as a disease; regretful or wistful memory of an earlier time; sentimental yearning *for* (some period of) the past" (p. 549). Furthermore, "sentiment" is referred to as:

> 1. A mental feeling, the sum of what one feels on some subject, a tendency or view based on or coloured with emotion, such feelings collectively as an influence. 2. Emotional feeling conveyed by literature or art. 3. Tendency to be swayed by feeling rather than by reason, emotional weakness, false or unworthy tenderness or the display of it. (p. 549)

These definitions imply that in nostalgia, emotions outweigh reason. I see nostalgia more as allowing us to attend to emotional response to place.

Nostalgia plays a role in my writing, and my autobiographical inquiry. My research is based on an emotional need to understand my own story, to re-visit and reconsider the places of my past. It is nostalgia that draws me back, and I see that as a valuable, powerful inspiration. Nostalgia does allow me to dream a little in the seductive embrace of remembered places as Lippard suggests, but in that dreaming, I can also imagine and question. I think that it is nostalgia, that very physical sensation of being pulled back, almost like a magnetic pull towards places in my past that initiates exploration and inquiry.

Spirit of Place

There are certain places that evoke an intense "spirit of place". This term describes the combination of characteristics that gives locations or places their "special feel" or in a sense, their personality. "Genius loci" is often used interchangeably with "spirit of place", which includes the look of a place, the history and nature of the people connected to that place, and the geographical situation. Spirit, as applied in this sense:

> does not refer to super natural entities or qualities, but rather to essential and activating possibilities, to the vigor or the inspiration that something- in this case 'place'"- can impart. In the meaning that I am attributing to it here, 'place' essentially means space (landscape) plus people. Spirit of place, in other words, is grounded in the human interaction with the local environment. (Flores, 1993, p. 1)

My concern here for the "spirit of place" is that it carries with it the values of people-in-dialogue-with-place. The travel writer Jan Morris (2001) believes that the spirit of place "only comes into existence when it enters our minds" (p. 1); it is a subjective experience that feels different to each of us. I consider the nature of teaching, and therefore my interactions with those whom I teach, to embody those same values, people-in-dialogue-with-place. People and place function in a synergistic relationship. This is not a static type of relationship; it is always shifting. "The most important thing about spirit of place is that cultural values and human imagination determine it as much as landscape does- and that it exemplifies history's greatest lesson: everything is always changing" (Morris, p. 2).

I don't believe that many people literally stay in one place throughout their lifetimes anymore, and even if they did, they are still affected by globalization. I, for one, have not rested in one place for too long. It is not that I have a vagabond spirit, but rather, that I participate in a variety of "communities of practice" (Wenger, 1998), and the spirit of each community inspires my interactions within it.

In this chapter, I have explained how I "unfolded" my data; and how I analyzed it. I looked at how I teach arts and crafts in summer camp, and through the analysis of the

data, I began to see themes develop. Two themes that characterize my teaching at camp are "making art" and "creating community", offering clues to what I do when I teach art in an informal setting. I also explored my experiences related to art education and I found that each experience or "place" presents a distinct perspective that influences how I see and think. In the next chapter, I consider how I draw on these diverse experiences in my teaching; what are the lessons of place?

Chapter 6

The Lessons of Place

Metaphors of Place

To understand the relationship between place and practice, I examined some of the metaphors that I have used to describe the spirit of each place. I drew out the metaphors that characterize a sense of place. I understand that *"The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another"* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 5). Metaphors suggest alternative visions of practice, and what has been an invisible, tacit part of my practice becomes discernable. Some of the metaphors of place are illustrated in Table 8.

Table 8

Metaphors of Place

Place	Metaphors
Arts and Crafts/ Summer Camp	All hands in one bowl Many hands held high Mother and daughter relationship Objects of affection
The Quilting Guild	A warm room Dancing naked Built around the hearth Paintings that are easy to like
Graduate School	Shifting, no ground, fragmented A ladder from nowhere to nowhere Glass, stone, steel Gates
Folk Art	Bread and butter pickles Two armchairs by the lake Handmade birdhouse Sepia-toned, worn, warm umber
School Art	McDonald's, Kodak, Kraft Artificial foods, artificial sweeteners Party hats, cuckoo clocks Mixers, the old and the new Pipe-cleaner dream catchers Candy

The method crafted from the collage and writing process presents vivid reflections of place. As I looked more closely at the metaphors, the essence of each place came into focus. For example, the metaphors describing arts and crafts at summer camp, such as "all hands in one bowl" and "many hands held high", suggest that it is about working together. The metaphors of the "mother and daughter relationship" and "objects of affection" refer to arts and crafts as a nurturing and supportive place. The activity is characterized by a strong connection with people, sharing stories, making something out of nothing and beauty in simplicity.

The quilting guild is an inviting, comfortable ("a warm room") and supportive place where women celebrate their handiwork and feel unafraid to show themselves ("dancing naked"). It is women working together, sharing stories and humor, belonging, and creating community ("built around the hearth"). The guild values the homemade and the handmade; it speaks of comfort and is connected to the everyday ("paintings that are easy to like"). Quilts can be seen as a folk art; reflecting the everyday ("bread and butter pickles"), the homemade ("handmade birdhouse"), as comfortable as "two armchairs by the lake", and as natural as "sepia-toned, worn, and warm umber".

I remember graduate school as a place apart; isolated from the surrounding community ("shifting, no ground, fragmented"). It is a gated community that is difficult for the general public to gain access to ("gates", "a ladder from nowhere to nowhere"). The art was a reflection of the cool ("glass, stone, steel"), minimal style of the fine arts world at the time. On the other hand, my memories of school art suggest a sugar-coated version of art ("candy", "artificial sweeteners"), conjuring up images of frivolous ("party hats", "cuckoo clocks") and trivial substitutes ("pipe-cleaner dream catchers", "artificial foods") for art that are based on standardized recipes ("McDonald's, Kodak, Kraft).

The associations between my experiences of teaching arts and crafts at summer camp and those of the guild and folk art are easy enough to see. More than the guild informing what I do when I teach, my initial interest in looking at guilds reflected my need to validate what I was already doing in my teaching. However, summer camp and

the guild are so different from my experiences in graduate school and elementary school. My art lessons in primary school and then in graduate school (with no formal training in between) diverge. The saccharine flavor of my early training had nothing to do with the cool, conceptual work of graduate school. Furthermore, the minimalist aesthetic that was embedded in the work did not connect with my everyday experiences after completing my studies. Graduate school art was that "ladder from nowhere to nowhere". It may be a type of "ladder" or scaffold for those who continue teaching in higher education, but for myself, its logic failed me when I graduated and tried to fit art into my everyday life. Yet, it is also these particular past experiences that makes me challenge what I do in my teaching; where I ask myself whether what I am doing is the trivial and "confectionary" version of art that I had learned in grade school, an art that must be made palatable and easy to swallow.

These are just several of the places that inform my practice; they are the ones that surfaced when I thought about my past experiences related to art. However, I have discovered that there are gaps and holes in memory work.

Forgotten Memories

Why do we remember certain experiences over others? In recounting the past experiences that influence my present teaching, I omit certain memories while others crowd and overwhelm the pictures in my mind. Although I have written about learning to knit and sew through the informal art lessons that my mother and grandmothers nurtured me with before, I omit them. How odd since these lessons have taken on their own life in my continuing love for the textile arts. (December, 2004)

Why did I forget these memories? I reflected on the gaps and hole in my process of remembering and I wrote:

I would like to think that I have always honored the lessons that my mother and grandmothers taught me, but I have not. I was recently revising and updating my resume in the anticipation of a post-PhD life, and I found that I had not

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completely noted a review of my artwork. I remembered that I had purposely cut

off the title of the review because it made reference to "women's domestic art".

Even though the review was a positive one, I did not want to be connected with

anything "domestic". It was true enough that the delicate, silk threads that I used

to stitch together the "Secret Notes" made out of paper were influenced by the

lessons that I had learned at home. I had not realized that my desire to

disassociate myself from these traditions of the home had been so controlled by

my notions of what it meant to be a "real artist". The art world not only

marginalized the work by women, it excluded it; and I had continued to disqualify

women's art in my own way. (April 26, 2005)

By questioning and reflecting on these experiences, I was able to imagine other ways of seeing. I am now better able to understand what Chalmers (1996) is talking about when he describes some of the culture-bound assumptions of Western art such as "The best art has been produced by men", "Oil painting, sculpture (in marble or bronze), and monumental architecture are the most important art forms", and "Great art requires an individual aesthetic response; sociocultural meaning is secondary" (p. 15). I know on an intellectual level that these beliefs are unfounded, but these are the myths that I grew up with and they are tough to erase entirely.

There is another facet of my past experiences that I "forgot" to look at until I was confronted with it recently. At a conference, I was explaining my research to a woman I had just met. She said that she had done a paper years ago on how her Jewish identity informed her teaching. I remarked that although I am also Jewish, I had never considered exploring my religious identity; I didn't think that there was any point since I was a non-practicing Jew. And then I couldn't stop thinking about it.

I had never considered my Jewish upbringing to have any significance on my identity at all. In fact, I was once asked to be in a show of Jewish artists, all I could think of was, why? But then I thought back on my schooling, I remembered that the public school system in Montreal was still divided by religion, which remained true all the way

until 1998. There was the Catholic school board, where only Catholics could attend, and there was the Protestant school board, where the Protestants and other non-Catholics went. I was the other. Whether this experience of marginalization has anything to do with why I find "creating community" to be at the core of how I teach, I am not sure. However, feeling as though I did not belong could have influenced my insistence on inclusion through teaching crafts and teaching in a way so that everybody and anybody can join in.

The Rabbit and the Duck
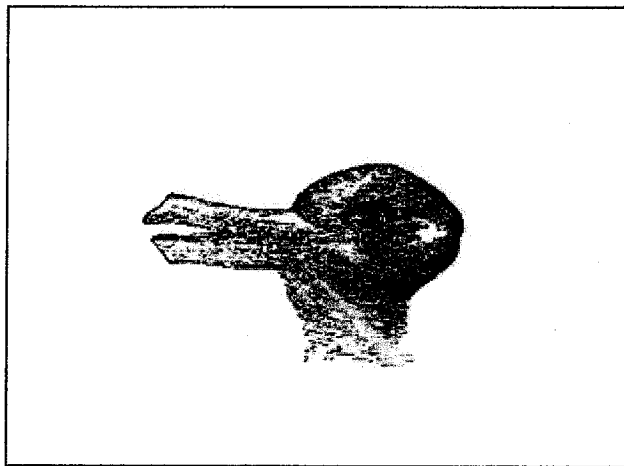
Figure 16: Is this a rabbit or a duck?

When I look at the image, I alternate between recognizing a rabbit and a duck. At times, I see a rabbit, at others, a duck. What I cannot do though, is see both images simultaneously. I see many of the characteristics of place in similar "rabbit/duck" alternates. The scientist Allan Snyder (1999) remarks that "We can only see this world through our mindsets- our preconceptions derived from past experiences and prior knowledge" (p. 1). He explains that we have more than one interpretation of the rabbit/duck image because of our familiarity with rabbits and ducks. My ideas about art and teaching develop through my past experiences, and like the rabbit and the duck, I can only enact one vision at a time. Each place from my past has generated a particular perspective. My knowledge about art and teaching often appears in oppositions such as: fine art/craft, elitism/everyday aesthetics, individual work/collaboration, product/process,

criticism/encouragement, modern/traditional, and recreational/educational. As I draw on experience in my teaching, I am continually negotiating between these oppositions.

Both John Dewey (1952) and Parker Palmer (1998) refer to either/or oppositions in reference to education. Dewey comments that we should not reject traditional education in favor of the progressive model, suggesting that we negotiate between perspectives. Palmer recommends that we look at the either-ors as "both-and"; in that way the oppositions or paradoxes, become the "creative tensions" of teaching. I have a tendency to speak about art education in terms of oppositions, but I see them as the creative tensions in my teaching. They are what keep the teaching dynamic. I may prioritize one side over the other in a particular setting, but that is hardly a fixed relation. Ultimately, the goal is to address both ends of the continuum, as Bruner (1986) suggests: "The most that I can claim is that, as with the stereoscope, depth is better achieved by looking from two points at once" (p. 10). Experience has granted me that stereoscopic vision; teaching involves negotiating these oppositions.

Realigning Theory

At this point, I need to take a step back to readjust the theory that frames my research. To understand how diverse places inform my practice, I originally turned to the concept of situated learning introduced by Rogoff and Lave (1984). In the text *Everyday cognition: Its development in social context*, Rogoff (1984) writes:

> Cognitive activity is socially defined, interpreted, and supported. People, usually in conjunction with each other and always guided by social norms, set goals, negotiate appropriate means to reach the goals, and assist each other in implementing the means and resetting the goals as activities evolve. . . .The social system in which the child is embedded thus channels cognitive development. (p. 4)

My examination of the places that influence my practice does coincide with Rogoff and Lave's findings; what I know about art has been informed by place. Learning is a function of the activity, culture, and context in which it occurs. The learning *is*

situated. The way in which I examine place supports the notion that learning involves social interaction, and the use of tools and schemas that the culture has provided for solving problems. However, each of the studies that Rogoff and Lave (1984) present focuses on a particular context, illustrating a type of "practical thinking"; thinking is described as a practical activity which is adjusted to the demands of the situation. Their examination of situated learning adequately explains the learning that happens in everyday contexts, but it does not help me understand more fully how my past experiences, that is, my participation in multiple "communities of practice" inform my teaching. The work of Vygotsky (1978) is helpful for understanding how society provides the mediational tools, material and physical, for cognitive activity and how more experienced members "scaffold" learning for the younger or less experienced, but what he does not explain is how we create new knowledge. For this, I turned to Lave and Wenger (1991).

Communities of Practice

In their text *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*, Lave and Wenger's (1991) focus primarily on learning within the workplace. Within this model of situated learning, learning is informal, rather than planned in a curriculum, and "in situ" rather than classroom-based. The metaphor for learning is participation. This angle fits well with my interest in looking at my learning to teach *while* teaching, in other words, learning that occurs within my place of work. I have used Lave and Wenger's term, "communities of practice" to describe the different places that influence my understanding of art and teaching. I remark that each place resembles a community of practice, which Lave and Wenger loosely define as "a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice" (p. 98). As I analyzed my data, I began to see how my understanding of art, what constitutes art, its value and meaning, has been determined by place or the particular community of practice that I was participating in at the time. Lave and Wenger's theorizing rings true and provided an appropriate place to begin unraveling the significance of the data.

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Lave and Wenger (1991) note that learners are socialized into a community of practice through a process of "legitimate peripheral participation". As newcomers participate in a community of practice, they acquire the skills and knowledge to move towards full participation in the sociocultural practices of the community. This was evident in my experience with the quilting guild.

> 'Legitimate peripheral participation' provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artifacts, and communities of knowledge and practice. A person's intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a sociocultural practice. (Lave & Wenger, p. 29)

The central point of their argument implies that learning one's social practice is integral to one's learning, which does resonate with what I found in my data. For example, I remember that learning in graduate school involved learning the social practice of art: learning what professionals artists do, how they talk, how they work in the studio and exhibit. However, in this study, I have not focused on the structure of a single community of practice. To do that, I would have had to be attentive to the way that I learn within a particular place in depth, which would be difficult since I am dealing with some remembered places. In other words, that would be another study. Besides, Lave and Wenger theorize how newcomers learn through the process of legitimate peripheral participation and my data describes some situations where I am hardly a newcomer, and I still continue to learn and search for ways of improving my practice. This type of learning cannot be explained through Lave and Wenger's metaphor of moving from periphery to center.

Wenger's (1998) more recent text defines a community of practice in a more precise way; as having three dimensions, mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire. Practice is the source of coherence within a community and it involves people doing things together, negotiating meanings together, and relating through shared activities, stories, concepts, history, artifacts, and the tools that make up the practice of the community. Although this definition appears to be concise, at times Wenger's

comments make me question whether I even understand or use the term appropriately. He remarks that "an institutional boundary does not necessarily outline a community of practice. . . It may consist of multiple communities of practice, or it may not have developed enough of a practice of its own" (Wenger, 1998, p. 119). For the most part, I have used "institutional boundaries" as the contours defining communities of practice; arts and crafts at camp as a community of practice, the school art room as another, and so on. Also, Wenger continues to use metaphors that refer to the structure of communities, as in the following quote: "a community of practice is a node of mutual engagement that becomes progressively looser at the periphery, with layers going from core membership to extreme peripherality" (Wenger, p. 118), which are not the most useful to my understanding of moving *between* communities.

However, Wenger's writing becomes more relevant when he introduces the concept of "brokering"; which he refers to as the "use of multimembership to transfer some elements of one practice into another" (1998, p. 109). He explains that "Brokers are also able to make new connections across communities of practice, enable coordination, and- if they are good brokers- open new possibilities for meaning" (Wenger, p. 109). Brokers in this sense, may belong to more than one community of practice at the same time and to neither and Wenger believes that "their contributions lie precisely in being neither in nor out" (Wenger, 1998, p. 110). With these introductory ideas, I begin to envision myself as a "broker" moving between communities of practice.

The concept of brokering is complex;

> It involves processes of translation, coordination, and alignment between perspectives. It requires enough legitimacy to influence the development of a practice, mobilize attention and address conflicting interest. . . It also requires the ability to link practices by facilitating transactions between them, and to cause learning by introducing into a practice elements of another. (Wenger, 1998, p. 109)

"Boundary encounters" occur as people interact in some way across boundaries. These may include meetings, conversations, and visits; they may be single events or more long-

termed involvements in the practice. The concept of boundaries, a term that has been often used in recent educational research, refers to the edges of practice. Boundaries are the lines dividing inside and outside of practice, membership and non-membership, and can be thought of as discontinuities.

Wenger's ideas frame what I am doing as I move between the borders of practice, although they remain theoretical. Wenger does not show how one negotiates meaning across boundaries. When I ask the question "How do my past experiences related to art and education inform my practice?", I am also asking how I draw on experience and negotiate meaning in my present. I see the "line" between the past and present, or between different communities of practice, as boundaries. Before I explore this idea of moving across boundaries further, I refer to Bourdieu's (1990) concepts of field and habitus which are helpful in understanding how communities of practice engender particular mindsets or dispositions, bringing me to understand how place exudes its "special feel" and affects how I act, how I think and how I "see".

Fields, Habitus, and Capital

Where Lave and Wenger talk about communities of practice, Bourdieu talks of "fields". He explained that the term allowed him to break away from "vague references to the social world (via words such as 'context', 'milieu', 'social base', 'social background)" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 142). Bourdieu's "fields" can also be called a "plurality of worlds", each with their own corresponding logics. To explain how fields work, Bourdieu uses the analogy of a game; a game in which people strive towards distinction. In this game, we:

> put into action the incorporated principles of a generative habitus. . .I am talking about dispositions *acquired through experience,* thus variable from place to place and time to time. This 'feel for the game', as we call it, is what enables an infinite number of 'moves' to be made, adapted to the infinite number of possible situations which no rule, however complex, can foresee. (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 9)

Our habitus is what orients our actions. Within this game, one's actions are constantly adjusted to the demands of the game. Players in this game have unequal positions and possess different amounts of capital with which to play the game. Although Bourdieu focuses on cultural capital, he does refer to both economic and social capital. By "capital", Bourdieu is referring to the resources that are distributed throughout the social field, and have value in particular fields. The relationship of capital to the field depends on the nature of the field. Social capital refers to the value of social connections and what happens when people do things together. For example, in the context of arts and crafts in summer camp, support and encouragement are two important aspects of social capital.

While Lave and Wenger (1991) stress the significance of belonging to communities of practice, Bourdieu believes that it is not so much that people are influenced by and influence the social structures around them, but it is more that those structures are presented through individuals, in their *habitus*. What we acquire through our experiences is our "habitus", our socially constituted nature. Habitus, as "society written into the body" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 63), are those cultural practices, behaviors, tastes, and general understandings which we perform almost unconsciously. In my study, I came to understand that place invokes a set of practices which are internalized through our habitus.

This brief and over-simplified version of Bourdieu's theory of habitus, field and capital introduces several new angles from which to view my work. For one, I have shown how the places in my past have their own spirit, which over time, make an impression on me. Place is inscribed into my body. Place becomes a part of how I see and how I think. As I examine each place, it becomes more clear that Bourdieu's notion of culture as "that sort of freely available and all-purpose knowledge that you acquire in general at an age when you don't yet have any questions to ask" (Bourdieu, p. 29) has been true for me. My past experiences have generated my everyday, taken-for-granted and deeply embedded cultural practices; I am "placed".

The concept of field also allows me to understand other aspects of place. In an article entitled *Bourdieu and art: Field and individual,* Arthur Danto (1999) comments that:

> To be an artist is to occupy a position in the field known as the art world, which means that one is objectively related to the positions of critics, dealers, collectors, curators, and the like. It is the field which 'creates the creators' who internalize what is possible in reference to other positions. (p. 216)

Danto is clearly speaking about the more specific field of fine art, where critics, dealers, collectors, curators and artists are the players. What Danto does not mention is the nature of alternate art worlds. The "fields" or "places" that I talk about point out that there are multiple fields of art; they are illustrations of the "plurality of worlds" which are guided by their own corresponding logics. I want to view these fields as equal, however, if the field of art is a "game", fine art holds the most capital, and dealers, critics, collectors and curators retain the most power.

Bourdieu (1990) notes that:

> Cultural producers hold a specific power, the properly symbolic power of showing things and making people believe in them, of revealing, in an explicit, objectified way the more or less confused, vague, unformulated, even unformulable experiences of the natural world and the social world, and of thereby bringing them into existence. They may put this power at the service of the dominant. They may also, in the logic of their struggle within the field of power, put their power at the service of the dominated in the social field taken as a whole. . .(p. 146)

I cannot say that I had never thought about the issues of power within the field of art, but Bourdieu incites/invites an expanded view of place and its relation to practice. It becomes difficult to ignore the reality that the field is "the locus of power relationships" (Bourdieu, p. 141).

In relation to the autobiographical study of my practice, the question that arises is whether Bourdieu's theory of the field and its focus on the social, leads to rejecting the

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role of the individual. However, Bourdieu (1990) does make it clear that society and the individual are inseparable;

> An individual habitus is the product of the intersection of partly independent causal series. You can see that the subject is not the instantaneous *ego* of a sort of singular *cognito*, but the individual trace of an entire collective history (p. 91)

In other words, my autobiography can be viewed as a strand of a collective history, in variant form. Bourdieu (1977) reminds us of this:

> Since the history of the individual is never anything other than a certain specification of the collective history of his class or group, *each individual system of dispositions* may be seen as a *structural variant* of all other group or class habitus, expressing the difference between the trajectories and positions inside or outside the class. 'Personal' style, the particular stamp marking all products of the same habitus, whether practices or works, is never more than a deviation in relation to the style of a period or class. . . (p. 86).

As I teach art, I piece together the past experiences that I find useful and usable in the particular place in which I am teaching; I draw on experience as I relate to place in a dialogical way. However, I do not think that my actions are merely adjusted to *the immanent demands of the game* as Bourdieu suggests. When habitus and field are in agreement, this may be true, but this perspective does not take into account what happens when there is a disruption; when my habitual repertoire, my *toolbox* of experiences, doesn't fit within the field.

What happens when habitus and field collide? This is where I depart from Lave and Wenger's (1991) focus on cohesive and fairly static communities of practice, which infers that learning happens in well-functioning communities. In my experience, learning occurs most vividly at the fringes of practice when what I know from past experience is disrupted and ceases to function smoothly. To use an example, when I started teaching at summer camp, my knowledge about art was strongly influenced by my experience as a student in a Masters of Fine Art program. However, camp art has little to do with the cool, conceptual art of my graduate school experience. Thus, to better understand how I

learn *across* these communities, I turned to activity theory and the concept of boundary-crossing (Tuomi-Gröhn, Engeström, & Young, 2003; Engeström, 2001; Star & Griesemer, 1989; Engeström, Engeström, & Kärkkäinen, 1995).

The Horizontal Dimension: Third Generation Activity Theory

The cultural-historical theory of activity has evolved through three generations of research. The original concepts were drawn from Vygotsky's notion that the relationship between human agents and objects of environment is mediated by cultural means, tools and signs (Vygotsky, 1978). Although Vygotsky's theory of learning is centered around the concept of mediation, a criticism of it is that it remains focused on the individual. It was Leont'ev who added the element of the complex, bi-directional interactions between individual activity and his or her community, leading the way to second generation activity theory (Engeström, 1987). In Figure 17, I used Engeström's model (which is based on Leont'ev's ideas) to illustrate my participation in the activity of summer camp. In this three-level model, the upper level of activity is driven by object-related goals, the middle level, in which I am the subject, is guided by conscious goals, and the bottom level presents the automatic operations of the community of summer camp.
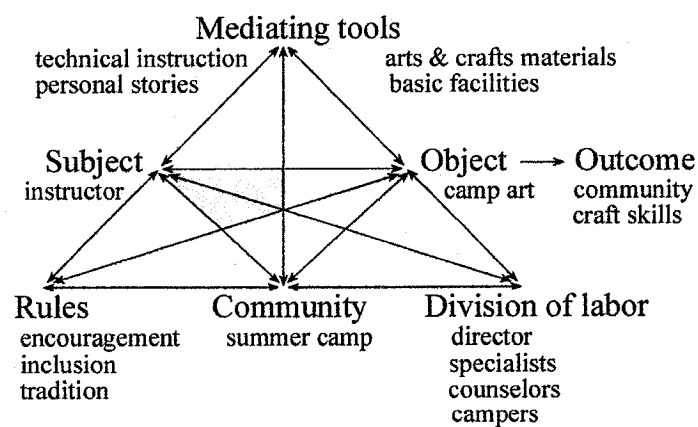
Summer camp:

Figure 17: Summer camp activity

This model shows how I interact within one activity system; I learn through a process of enculturation "where the process has more to do with unconscious social contagion" (Engeström, Engeström, & Kärkkäinen, 1995). This model explains how I, as an instructor in the community of summer camp, carry out the activity of making camp art. The activity is guided by the unwritten rules of encouragement, inclusion and tradition and the division of labor is hierarchical in the sense that the director has the most control over all decisions made. The object and outcome of the activity are influenced by the mediating tools available in the place of camp, which can be summarized as "low tech" or basic. I teach arts and crafts through offering technical instruction and sharing personal stories.

The model illustrates how knowledge is socially constructed to achieve the shared objectives within a particular cultural setting; the object, camp art, is informed by the complex interaction between myself as the subject, the community, and the mediating tools provided by the culture of camp. However, this is not the only activity or community of practice that I participate in, and this model does not explain how I move between multiple activity contexts, which is what I am concerned with in my research. For this, I turn to third generation activity theory; what differentiates it from the earlier versions is that it involves two interacting systems as its minimal unit of analysis (Engeström, 2001).

Within individual activity systems, subjects learn through a process of enculturation, much like Lave and Wenger's (1991) model of legitimate peripheral participation, and Bourdieu's (1990) concept of habitus. This "vertical" view of expertise, where experts have more knowledge than others and knowledge is acquired through stages or level, presents a single view of expertise. Engeström, Engeström, and Kärkkäinen (1995) argue for a more multidimensional model of learning, explaining:

> Experts operate in and move between multiple parallel activity contexts. These
> multiple contexts demand and afford different, complementary but also
> conflicting cognitive tools, rules, and patterns of social interaction. Experts face

the challenge of negotiating and combining ingredients from different contexts to achieve hybrid solutions. (Engeström, Engeström, & Kärkkäinen,, 1995, p. 319)

Two central features of this model are polycontextuality and boundary crossing.

> Polycontextuality at the level of activity systems means that experts are engaged not only in multiple simultaneous tasks and task-specific participation frameworks within one and the same activity. They are also increasingly involved in multiple communities of practice. (Engeström et al, p. 320)

This facet of the multidimensional model of learning is of less interest to me since I am not examining different tasks within one activity, however, the notion of boundary crossing is worth noting.

The idea of transferring ideas or concepts across boundaries of practice "involves encountering difference, entering onto territory in which we are unfamiliar and, to some significant extent therefore, unqualified" (Suchman cited in Engeström et al, p. 320). Engeström, Engeström, and Kärkkäinen remark that in order to deal with such challenges, boundary crossing requires cognitive retooling. They suggest two directions that are of relevance to my study; boundary objects, and argumentation and dialogue.

Boundary Objects, Argumentation and Dialogue

Boundary objects are defined as:

> Objects which are both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. They are weakly structured in common use, and become strongly structured in individual-site use. These objects may be abstract or concrete. They have different meanings in different socials worlds but their structure is common enough to more than one world to make them recognizable, a means of translation. The creation and management of boundary objects is a key process in developing and maintaining coherence across intersecting social worlds. (Star & Griesemer, 1989, p. 393)

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Boundary objects make it possible to transfer knowledge from one community of practice to another; they function as an act of translation (Star & Griesemer, 1989). As I have explained before, after I finished graduate school, I found that what I had defined as art in graduate school no longer made sense in my everyday life and I stopped making art; I was unable to "translate" what I had learned and transfer it to a new context. Figure 18 shows how the activity of graduate school is quite different than the experience that followed.

Graduate school:

Mediating tools
critiques   fine arts & crafts materials
exhibitions   state-of-the-art studios
visiting artist lectures

Subject ← → Object → Outcome
student   fine art   career in art
                         "cultivation of
                              distance"

Rules   Community   Division of labor
originality   graduate program student artists
individual style fine arts academy artist-in-residence

After graduate school:

Mediating tools
fine art   studio at home
exhibitions   fine art & craft materials
art reviews

Subject ← → Object → Outcome
artist   professional stopped
             art career   making art

Rules   Community   Division of labor
self-directed   fine arts   gallery directors
                             critics
                             grant agencies
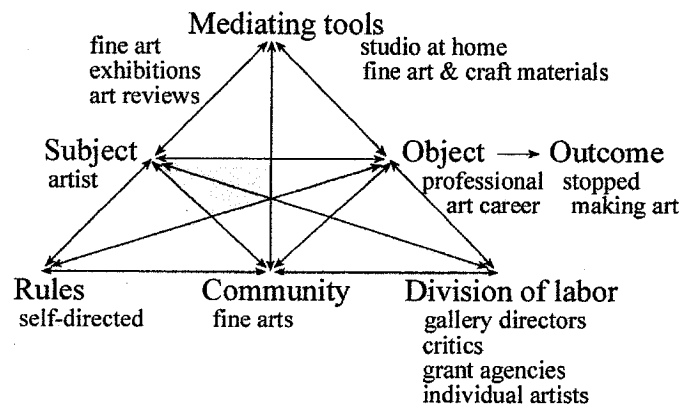   individual artists

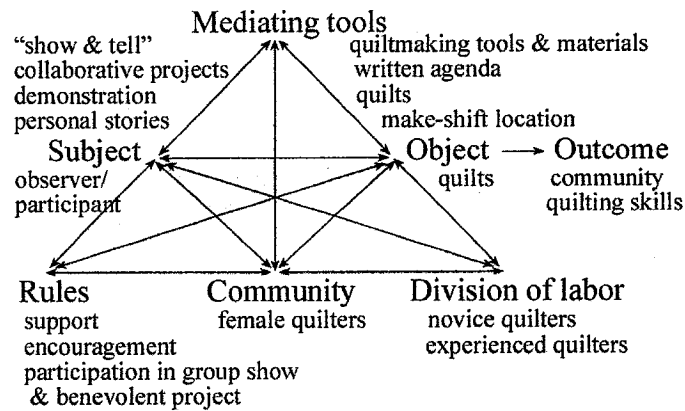Figure 18: Graduate school and after graduate school activities

In graduate school, the division of labor was between young artists and "artists-in residence", who were the directors of each department, in a mentoring type of relationship. Through making art, attending lectures by visiting artists, exhibiting

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artwork, participating in critiques, and having access to state-of-the-art studios, we learned what was accepted as art in the community of graduate school, which was a reflection of the fine arts world beyond the walls of the school. However, this overarching influence is not visible in Engeström's (1987) model.

After I graduated, and my role shifted. The object was no longer about learning to make art, but to *make* art and have it accepted into the professional fine arts world. The entire structure of the activity had shifted. Le Maistre and Paré (2004) point out the transition from school to the workplace is often a challenge. The object of learning within the context of graduate school developed into the mediating tools in that transition, and although the intended goal may have been to have a professional career in art, I stopped making art; I could not imagine where fine art fit into my everyday life of being a mother and trying to make a living.

The components of each activity system are not only complex, they are also interdependent; the mediating tools, my role as the subject in each place, the rules, the community, and the division of labor in each, all contribute to the object and outcome of each place. Similarly, the other places that I have examined can be explained as distinct activity systems made up of complex and interdependent components. Each activity has its own well-defined rules, division of labor, and mediating tools, which affect the outcome of the community as illustrated in Figure 19:

Quilting guild:

Mediating tools

"show & tell" / quiltmaking tools & materials
collaborative projects / written agenda
demonstration / quilts
personal stories / make-shift location

Subject ← → Object → Outcome
observer/ / quilts   community
participant /   quilting skills

Rules   Community   Division of labor
support   female quilters   novice quilters
encouragement   experienced quilters
participation in group show
& benevolent project

Elementary school:

Mediating tools

demonstration / budget materials
assignments   / classroom setting

Subject ← → Object → Outcome
student / school art   art as
                        recreation
                        sugar-coated
                        version of art

Rules   Community   Division of labor
compliance   elementary school   teacher/adult
disciplined behavior   students/children
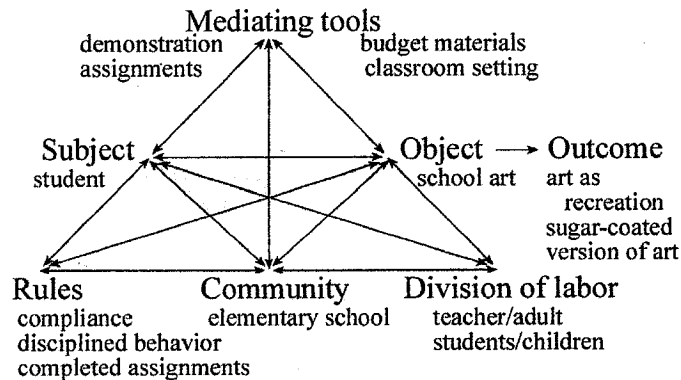completed assignments

Figure 19: Quilting guild and elementary school activities

The diagram shows how my participation in the guild/community of female quilters was as an observer/participant. The rules dictated an environment of support and encouragement through participation in a group show and benevolent projects. The division of labor was egalitarian; there were novice quilters and those more experienced. Meetings occurred in make-shift, donated locations such as community centers and they include "show and tell", working on collaborative projects, demonstration of quilting techniques, and sharing personal stories. The object was to learn about quilts and to make quilts, while the outcome was a sense of community as well as improved quilting skills.

My memories of elementary school art class remind me of rules of compliance, disciplined behavior, and completed assignments. The division of labor was directly related to the adult as the teacher, and the children as students; the teachers had full control/power in the situation. We learnt to make art by watching the teacher demonstrate a technique, and through specific assignments. The materials were budget oriented. The outcome of this activity was a sugar-coated version of art and served as a form of recreation.

There is little in common between the art activities of the quilting guild and elementary school, however, there is another way to imagine these separate activities. If I were to take the objects of each activity and look for a way to translate them and conceptualize them in plastic enough ways to maintain a common enough identity across these seemingly disparate activities, they could function as boundary objects, therefore making it possible to translate knowledge from one community to another, and I could learn across these communities of practice.

The way that I was able to do this is through my inherent belief that both fine art and camp art are both forms of art; "art" functions as the boundary object. Rather than erasing the boundaries of the diverse practices that I have participated in, I maintain that each activity has its own distinct characteristics, although there are also enough commonalities to include them as art. This is illustrated in Figure 20.
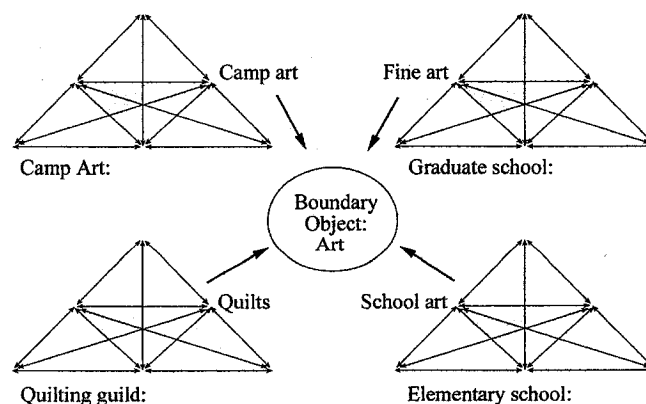

Figure 20: "Art" as a boundary object

The way that camp art, quilts, and school art can be translated into the boundary object of "Art" is " through *argumentation and dialogue* with theorists such as Danto (1981, 1994, 1997, 1999), Dickie (1997, 2000, 2001), and Dissanayake (1988). Rather than applying essentialist approaches to art, these theorists provide robust enough, yet flexible enough definitions of art to solidify my intrinsic beliefs about art. In Danto's 1964 essay "The Artworld" (reprinted in 1994), he suggests that "To see something as art requires something the eye cannot descry- an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld" (Danto, 1994, p. 477). He also emphasizes that "Nor would these things be artworks without the theories and the histories of the Artworld" (Danto, p. 481). What Danto's definition of art does is to name something as art not by virtue of its visual properties, but by its relation to some context. As a cultural-historical theory of art, Danto's theory suggests that what counts as art is determined by the practices and institutions of an artworld at a particular time in history. The only difficulty that I have with Danto is the reliance on the singular term "artworld", particularly when it is written with a capital "A", and implies that he is talking about the fine arts world.

In a more recent article on Bourdieu and art, Danto (1999) uses Bourdieu's *field* to explain the same idea: "To be an artist is to occupy a position in the field known as the artworld" (p. 216). Again, there is a singularity to the term. Even Danto himself notes that it does not help us understand how fields change: "It [the power of the field] explains how we think and how we act as cultural beings, and how these modes of thought and conduct change. Whether it can explain the transformations when they occur is quite another thing" (p. 218). While Danto's writing explains how art is culturally and historically framed, it cannot explain the interactions between artworlds if it relies on the singular notion of an artworld. Furthermore, considering how transformations occur is crucial to understanding how we learn.

The main point of Dickie's institutional theory of art is that instead of looking for exhibited characteristics in artworks, we should look for "characteristics that artworks have as a result of their relation to their cultural context" (Dickie, 2000, p. 97). Dickie never clarifies what those characteristics might be, he explains that "A work of art is an

artifact of a kind created to be presented to an artworld public [and] A public is a set of persons the members of which are prepared in some degree to understand an object which is presented to them" (Dickie, 2001, p. 59). While Danto (1994) may rely on theories to confer objects as art, Dickie (2001) depends on the people who are prepared in some degree to understand the object presented to them to define what it is accepted as art and what is not. Dickie does makes reference to "artworld systems" in the plural, although he explains that he is referring to the "collection of different systems- painting, literature, theater, and the like", rather than multiple versions of visual art worlds.

The anthropologist Ellen Dissanayake (1988) states the need to make art, to "make special", is universal; the existence of multiple versions of art is a given. She remarks that there may a variety of reasons as to why people make art, such as providing a sense of meaning to life or as a form of escape. If we look at the functional explanations for individual arts, we can see how the arts serve social ends. Dissanayake gives the example that "Art in the modern Western sense contributes to species' sociality only in the most tangential ways, having become increasingly private and elitist" (p. 71).

The point that art serves social ends has become evident in looking at the places that I explored through activity theory; the outcome of each activity system is distinct. For example, art may function as a way of creating community as in the activity of the quilting guild and summer camp, and it may also cultivate distance and critique as in my experience in graduate school, or it may be reduced to recreation as with my memories of school art. Each form of art not only reflects the place in which it is created, but it also contributes to particular outcomes. In graduate school, learning to think critically about one's own work is central, while in elementary school, art is often a form of recreation. Summer camp is similar to the quilting guild; connection is at the heart of the experience. What I am now learning, is that there is value in each approach.

Vibrating Boundaries

When reading Josef Alber's (1971) text, "Interaction of Color", I came across the term "vibrating boundaries"; this term allows me to imagine the borders of practices in new ways. Albers describes the effect that occurs when complementary colors of the same intensity are placed next to each other, causing "vibrating boundaries", where the boundary line appears in duplicate or triplicate: "This initially exciting effect also feels aggressive and often even uncomfortable to our eyes. One finds it rarely used except for a screaming effect in advertising, and as a result it is unpleasant, disliked, and avoided (Albers, 1971, p. 62). A "screaming effect" is one way of describing the results, but it is also possible to see that these colors *enliven each other.*

Boundaries of practice can be looked at in similar ways; encounters at the boundaries of practice can have an uncomfortable, aggressive feel, but they can also be seen as ways of enlivening practice, through learning to look at practice from a different perspective. I begin to imagine the boundaries of different communities of practice as vibrating, rather than fixed, and each experience provides possibilities for dialogue.

I now understand the value of arts and crafts at summer camp and the role of the quilting guild on a deeper level. They serve a purpose beyond making "useful objects"; these sites of learning invite newcomers into the community and give them permission to make art. What has been less clear to me is the meaning of what I learned in art class in elementary school and many years later, in graduate school. School art may also be a way of introducing students into the arts by making it palatable and recreational, however, that is not excluding the idea that it could benefit from more substance. Nonetheless, I am also coming to realize the necessity of the critical edge that I experienced in graduate school; the possibility of art to re-awaken us, allowing us to see again. The role of art can be described as such:

> Art's role is to shock us out of this perceptual complacency, to force us to see the
> world anew. This shock has borne many names over the years: the sublime,
> alienation effect, *l'amour fou,* and so on. In each case the result is a kind of
> epiphany that lifts viewers outside the familiar boundaries of a common language,

existing modes of representation, and even their own sense of self. (Kester, 2004, p. 12)

I have focused primarily on the alienation effect of contemporary art, and the resulting distancing between the object and the viewer, but art can also shock us out of our taken-for-granted ways of looking at the world and lead us to question.

The Role of Place

When the writer Eudora Welty (1998) discusses the role of place in fiction, she comments that:

Place absorbs our earliest notice and attention, it bestows on us our original awareness; and our critical powers spring up from the study of it and the growth of experience inside it. It perseveres in bringing us back to earth when we fly too high. It never really stops informing us, for it is forever astir, alive, changing, reflecting, like the mind of man itself. One place comprehended can make us understand other places better. Sense of place gives us equilibrium; extended, it is sense of direction too. (p. 792)

A pedagogy of place produces particular narratives. Participants in a community share interests, experiences and understandings, thus functioning as an interpretive community. Within the interpretive community of summer camp, I speculate on what the culturally acknowledged meaning of arts and crafts is. I believe that, as cultural signs, arts and crafts function as expressive display and community building. Bakhtin suggests that "every community brings a distinct dialogical angle, each conveys its own cultural orientation and political aspirations" (Bakhtin cited in Stokrocki, 2004, p. 60).

The lessons of place point out that camp art is accessible; it is nature under glass. It is about valuing technique and passing on tradition. Camp art is located in the *crafts* of "arts and crafts". It is so tightly knotted to the place of camp, the interactions between people, the welcoming, safe place, the nest. Teaching and learning within the place of camp are about relationships and sharing stories; encouragement, respect and collaboration.

The quilting guild is much like camp. The guild is where we (women) are all welcome, where we are open, vulnerable and comfortable. We are "at home". Quilts are *of the home*, the domestic, the everyday and the accessible art. The guild is also a place of encouragement and sharing stories. Folk art is also about the comfort of the homemade, the handmade, the everyday bread and butter. It is the unschooled, untrained, the naïve.

The art of graduate school depicts quite the opposite. It speaks of the remove of modern art- the epitome of art disconnected from its public. It is an art that separates the elite, those accepted into the world of high art, and the general public. The philosophy of graduate school seems to proclaim that the less the public understands, the better the art must be. It is exclusive. School art on the elementary level exists in its own world; a world of pipe cleaners and construction paper. It is too often a frivolous, sugar-coated, artificially-flavored version of art that has little to do with any art outside of that world.

As Danto (1981, 1997, 1998) and Dickie (1997, 2000, 2001) suggest, art is historically, contextually and culturally influenced. Art is "placed", it is "of place", characterized by the social context in which it is situated. Art can be defined in multiple ways; each place informing and creating its own version. The notion of place makes this clear. Tuan (2004) comments "human attachments to place. How firm it is. . . we are nurtured by place. . .we 'feed' on places and artworks, and that, so fed, we grow" (p. 4). Basically, we learn culture, and place acts like a template, shaping our behavior and the way we see. We are nurtured by place; we are attached to place.

Conversations with theorists have provided me with alternate ways of looking at my data. Bourdieu's theory of habitus, field and capital informs me that my habitus imparts particular ways of thinking and acting. Place influences the repertoire from which I draw meaning; it shapes my way of seeing. For example, from my experiences of making art at summer camp as a child, I consider that art is the bread of everyday, it is a nest, a safe place; it is joyful and messy, with all hands in one bowl. The quilting guild has offered a similar, perhaps more grown-up version of this childhood place, and conveys the art experience as festive, lit-up and glowing, welcoming, reflections of self

and comfortable in one's own nakedness; it is a safe and welcoming place that mirrors my memories of camp. The place of school art provides a cute, candied, "just mix and stir" version of art, while graduate school presented conflicting perspectives, empty space and a form of art that was removed from the general public. The early lessons from my mother and grandmothers confirm the collaborative side of art, art connected to a sense of community, of building community, in vivid and significant ways. These are such divergent ways of seeing, ways of conceptualizing the field of art. They are the multiple places/visions of art that I carry within my self.

Bourdieu's notions of field and habitus provide the foundation for understanding the field of art as multi-faceted. He also brings an awareness to issues of capital that are not always visible. Within the place of graduate school and its links to, or emulation of, the world of fine art, the relationship between the players of the game is quite uneven. The majority of power resides in the hands of the critics, the gallery owners, curators, and even graduate school professors who grant the artist entry into the field, or not. Even if Bourdieu believes that "cultural producers hold a specific power, the properly symbolic power of showing things and making people believe in them" (1990, p. 146), within the framework of conventional venues for exhibiting artwork, there is an inherent hierarchy of power. Ultimately, those who hold the most power dominate over others.

On the other end of the spectrum is the quilting guild. It is no wonder that quilting has been referred to as "the democratic art" (Shaw, 1995); not only because everyone knows someone who has quilted or quilts, but also that the distribution of this art form is more democratic. Quilts are often handed down or offered as gifts, avoiding the need for any intermediary system. Quilters, for the most part, function within their own art world, organizing their own exhibitions in donated spaces, such as church basements. The artists retain control of the field in their own hands; setting up their own definitions of expertise and credibility. I am not insinuating that there is no economic market connected to quilting; there is: there are the fabric stores, the publishers of quilting books, the antique and art quilt markets, and the certified quilt historians, not to mention the recent interest in quilts *as* fine art. For example, the women of Gee's Bend are now regarded as artists,

and their quilts are greatly valued as "art". But there is also the possibility of making quilts by re-cycling material from old clothes, making patterns from newspaper (and even from the plastic sheets from discarded x-rays as I have seen), and side-stepping the commercial market completely.

In diverse places, different lessons are taught; they are the lessons of place. Until different communities literally collided in my practice as an artist, I never saw these places as anything more than taken-for-granted. I acquired my knowledge about art *through* these places before I had any questions to ask. But I do have questions now, and these questions extend further than exploring how my past experiences inform my teaching. My interrogations aim to disrupt the taken-for-granted nature of my habitus, expanding what I believe and know about art and re-purposing the goals of my practice.

I am reminded of a quote from Dewey (1934) that I have referred to earlier about works of art that are signs of a collective life also help in creating such a life. What this makes me think of now, is that the *form* of art can play a role in creating a collective life, or not. Some forms are better in achieving that than others. As a teacher, questioning what has been a given until now, is essential. We must understand what it is that we are teaching and meanings are hidden in our curriculum choices.

The concepts of habitus, field and capital are therefore critical to understanding how I learn. Wenger's (1998) notion of brokering adds another level; it allows me to envision myself as a broker, transferring elements of one practice to another and Tuomi-Gröhn, Engeström, and Young (2003), Engeström (2001), Star and Griesemer (1989), and Engeström, Engeström, and Kärkkäinen (1995) explain how the process of crossing boundaries occurs. By making these new connections, new possibilities for meaning may open.

The idea of brokering has similarities to Gutiérrez, Rymes and Larson's (1995) notion of a third space, or the learning and development that take place when the ideas and needs of different cultures meet and collide. Although the concept of third space

appears most often in the literature on multiculturalism, it can also be applied to an autobiographical study in the sense that we all participate in multiple communities of practice; if only moving from our private lives at home to our more public lives at work. I consider the places that inform my practice as versions of culture, as distinct and separate, but all embodied in myself.

I have begun to understand the role of theory in relation to practice on a new level. Although, we tend to see theory as separate from the experience of teaching, like some "truth" that we impose on our teaching, perhaps it is more constructive to imagine theory "as a lived relationship, grounded in the practical existence of persons and dependent upon the process of interpretation and change" (Britzman, 2003, p. 64). To believe that theory exists as a lived relationship grounded in my own practice, I must move back and forth between the theoretical notions of "horizontal learning" and "brokering" and my own lived experience. Britzman notes that "Another's discourse performs here no longer as information, directions, rules, models and so forth- but strives to determine the very bases of our ideological interrelations with the world, the very basis of our behavior" (p. 42). The words of others help me name my practice; and the theory of "horizontal learning" points out the possibility of learning *across* communities where I have practiced as an artist and a teacher. It is in the spaces *between* communities of practice that I learn, where I begin to construct new meanings.

The question that surfaces now is how I negotiate meaning in this so-called third space; how do I move from viewing the space between communities of practice as a place of disjunction, of dichotomies, dualisms and oppositions, to transforming it into a more dialogical space. Certainly, noticing and acknowledging the contradictions and oppositions that appear in practice is a first step. Although I label the oppositions in my practice in binary terms, such as fine art/craft, elitism/everyday aesthetics, individual work/collaboration, and so on, (as noted at the beginning of this chapter), I realize that they are not nearly as neat nor binary as they appear. In my attempt to move beyond the dualisms of my own practice, I use writing as a way of creating new meanings; "Drawing on Experience" has become a third space on paper; a process of thought, a place for

discussion, writing, debate and understanding. The aim is not to remain at the researcher's desk, but to move fluidly from theory to practice and back again.

The moment that I realized that what I had learned as a graduate student no longer fit or made sense within my everyday experience outside of the art academy, two communities of practice collided. I found myself unable to take what I knew from one place and transfer it to another. I perceived this encounter at the borders of two distinct "locations of culture" (Bhabha, 1994) as conflictual, even antagonistic. It was a critical moment; I stopped making art.

What made this experience appear so insurmountable that it resulted in setting aside my studio practice? What makes some borderline engagements of difference so contentious that one retreats as I did? Alternatively, what encourages one to look at these tensions as opening up the possibilities for a "third space", an in-between space that creates new knowledge, new ways of seeing; transforming the space between communities into a place of "*negotiation* rather than *negation*" (Bhabha, p. 4).

An autobiographical study offers that space to step back and reflect, to see myself as a teacher, and to learn in the third space. Writing provides a sense of distance between my past and present somewhat in the same sense of writing in the third person; it creates a space between author and subject, the self and experience. I have benefited from autobiographical research in this way; it has initiated a change in my thinking, allowing me to envision the place when communities collide as a third space. It is in this third space that new meanings are constructed and possibility is created. The exploration of the diverse experiences of my past, my educational biography has opened up "an interrogatory, interstitial space" (Bhabha, p. 3). The third space becomes a place for transformation.

The same questions apply, whether to multicultural concerns as in the writings of Bhabha or to the particulars within the fields of art: Whose voice is being heard? What is being said? Who is representing whom? What is a community anyway? Through critical

reflection, I learn to ask such questions as who makes art? For whom? And quite literally, who holds the keys to the museums and galleries? I learn to not only question what I teach, but how I teach. From the places of summer camp and the quilting guild, I learn that encouragement and a supportive, caring environment are tied as much to the teaching as the subject being taught.

This is the dialogical third space that arises through inquiry, through enlarging the snapshot of my practice; inquiry as the "undoing" of my preconceptions and my taken-for-granted notions of the field and creating possibility. New questions emerge in the third space; What are the implications for practice?

Chapter 7
Possibilities for Practice

Learning to Teach/ Teaching to Learn

Through my research, I found that my learning to teach can best be described by the concept of horizontal learning, learning in the spaces *between* and *across* communities of practice. When communities collide, one can recede from the boundaries as I initially did when I stopped making art, or one can negotiate a "third space" (Bhabha, 1994). By emphasizing the notion of learning across communities of practice, I do not intend to discredit the idea of learning within communities, a "vertical" model of learning. However, the vertical model suggests a limited view of learning to me, as if we learn in hermetically-sealed, unchanging contexts, unaffected by what lies outside the perimeters of a particular practice.

What has opened up the third space, transforming conflict into a vantage point, a place for constructing new knowledge, has been the process of autobiographical research. Through critical reflection, I learned to question my taken-for-granted knowledge and I began unwinding my own assumptions about art. After my graduate school experience collided with my everyday experience outside the academy, I needed to understand that "graduate school art" was just one possibility and that there were others; it had become necessary that I transform the space between communities of practice into a more constructive place. Although I may have read about the idea of reflective practice in Schön (1983) and "reinventing oneself as a teacher" in Mitchell and Weber (1999), I only began to truly understand and appreciate those concepts through the research process. When our ways of thinking remain unexamined, we teach without thinking about how we act; we do not exercise control over our actions. Reflection and inquiry aim to free us from some of our biases and unjustified beliefs. Autobiographical research has been a process of challenging my beliefs and finding meaning through my own thinking.

Writing became the site of struggle between my past and my present as I learned to challenge my own personal practical knowledge, the knowledge that I have drawn

from my lived experiences. My dissertation can be imagined as a *third space on paper*, a discursive and hybrid learning context, where I constructed new knowledge from the bits and pieces of past experiences. I learned through reflection as a type of "dialogue with the self" and through dialogue with others as I have conversations with theorists and those around me.

The educational theorist Shirley Grundy (1987) writes that:

> Critical reflection involves more than knowledge of one's values and understanding of one's practice. It involves a dialectical criticism of one's own values in a social and historical context in which the values of others are also crucial. Criticism itself, is therefore, a relational concept; criticism can only be conducted in a community where there is determination to learn rationally from each other. (p. 124-125)

If criticism is a relational concept, it is vital to draw from our experiences *and* converse with others in a critical community. Dialogue with others is not an end in itself; it is a means towards a better understanding of the object of knowledge. In this case, dialogue has been the means towards considering practice more intently and recognizing that practice is constructed and capable of being recreated.

The original goal of my study was simply to understand my teaching more fully; however, the process of research has done more than allow me to understand how my lived experiences inform my teaching. It has provided a way for me to develop a critical awareness of my practice and to imagine other possibilities. I recognize the significance of critical reflection; the "undoing" of our preconceptions, of our habitus, and the necessity of understanding that knowledge is a human construction, but we also come to teaching with the knowledge acquired through our past experiences. I am learning to *critically* draw on experience, which is a way of liberating myself in Freirian terms; a project of *conscientization*, the development of a consciousness able to transform reality, as I move between experience and reflection. Grundy explains that "Emancipation lies in the possibility of taking action autonomously. That action may be *informed* by certain theoretical insights, but it is not *prescribed* by them" (p. 113).

Teaching has become a process of learning, not only learning to teach, but also learning about art. Teaching has been about finding my voice and learning to take action autonomously. In learning to teach, the intertwining of experience, dialogue, reflection and practice are incomplete; it is an ongoing process where I can imagine possibilities for practice.

In this chapter, I discuss possibilities for practice, based on what I have learned through my research; this includes the significance of drawing on multiple art worlds, personal experience in curriculum and art making, and reflection and critical thinking. At this stage, the "possibilities" are just that; they are hypothetical for the most part. The possibilities for practice that I discuss are "Possibilities for Teaching Art", "Possibilities for Teacher Education", "Possibilities for Studio Practice", "Possibilities for Research Methodology", and "Possibilities for Future Research".

Possibilities for Teaching Art

Teaching is a process; it is not completely pre-determined, but requires more of a dialogical approach, in dialogue with others and my own lived experiences. Teaching art can also be thought of as a third space; a space to connect with others and continue learning.

In the chapter "Writing the Self", I asked the question whether teaching is a science or an art. In response, I see teaching as a science and an art. I am referring to "science" here, in the way that it is traditionally taught, as "the transmission of an organized body of knowledge accumulated on a subject" (Sykes, 1976, p. 1014). Even in the field of art, the importance of an awareness of the field, a familiarity with the traditions or "recipes" associated with art practice, cannot be ignored. For example, the elements and principles of art, often considered as part of the foundation for the study of art, are criticized by many, including myself, for disregarding the *content* of art. I am aware that the formalist approach does not help us to comprehend a lot of the art being made today. The problem for me begins when the elements and principles of design

become the sole focus of the lesson; however, I believe that they cannot be entirely overlooked.

The "art" of teaching relates to improvisation in teaching. It is the ability to read the nuances of place and respond creatively to them. The art of teaching requires that educators have a broad knowledge of the field, and the skill of disciplined improvisation (Sawyer, 2004). In my experience, this has been the advantage of participating in multiple art worlds; it has provided me with a broad knowledge of the field. Eisner (1983) explains it in this way:

> What skilled teaching requires is the ability to recognize the dynamic patterns, to grasp their meaning, and the ingenuity to invent ways to respond to them. It requires the ability to both lose oneself in the act and at the same time maintain a subsidiary awareness of what one is doing. Simply possessing a set of discrete skills ensures nothing. (p. 9)

The concept of teaching as improvisation is not new; it overlaps with the notion of a third space. "It is in this unscripted third space that student and teacher's cultural interests, or internal dialogizations, become available to each other. . ." (Gutierrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995, p. 465). Rather than viewing teaching as a pre-scripted place, teaching is re-viewed as an improvisational space, where dialogue between teachers and students can occur and each are recognized as competent within their own scripts.

One of the ways that improvisation can be realized is through drawing upon real life and connecting art with everyday experience. If the banking system of education is criticized because the students become the passive "receptacles" in which teachers deposit knowledge, by drawing on and integrating the everyday experiences of students as the subject of study provides a way for them to become active participants in their education. The teacher is no longer the expert, but learns along with students and co-creates knowledge with students.

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An example that I can offer that speaks to the idea of drawing upon popular culture and providing a space for students to voice their personal points of view, is a button-making project that I have taught several times, but continue to revise (Markus, 2006). I was intrigued with how people literally wear their beliefs on their chests by wearing t-shirts that have messages on them. I also noticed that people, particularly youth, wear buttons that make their beliefs public, so I started working on an art activity based on this trend. By buttons, I mean the celluloid buttons that have thin, transparent plastic covering an image and/or text printed on paper; the type of buttons originally used for political campaigns.

When I first taught the button-making project, it was in the camp setting. I didn't have any particular approach other than trying to get the campers to make their own statements by cutting out words and images from their own magazines. Subsequently, I taught the same project in a high school women's studies class, so I decided to work with the theme of feminism. The goal for the workshop was to get the students to create their own feminist slogans. In this way, I began the lessons with an *idea*, or an issue, rather than a technique. I showed images of historical feminist buttons and then I had each student pick a button from my own collection and I asked them to talk about what they thought they were about. We spent some time discussing this and they asked questions about the ones that they didn't understand. The actual button-making part of the project only took a couple of seconds, so the emphasis was on the collage aspect of cutting apart, "disrupting", the words and images that they are presented with in the media, and pasting them together into a meaningful composition.

I learned several things from this project. I discovered that young women have their own opinions of what it means to be a feminist today. They are concerned about issues that range from health, career, sexuality, equality, to education. They have compelling, positive voices; they believe in themselves. I also learned that students must have the opportunity to express themselves. If art lessons are completely technical and students don't feel that there is room for expression, they lose interest. This is something that I have noticed for myself recently since I attended an introductory drawing class:

The class on "chiaroscuro" felt like such an over-used recipe for teaching- an "ossified pedagogy" (Rollins, 2005), which doesn't respond to an ever-changing society. The lighting wasn't even okay from the angle that I was working and I couldn't see the chiaroscuro (light and dark) on the concrete sphere- so I just worked to copy the teacher's drawing. The teacher was expressionless herself- just like the drawings we were doing- expressionless and academic. If students don't feel that they are being creative in any way, they lose interest. I was bored and I couldn't see the point in drawing something that I had no connection to. (April 24, 2006)

Students need to feel that their voices are being heard. There has to be some connection between what they think and feel and what they represent. The point of art is that it reaches deeper than surface appearance. Art is not something separate from experience; it condenses and intensifies personal experience and utters us into the world. As I found with the collage and narrative process that I crafted for my memory work, the visual functioned as a way for me to see what I couldn't see or "get at" otherwise. The collages were not about "a proper way of doing collage", they were about *finding form for feeling* and enabling me to find meaning.

Another element that is crucial for teaching art is engaging with a plurality of art forms, offering multiple ways for students to interact with art and thus ensuring a broad knowledge of the field. Since teaching is a cultural practice that influences the way students view the world, it is important to provide as wide a lens as possible onto that world. It is necessary to broaden the field to include more diverse concepts of art, based on craft, fine art, visual culture and so on. Efland (1995) suggests that an eclectic approach to art curriculum is mandated, one that "invites contradiction and inconsistency. A noneclectic curriculum is possible only when one model of art teaching is privileged as being true, a situation that cannot exist as long as the present pluralism is characteristic of the art world" (p. 38).

I have learned to appreciate multiple versions of art through re-visiting my experiences related to art with a more critical eye. Art education cannot be based on one form of art alone, nor one theoretical approach. Also, I now understand how art is influenced by the socio-historical context in which it is produced, as discussed by Danto (1981, 1994, 1997, 1998) and Dickie (1997, 2000, 2001). The challenge for art educators is to help students understand that there is a variety of ways that art can be known. We need to know that even labeling something as art is culture-bound, especially when we teach.

By expanding the notion of art beyond the confines of traditional painting and sculpture, curriculum can begin to address Dissanayake's (1988) question, "What do the arts do?" This question has allowed me to look more closely at what the function of different art lessons, and what the "hidden lessons" are. A functional approach to curriculum moves towards understanding how the arts serve social ends. As I discovered in my research, different forms of art serve different social ends. I learned that camp art, much like quilts and other forms of folk art and crafts, *connects* people to each other, to their history, to tradition. The arts function as a way to create community and encourage a sense of continuity. My experience with fine art in graduate school and beyond, led me to believe that it *cultivated distance*, however, as with contemporary art, it functioned as way to challenge and question accepted ways of seeing. My memories of school art revealed that it was neither a medium for connection nor challenge; it was a form of recreation that at least allowed students to join in and be entertained. Each of these forms of art, embedded in distinct models of art education, serve a purpose and art can be taught and "used to perpetuate and to challenge the values of a society" (Chalmers, 2005, p. 105), which are both valuable lessons.

Educators such as Atkinson and Dash (2005), Bersson (1992), Chalmers (1996, 2001, 2005), Cosier (2004), Freedman and Stuhr (2004), and Gaudelius and Speirs (2002) point out that if art is to be meaningful in students' lives, it must connect to important social issues and not shy away from controversial themes; otherwise we will end up with the trivial and sugar-coated version of art that I experienced in my elementary education.

I agree that we must address issues of social justice in art education. Schools can be an appropriate place to build awareness and collaborate for social change, which requires a shift in thinking and moving beyond the idea of art as reward or recreation.

Since part of my research was spurred on by my criticism of an art education class on the afternoon of September 11th, I return to the subject of 9/11. The art educator John Johnston (2005) asks:

> How then can art help us understand such events and prevent similar actions in the future? Quite simply- it cannot. Art could never be so arrogant as to claim that it holds the answer to such difficult worldwide problems. . . .However, the actions of being creative are in direct opposition to those of being destructive. If art helps us understand who we really are it has made a significant contribution to helping us understand others and how their identities are constructed. (p. 19)

In the weeks following 9/11, many people turned to the arts, looking to understand an event that was seemingly incomprehensible. Poetry was read on the radio, sculptures in the form of memorials were assembled in the streets, all in the attempt to make meaning of something that no one could understand. The arts provide us with a way *to see for ourselves,* to see the world and make sense of things for ourselves. We seem to acknowledge this subjectivity in the arts willingly, even with an enthusiasm. We acknowledge the subjectivity in both the creation of and the response to visual art more freely than in other forms of art, such as ones that make use of the written word. It enables individuals to not only explore personal meanings through art, but to imagine that there are other possibilities, other points of view. Art can be an excellent way to introduce the notion of difference.

Possibilities for Teacher Education

There are several implications that I draw from my study which are relevant to teacher education. Through my research, I learned how my lived experiences inform my teaching, but I also realized that I had to question this taken-for-granted knowledge. I think that it is essential to listen to and acknowledge the personal experiences of pre-

service teachers, as well as guiding them to think critically. Serendipitously, as I was finishing my writing my dissertation, I was asked to teach a course in Art Curriculum and Instruction to pre-service, elementary level, general teachers, so I was able to try out a couple of ideas.

The first exercise that I had students do for this class, was to write up an "art autobiography". It was based on "My Personal Art Inventory" (Herberholz & Herberholz, 2002, p. 17) and included such questions as: 1.What is your definition of art? 2. What do you remember about your art lessons when you were in elementary school? 3. Who is your favorite artist? 4. What do you think elementary art education should include? and 5. What do you want to learn? This was intended as a general guideline, not only to make the students more aware of their knowledge of art, but also as a way for me to become familiar with their backgrounds. One of the things that came out of this brief assignment, was that I quickly found out that the students had little experience in art and a great fear of it. Therefore, encouraging pre-service general teachers feel to comfortable and competent is essential if they are to include art in their curriculum at all. This was a huge task to deal with in an intensive class which met three times a week during a brief six week period.

I also found that it was crucial to offer a range of approaches to teaching, providing the "toolbox" from which they could draw in the future. I tried to balance a range of theoretical readings with a variety of hands-on activities, keeping in mind that in this context, art had to be considered in how it could be integrated into other subjects and keeping the materials and tools as simple as possible. The idea that general teachers will most likely integrate art into other subjects rather than teaching it as a subject on its own, is an asset; it lends the opportunity to imagine art as *connected* to the world, and not just the art world.

For pre-service teachers to feel competent, they need more than a toolbox of theoretical approaches for teaching art; they need as much experience in making art as possible. I assume that to engage students, the "doing", the hands-on part of art is central;

besides, learning to materialize ideas into visual form requires *doing*. At the same time, I was aware that for art to be meaningful to them in any way, they had to find a way to tie in their personal experiences. There are several specific ways in which I tried to do this.

As an ongoing project, I assigned students to keep "visual journals", which would be both a resource binder and a place to add their personal reflections on the class projects. Students could paste together reflective memos about the course materials, examples of art techniques, and reviews of theoretical readings, with ideas of how they could imagine using them in their own classrooms. The journal was intended as more than a vehicle for sketching out their lives; it was a place for students to trust that their points of view were as important as what was presented in the course. The objective was to acknowledge the perspectives of students and the visual journal could develop into a place for creating critical and collaborative knowledge. Ultimately, I think for this to work as I had intended, there would have had to be more emphasis on the *reflective* part of the journal, with more consistent and rigorous documentation of their reflections.

Another example of a specific assignment where students could tie in their personal experiences was one that linked language arts and visual art. I began the class by showing examples of concrete and found poetry. In concrete poetry, the message of the poem is partly conveyed through the shape of letters or words on the page; it is a visual poem. Found poetry is an arrangement of words or phrases taken from or "found" in other sources. I asked the students to select and read an article from a newspaper that I had brought to class and I asked them to write a found poem by cutting out words and/or phrases from the article, and pasting them into a visual poem. The intention was to create a poem that presented their personal interpretation of the original article. I made copies of all the poems for each student, and I taught them to bind the collection into book form, which was the purely technical part of the project.

These are only a couple of ideas that I tried out; there are other ways to acknowledge the personal experiences of pre-service teachers. One thing that that I would definitely make more time for is reflection, not only emphasizing it in the visual journals,

but by spending more class time reviewing finished projects and encouraging students to respond to completed work. Reflection and interpretation are ways to encourage critical thinking. For example, for one project on symbols, I had students create their own symbols for "growth", which they carved into rubber stamps and printed on fabric, which was later assembled into a collaborative quilt. After they completed this, I asked them to evaluate how well they felt their symbol represented the idea of growth. However, if I were to repeat this project, I would spend more class time on the aspect of interpretation by sharing and discussing their responses with the class. As a side note, the finished quilt, "Symbols of Growth" was selected by the Faculty of Education to represent the graduating class of 2006 and will hang permanently in the education building, thus connecting the visual to a wider community.

One point is certain, six weeks is far too short a time to introduce generalists to the field of art, particularly if they have not studied art since elementary school. It is difficult to encourage them to draw on their own art experiences, since they are so limited. One thing that is essential is to provide them with experiences where they gain confidence with their own art making. Therefore, teaching a technique such as collage with found images, which is not intimidating for beginners, is so successful. Also, some type of ongoing mentorship could be helpful, where students could have someone more experienced in the arts to refer to as they begin teaching and new questions arise.

Possibilities for Studio Practice

Since I began my research, my ideas about art have shifted. More than ever, I see that art cannot be separate from everyday life. It must be connected to our everyday experiences, as Dewey (1934) commented in the following:

> When artistic objects are separated from both conditions of origin and operation in experience, a wall is built around them that renders almost opaque their general significance, with which esthetic theory deals. Art is remitted to a separate realm, where it is cut off from that association with the materials and aims of every other form of human effort, undergoing, and achievement. A primary task is thus imposed upon one who undertakes to write upon the philosophy of the arts. This

task is to restore continuity between the refined and intensified forms of experience which are works of art and everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognized to constitute experience. (Dewey, 1934, p. 3)

What has caused my idea of art to change has been what I have learned through teaching. Writing has also been a way to articulate some of these beliefs, as my understanding of art gets rearranged. I am searching for the possibilities for studio practice that exists between the disciplines of teaching and studio art, and I am inspired by artist/teachers such as Krzysztof Wodiczko and the late Joseph Beuys, who find no distinction between their roles as artist and teacher.

Beuys, in particular, was known as a prolific teacher in the traditional sense, as well as extending his pedagogical role to his performances such as "How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare", where he whispered the "secrets" of his work to the dead hare that he held in his arms (Borer, 1997). He described the materials of his sculptures, which included beeswax, fat, felt, sulphur, honey, blood, and dead animals as being in a state of flux; these materials were not exhibited *as* works of art, as much as supplying "the necessary space for his teaching, they provide[d] *matter for thought*. . .as a process of transformation- a primary space" (Borer, p. 15). Art, like teaching, can be directed towards social commentary, and ultimately, *transformation*.. Beuys stated that: "only art, that is to say conceived both as creative self-determination and as a process that engenders creation, is able to liberate us and lead us to an alternative society" (Beuys cited in Borer, p. 28). For Beuys, art, teaching, politics, and life were inseparable; he was a teacher, an artist, and an activist.

It seems natural that if art is to connect to everyday life, it must extend beyond the boundaries of the studio, museum, or gallery, and practice must be thought of as more than "art for art's sake". Art can be linked to life and "reenchanted", to use Gablik's (1991) term, by relating the field of visual art to other practices. Both Gablik and Kester (2004) refer to contemporary artists whose work exists between such diverse disciplines as visual art and social work, and visual art and ecology. There is even a term used to

describe such practices: "U.K.-based artist/organizers Ian Hunter and Celia Larner employ the term *littoral art* to evoke the hybrid or in-between nature of these practices" (Kester, 2004, p. 10).

The type of artwork that intrigues me would take into account the accessibility and connection of craft *and* the criticality of fine art. A collaborative piece that I am only beginning to work on that exists between the disciplines of craft and fine art is a digital self-portrait project designed for teenagers in conjunction with a youth center. The intention is to use the photographs as a way to initiate dialogue, so young people can be both "seen and heard". This type of project is informed by what Gablik (1995) refers to as "connective aesthetics"; art that is based on "vigorously active and impassioned engagement that would restore art's connectedness with the world after a century of vision-oriented, purist ideals" (Gablik, p. 17). Experimentation with digital photography is so prevalent today, as evident on such websites as MySpace.com, that it has been referred to as "a kind of folk art for the digital age" (Williams, 2006, p. 1). However, it also raises concerns for how youth portray themselves in public space versus private space, a distinction that seems to be blurred by the availability of such media. By starting with the accessibility of the everyday snapshot and working from what teenagers are already doing, these photographs can be a springboard for conversation about the difference between images (expressions of youth culture) and identity (who he or she is).

This kind of project requires a type of spontaneity and a willingness to listen to and learn from the participants. I already realize that I will be stepping into unfamiliar territory and must be open to working with others. While all the details of how this will unfold are yet undetermined, the animators at the center who work with youth on a daily basis and are more familiar with the issues that are relevant to their lives, already show a definite interest and will be involved. Kester (2004) uses the term "dialogical" to describe work based on communication and exchange, and notes that "we must understand the work of art as a process of communicative exchange rather than a physical object" (p. 90). However, in this case, I consider the digital self-portrait as the physical "trace" of the experience, as an integral part of the work that will be brought back to the youth

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center, rather than viewed in the isolation of a gallery. Kester (2004) explains that this type of work challenges the "banking" style of art (using Freire's term), in which the artist deposits expressive content into the object for the viewer to withdraw, and replaces it with a dialogical framework based on conversation. In this framework, the artist's point of view is also always shifting.

Although this project is in the early stages of planning, it integrates my role as a teacher and an artist; it is located between the practices of fine art, craft, social work, and education. It is a model of art that is far more socially-engaged than the work that I was doing prior to starting my research. The arts offer opportunities for creating dialogue; the arts can create a third space that inspires new conversations and learning. I am anxious to collaborate with others, to teach, and to listen and learn.

Possibilities for Research Methodology

When I began my research, I had no intention of using arts-based methods in my work. In fact, I was distrustful of "artful" approaches to research. Although I was accepting of narrative methods, it was only when I arrived at a point in the process of memory work that I was willing to try out visual methods. So even with my background in visual art, I had doubts about the validity of such approaches in academic research. I no longer do.

Collage has provided me with a methodical approach to retrieving memories that thrives on spontaneity and intuitiveness. As a visual method, it has offered an alternative approach in the research process that I don't believe would have been as successful through textual methods alone. By crafting a process that combines images and text, I have crafted a method that could provide possibilities for others pursuing research. I am convinced that the arts offer new ways of thinking and "seeing".

Possibilities for Future Research

I arrive at the conclusion of this study with more questions than when I began, which lends possibilities for future research. For one, reflecting on my personal

experiences related to art and education has made me re-evaluate my beliefs and assumptions about art. The informal setting of summer camp has offered an alternative view to what I was taught in my formal schooling and has convinced me that we could also learn from other informal sites of practice. For example, I was speaking to a woman who meets with 4-5 other women once a week in a "crafters' group". They each work on their own projects, and sometimes even just go for the company and don't do any work at all. There are no formal lessons; they get together for conversation and encouragement. I am certain that there is something to learn from people who get together *because they want to*. Alternative sites, such as the crafters' group, could serve as a valuable area for future studies in art education.

Another area where more research is certainly needed, is finding out what art teachers are actually doing in practice. Teachers' stories would be central to this type of project. Something that I have noticed at the last few art education conferences is that the same people attend certain sessions; those teaching in higher education often attend the more theoretical presentations, while the elementary and secondary teachers go for more hands-on demonstrations. There still seems to be a split between the theorists and practitioners. Certainly, there is something to be learned from each, and there needs to be more dialogue between these groups.

Finally, another area that could be promising for future research is exploring the pedagogical role of the artist through artist/teachers who see no difference between those roles. Although I explored the work of Joseph Beuys on a surface level, I know little about the work of Krzysztof Wodiczko or other contemporary artists who engage in art as a social practice. I believe that these artists not only challenge the boundaries of art, but by expanding the notion of art, have much to offer the future of art education.

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Appendix B

Dear Parents and Campers:

I am writing to introduce myself and to outline a research project that I would like to conduct at Camp Pine Lake this summer. I am currently a Ph.D. student in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill University in Montreal. More specifically, my research is in art education and will form the basis of my dissertation.

The 2002 summer session will be my fifth summer as the Arts and Crafts Director at Pine Lake. My training prior to coming to camp was a Masters of Fine Arts and I have concentrated on studio work for the past twenty years.

My research is an autobiographical inquiry that aims to examine my pedagogical beliefs in action. The purpose of the research is to articulate my intentions and through this process, reclaim and reinvent my values and goals as an art educator. I would like to record my teaching "in action" by videotaping the first class that I teach daily for the first three weeks of summer camp. A video camera will be set up on a tripod and if you do not wish your child to be taped, the camera angle can easily be diverted or the film can be edited. The same group of children will be invited back once a week to view the videotapes, and I will audio tape their feedback. I will also be photographing the works of art completed during the classes.

I will make every attempt to ensure the anonymity of all participants. All information will be for data analysis only. The experience of collaboration has been designed to be beneficial as well as enjoyable for the children. However, if at any time your child wishes to withdraw from this study, he or she may do so without penalty. If you choose to not have your child participate in the study, it will not affect their opportunities for selecting arts and crafts as their activity.

If you have any questions about the project, up until June 14th, you can contact me by e-mail at xxxxx or by telephone at xxxxx. After that date, I can be reached at camp at xxxxx.

Sincerely,

Pamela Markus

Please sign, detach, and return the consent form to me on the first day of camp.

I am willing to have my child, _____ , participate in this project which will involve: 1.) videotaping during the regular art room events, 2.) audio taping their responses to viewing the videotapes and, 3.) photographing their artwork.

_____ Signature of parent or guardian
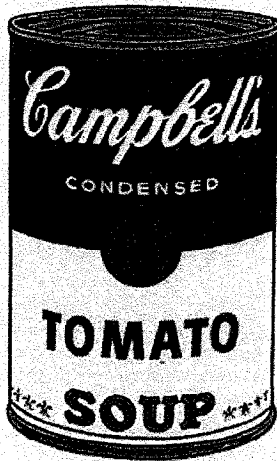_____ Signature of camper   Date_____

Piss Christ
Andres Serrano
1989

Note: From http://www.somthingunderstood.
Or/albums/fp-art-gallery/Andres_Serrano_
Piss_Christ.sized.jpg

America's Most Wanted
Vitaly Komar & Alexander Melamid
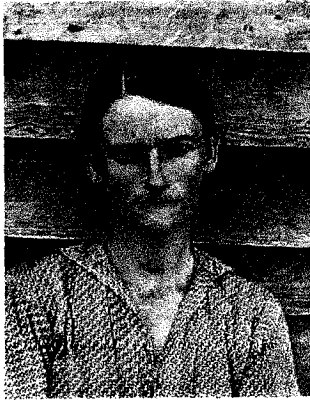1995-1997

Note: From http://cuppatea.org/18-
22april2000.html

Campbell's Soup Can
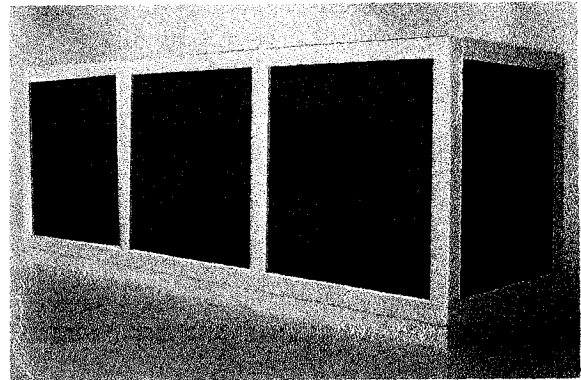Andy Warhol
1968

Note: From http://en.wikipedia.org/
wiki/Andy_Warhol

Trademarks
Vito Acconci
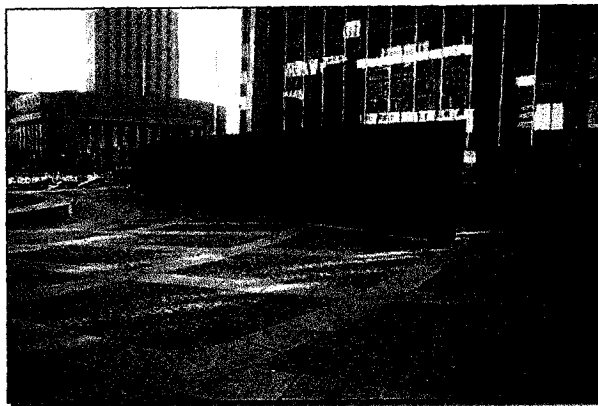1970

Note: From *Artforum,* November
1980, p.22

After Walker Evans
Sherrie Levine
1981

Note: From http://www.medenkunst
netz.de.sherrielevine/biography

The Physical Impossibility of Death in the
Mind of Someone Living
Damien Hirst
1991

Note: From http://www.grefsen.vgs.no/
Kunst/hirst.jpg

Tilted Arc
Richard Serra
1981

Note: From http://www.artslides.com
/gallery/images/85304.jpg

Appendix D

Banking system: The banking system of education suggests that the teacher hands over or "deposits" information in the learner who receives it passively (Freire, 2002).

Constructivism: A constructivist perspective points out that multiple versions of reality are constructed and that these realities are relative; dependent on the people constructing them. Constructivism places an emphasis on interpretation, with the goal being a more enriched construction than previously held (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Critical theory: Critical theory is viewed as a blanket theory, and it may include perspectives such as feminism and Marxism. This theory suggests that reality is historically determined and is shaped by "social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender factors" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.110). Critical theory suggests a dialogical, transactive interaction between researcher and subject.

Expressive speech: Expressive speech, a term referred to by James Britton, is used more by humans to shape their experience than to communicate to others. Words give form to thoughts and experience, helping to transform them into understanding and action. Expressive writing, as in journal writing, reveals the writer in a way and is close to his or her thought processes.

Teacher as Technician: The notion of teacher as technician emphasizes "the actions of teachers rather than their professional judgments and attempts to capture the activity of teaching as identifying sets of discrete behaviors reproducible from one teacher and one classroom to the next" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p.6). In other words, the concept implies that teachers simply act out a curriculum set by others.

Literary theory:
- Structuralism: Structuralism is based on the writings of Lévi-Strauss, Roland Barthes and de Saussure, believes that all human activity is constructed and consequently, the systems of organization are important. The analysis of texts focuses on the perceptions and descriptions of structures.
- Phenomenology: The phenomenologists, Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Gadamer argue that all realities must be treated as pure phenomena and this is the only absolute data from which we can begin. Everything not "immanent" to consciousness must be excluded.

- Feminism: The feminist approach views texts as the products of historical forces that can be analyzed by looking at the material conditions in which they were formed; feminism puts the emphasis on issues of gender.
- Marxism: Marxism, like feminism, as the products of historical forces that can be analyzed by looking at the material conditions in which they were formed; Marxism places attention on the dominant and repressed classes.
- Psychological: The application of the psychological principles of Freud and Lacan place an emphasis on the creative process, psychological types presented and the effect that they have on readers and on the writer's psyche. Jung, who also focused on psychological issues, was influential in archetypal or myth criticism which assumes that there is a collection of symbols, images, characters and motives that evoke similar responses in people, a "collective unconscious". Those who approach literary criticism from this perspective set out to identify these archetypal patterns and describe how they function in the text.
- Post-structuralism: Post-structuralism evolved as a reaction to structuralism, contesting the view of language as a stable, closed system. Deconstruction is based on Derrida's critique of structuralism and fits within this theoretical approach. Derrida's beliefs on deconstruction are often interpreted as "anything goes", ultimately questioning the possibility of a "knowable center" or a single way of reading a text.
- Reader-response: Reader response criticism suggests that the experience of reading a text is an active, constructive and cognitive process (Graham, 1991). The writings of A. Richards, Louise Rosenblatt, Walter Gibson, Norman Holland, Stanley Fish, Wolgang Iser and Robert James all contribute to this approach, but in slightly different ways. The common feature is that they all analyze the reader's role in the production of meaning. Reader response criticism sits at the opposite end of the spectrum from formalistic criticism that suggests that all information essential to the interpretation of a work is found *in* the work. Formalists analyze the text apart from its context.

Positivism: A positivist perspective suggests that there is a knowable reality that exist, and research within this framework can point to a "truth". It is associated with methodology that is experimental and controlled.

Postpositivism: Postpositivism assumes that there may be a reality out there, but that it is only "imperfectly apprehendable because of basically flawed human intellectual mechanisms" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.110). This perspective infers a modified version of experimental research within more natural settings.