CHAPTER 2

In Search of an Artistic Curriculum Identity

Richard D. Sawyer, Lida Dekker, and Melody Rasmor

Curriculum is one of the most widely experienced and variously interpreted phenomena of life. As a curriculum theorist, on the one hand, I [Rick Sawyer] see curriculum as embodying relational possibilities and contingent uncertainties. Curriculum theorists see curriculum as an opportunity born within the immediacy of collective transactions—the generativity of a moment. In this sense, curriculum expresses intergenerational discourses that are grounded in the past yet stretch into the future: they exist simultaneously before and after any individual narrative of any individual life. For curriculum implementers, on the other hand, it represents the clarity of design and the certainty of content. And for many planners, curriculum comes pre-packaged as decided representations, prescriptive methods, and future opportunities for credentials. Many curriculum planners, often those within professional programs such as education and nursing, use curriculum to promote a technical paradigm and professional objectivity and distance in their students.

R.D. Sawyer (✉)
Teaching and Learning, Washington State University, Vancouver, WA, USA

L. Dekker • M. Rasmor
College of Nursing, Washington State University, Vancouver, WA, USA

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016

R.D. Sawyer, J. Norris (eds.), *Interdisciplinary Reflective Practice through Duoethnography*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-51739-5_2

As a curriculum theorist working within a professional practice program, I have often sought to teach within embodied and experiential ways, often using an arts-based approach. However, I have experienced the tension found with conflicting theoretical and practical goals. In this paper, two nursing faculty in higher education and I explore via a trioethnography the tensions in our attempting to use arts-based approaches in our professional practice programs. The two nursing professionals are colleagues and were students of mine in a curriculum theory course in an Ed.D. program. Our specific focus is our use of aesthetic ways of knowing in the classroom, and dilemmas we've encountered in integrating art into professional practice programs.

Part One: The Curriculum Class Backstory

To introduce this paper, two stories are helpful. The first story took place four years ago. Two students, both colleagues, took a curriculum theory class that I taught. Part of my goal for this class was to shape curriculum conversations as generative spaces. In these spaces, I attempted to use a mix of theoretical frameworks and lived experience to create something critically innovative: the reconceptualization of social and environmental justice in a new key. In such complex conversations (Pinar, 2005), students mix theories (such as critical race theory, postfeminist theory, aesthetic and arts based theories, postcolonial theories, and neoliberal theory) with personal and cultural imaginative myopoethesis (ones' poetic and mythic sources of meaning), story, performance, and engagement. I sought a dynamic class text, animated by the soft collisions of our lives and worldviews and creating a process of heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981)—of meaning generation.

Thus curriculum theory has no boundaries between theory and life. Perhaps residing at the heart of curriculum theory are participant relationships—unexpected and generative lived experience. These curricular spaces involve personal and societal transformation and reflexivity. They also involve ethics and our critique of power dynamics not just inside and outside the classroom, but within our curriculum experiences in relation to power structures and their underlying genealogies (Doutrich, Arcus, Dekker, Spuck, & Pollock-Robinson, 2012).

Before teaching a curriculum theory class, I consider how in-class experience may mirror the complexity of practice in the field. And I ask myself,

how can the class transcend the boundaries of the course to become an embodied performance of curriculum theory? My challenge for myself then is to "walk the talk" with my students. To construct the class as reflexive pedagogy, we engage in story to ideally promote deep personal (and collective) reflection, changed perspectives, and new orientations of self. These stories are on multiple narrative levels, such as individual, national, international (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Sawyer, 2010). In these stories, we locate ourselves in in-between spaces between self and other as well as multi-textual interplays (e.g., self/art/idea/narrative tense/academic discourse/place). Aoki (1993) discusses this sense of "self/other" as "one that intertwines the self as subject and the other as subjectivity—an intersubjectivity, which, in the hermeneutic language of Hans Georg Gademer understands it as a fusion of horizons, an intersubjectivity interfused into a 'we'" (Aoki, 1993, p. 265). It is the "improvised line of movement growing from the middle of … conversation" (Aoki, 1993, p. 268).

To position students ontologically within curriculum theory, I asked them to do a duoethnography as an optional assignment. My goal was for this project to generate transactional movement between the class, the assignments, and the topic of the class—curriculum theory.

In the second part of the paper, Lida and Melody examine this story and discuss a duoethnography performance they did in class. Here, they present an excerpt from their duoethnography on "Nursing an Artful Practice: Finding the Aesthetic Groundings of our Practice." This paper was a central assignment of the course, one which I intended to become a site of reflexivity for myself and the students. In this inquiry, Lida and Melody explore the separation of their "artistic" and "professional" sides. This exploration led them to examine how their artistic sides, subordinated by current duties and responsibilities as faculty in a graduate nursing preparation program, were still present in their lives, contributing to their professional behavior. As part of this exploration, they (and I) sought to move beyond recognition to engage in and/or articulate transformation: how to reintegrate art into their professional lives, and basically reground their present experience back into the rich soil of their artistic selves.

The second story took place after the course ended. Lida, Melody, and I got together and talked about their duoethnography, using it as an artifact and springboard to examine tensions we experience in integrating the arts into professional practice courses. Each of us is an artist, who until

recently has deferred to the normative demands of our professions in education and nursing and partitioned art outside our classroom spaces. From their duoethnography, we surfaced and explored the following questions: why have we resisted using the arts in our own teaching practice? And, what are tensions involved in our personal positionality in relation to the use of the arts in our classes? These questions are central to our practice as well as to curriculum theory.

Part Two: Nursing an Artful Practice: Finding the Aesthetic Groundings of our Practice

Both Lida and Melody are advanced practicing nurse professionals who currently work at a university in nursing education. With 31 years of nursing experience, Lida became a registered nurse in 1980 at age 33, a Certified Nurse-Midwife in 1987, a college instructor in 2003, and a nursing program director in 2014. With 34 years of nursing experience, Melody became a registered nurse in 1977 at age 21 and an FNP in 1982, receiving her MS in 1982 and going on to teach college in 1998. They both received their doctorates in education in 2014. As young adults they were also both artists. However, as they pursued their careers in the healthcare profession and in teaching, the artistic part of their identities began to recede from their professional experience.

Melody and Lida: We presented our duoethnography in class on 13 October 2011. The presentation took approximately 20 minutes with an additional 10 minutes for discussion. The excerpt here is a discussion of the presentation, including some of the slides, notes and class impressions from the activity. The overall discovery process for the duoethnography, however, involved considerable dialogue over several months. Our offices are across the hall from each other and much of the dialogue took place in that hall space.

Lida: To edit the slides for the presentation we took the chronological order out and made it more of a story, with the visual impact telling the story rather than words.

Melody: In the presentation we juxtaposed the slides. In the paper, we first examined our backgrounds in relation to being artists.

Sixties Art Expressions: Artistic Roots

Compound Woman

Lida: As young women, we both had a strong love of art. This drawing is from a time that I lived in Africa in 1976. It's a sketch I did called "Compound Woman." We lived in a worker's compound. The face in the drawing was of one person and the body was of another. The woman is nursing her child. I see the image as a metaphor for the complexity of who we are in our profession. It's a symbol of my career focus on women's health and women's experience and also a metaphor for our collaboration.

Melody: Well, I think that the drawing that Lida did was beautiful. It's an African mother with a child from her 1976 African sketch diary. And this was before she became a midwife later on.

Sixties Expression

Lida

Melody

Lida: We examined these two images—"the sixties art expressions"—and thought, what happened to that person, what happened to that artist? Here we had our sort of hippy days, where we were the artists. We thought, where did she go?

Melody: At the time, I made and sold wire sculptures in art fairs. In this picture, I'm doing sculpture from wire that my dad brought home from the factory where he worked. I'm in a wheelchair.

Lida: You were in the wheelchair because you thought it was cool—right?

Melody: Right—it was an antique wheelchair. I'm not really disabled. I used to sit in this wheelchair, just for effect. It's interesting that I became a nurse in occupational health! Now I wonder if people bought my art because I was in the wheelchair.

Lida: And for me, in the 60s, this was my art. You'll see in the following picture that it is very different from the flat postcards that my great aunts and I were painting when I was young.

We both found that in our early development that by taking off our uncomfortable shoes and putting on hiking boots, we felt much more grounded on the earth and could move and express ourselves more freely. We were both influenced in the seventies and the eighties by the women's movement.

Melody: We were both passionate and burning bras and wearing overalls. Once in our talk I had an "ah hah" moment when I was describing myself as conservative and Lida told me—oh no—that was the feminist movement.

Lida: Because Melody was saying to me, well, you're sort of a feminist, aren't you—as if it's a dirty word. And I said, "Well honey, what do you think that was that you were doing?"

Melody: We looked at these pictures and thought, we can start doing art again.

Lida's Early Years

Lida: In this picture, I am sitting at my grandmother's feet. The other ladies are relatives in the painting class together. This is me as a young child. This is my grandmother, who was really my rock. And this is my mom, and this was Mr. Cook, the painting teacher. I loved the plaid and I loved my grandmother. In later years, after my parents divorced, my mother, brothers and I moved back to this house and lived in this third floor room. The ladies lost their studio so had to move their painting to their own bedrooms on the second floor of this large house. That's me, the little girl in the corner.

Melody: So then, Lida, do you want to share what's really going on?

Lida: So they are all at the easels painting, but they are all painting the same picture from the same postcard. And so it was just the sort of thing that lovely ladies did and to me—I was just appalled that they all painted the same picture from a flat postcard. I felt like painting should be something that was done from life. So, eventually, my first degree was in drawing and painting and printmaking. And I came to that as a rebellion against this image.

Melody: During our presentation the class was invited to participate in interpreting this photo. Here are some of our classmate's observations:

- "This looks like a metaphor of curriculum."
- "Are their women segregated from the men?"
- "I see multiple generations coming together."
- "I like the aprons, the plaid, the beautiful old building."
- "It seems as if the child is trusted to be good, to be included in the adult activity."

Lida: Now when I see it …, well, when Melody said that they look so privileged and so … so … cultured I had thought, well, this is nothing, but obviously it was something. And I was surprised when one of my classmates pointed out that I must have been very trusted to be allowed to be there as such a small child. I must have behaved myself.

Since seeing that picture again I actually went back and found a painting that I had done when I was five—a really good rendering of a dog. I reflected that I had … had always been this advanced student and had always been under personal pressure to produce. In art school during the Vietnam War, the student protests about the bombing of Cambodia directly affected me and I was having a kind of crisis in life … [an] intellectual crisis where I just couldn't stand to read or write anymore because everything I had been reading was about men fighting wars and it was like, why should that be history? That whole time period was just blowing up and my brain was blowing up and I thought oh look, when I was five I thought maybe I could find refuge and development in art. And then when I saw that picture again I realized that my grandmother must have done the really good part of that. So it wasn't me at all because I really had no talent for drawing. It was a powerful moment. I'm artistic and creative and I can scribble and scribble until something emerges but I'm not a renderer … I can make lots of lines until I find that some work. It wasn't who I was at all.

Melody: You really think that?

Lida: I don't know. But, what we discovered in looking at our backgrounds—and you don't always go back and examine what motivated you—we both discovered that we did not want to be like our families.

Melody's Early Years

Melody: Here I am as a baby on my grandmother's lap. My aunt and mom have big horn-rimmed glasses and the men are in another room playing cards.

Lida: And I thought, this is really interesting. It looked like a bunch of society woman and— I thought—oh, what lovely ladies. They've got lipstick on and nail polish and they are so nicely dressed. I just thought that they looked like lovely, glamorous role models. And then to hear Melody's story.

Melody: Of course the reality was very different. Your picture reminds me of a newspaper picture of my parents from when I was a little girl. In the picture, my parents are still fairly young, happy—smiling—and both looking at the same undefined spot away from the camera. My mom has a "sixties sweater" on and glasses. There is a glass of beer in front of her. My father wears a wool cap with a ball at the end and a large plaid shirt. He is holding his glass of beer. Between them is a nearly empty pitcher of beer. The walls have wood paneling. The caption mentioned something like, "Al and Jane have been coming to this tavern for 28 years." That was the blue-collar life that I experienced. So, I would think that we were economically … poor.

Lida: So, for me, to have Melody look at me and my life, and see things that I had not ever seen, even though I had been deeply reflective in my whole existence, but she could say—Oh, I kind of see it this way. Like she would have a completely different interpretation of my experience and it made me realize that there was a different interpretation beside my own that could very well have been my experience. I mean, there was the experience—what had happened to me, but that experience was only in my mind through my interpretation of it and if I could accept someone else's interpretation of it, it suddenly becomes a totally different experience. Like that whole dialogue that happened around the picture of me as a little girl holding the painting with my great aunts and my grandmother, and there are all those women in the plaid attic and the class saying, "Oh, you must have been really trusted and well behaved, because they are letting you be there." And it never even occurred to me to interpret that as somehow a positive about myself. Before, it was just like, "Well, this was my weird childhood."

Melody: Well, the other piece to that, what this picture really got me doing was to think about my own grandmother and how the images would reflect something back in my childhood or my history, because that's what I think is cool about duoethnography, in that you can look at it and go, "How can I relate to this? How is this story meaningful to me?" And the fact that you were an artist—that was cool, too. Just the fact that you guys got together and painted. I would get in trouble for

painting. It would be like, "You've got to get out there and play outside." I would go to my grandmother's house and it would be like a totally different experience. It would be like cows and mud pies and I'd play with my brother. But it wasn't so much like playing with paintings.

Artist or Nurse

Lida: So that's why it seemed to present these images first said more than words. This is what we were seeking. And then this is what we have lived with—the dichotomy—artist or nurse.

Artist	**Nurse**	
		If you just take Florence by herself—she is what she is—She was a brilliant woman and she did courageous things and she changed how people are treated in healthcare for generations to come. And for both of us, there was a point in our lives where we needed to earn a living. And, we also had this strong urge to express ourselves creatively. And so, this dichotomy represented us. This was the choice that we had to make.

Melody: Of course, nursing won. And so I started out my nursing career right at 21.

Lida: I was actually in my thirties, my early thirties, when I became a nurse and we had our little uniforms with the little piping …

Melody: … and the caps. And it's so different now. I just remember one of my nursing days at the army hospital where we would have to get down on our knees and make sure our uniforms touched the ground. We had our fingernails inspected to make sure we had no nail polish. No lipstick. And now, of course, we see all kinds of things in nursing.

Lida: I think part of our dialogue was, what did nursing rob us of? And yet—it's been our lives. It's been our careers and I think what we came to were positive aspects of our accomplishments. What Rick asked us to do in the duoethnography was, "What did I learn from your stories and what's in my story from your perspective that I don't see?" And so—one of the most powerful things that we discovered was that we both had things that we thought we had to hide. For me, I actually spent 17 years in the San Francisco Bay Area studying at the Berkeley Psychic Institute and I gained a lot of esoteric skills that might actually frighten people. And I'm not that upfront about it so just divulging this here right now is challenging for me. I actually helped to create a freestanding birth center where we taught meditation prenatally. And these women would be surrounded by other women in meditation as they gave birth. So there was a tremendous amount of spiritual support and experience. So that was an important part of my background and a huge part of who I am. And I thought that when I told Melody that that she would just never speak to me again.

Melody: No …

Lida: And of course that is totally not the case.

Melody: And I realized that I don't have to hide that I had been in the military. I didn't think that you would accept that.

Lida: Oh, Melody!

The other thing was, as a midwife, I had to hold so much in my brain for a year, for every client, all the possible things that could go wrong. It was exhausting. And, coming full circle—this is how we started our dialogue—I said, nursing is just so exhausting. I just had to hold in so much, for every patient, you know, for a year, and you do, as a midwife. And then it turned out that Melody had a totally different experience.

Melody: I said, I don't see my practice like that. I only have 15 minutes with each client. In Family Practice you have to be "a jack of all trades and master of none." Remember,

babies are nine months, so when Lida said that, I was like, well, I don't see my patients that way. In urgent care and family practice, you don't get a lot of time. And there's no way I could put all those people—you know, 200 people, 300 people—on a medical panel and try to keep track of what's going on for nine months. And then I thought of when Lida and I were trying to work on a couple of projects together and I'm like—Lida, we've got to get this done. I mean, we've got to *move on*. So—that—in itself was a really powerful insight. And Lida does a lot of research on reflection in practice, in nursing practice (Dekker, 2014). And then I thought, we don't typically take time to really look at our practice.

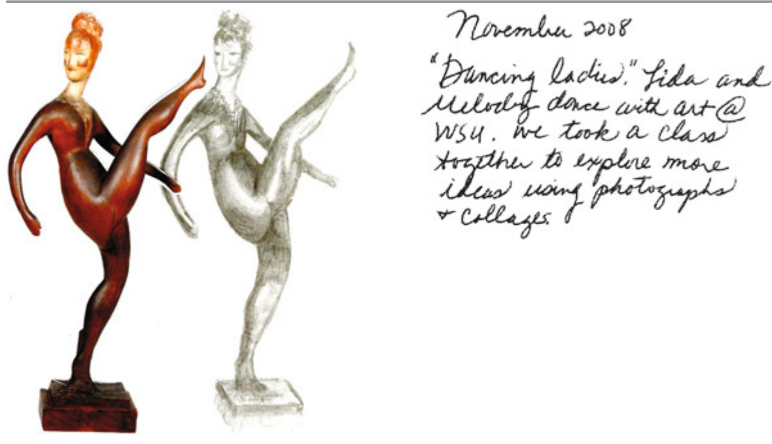
We also learned that we do not have to compete. We have different ways of knowing and different talents that make the sharing of this journey rich. We collaborated several days a week by running across the hall to share stories and artifacts. Each exchange resulted in new insights about the dialogue process, about each other and about ourselves.

Lida: Today we are amazed at how our psyches have been freed from unnecessarily hiding of our whole complex selves. Neither of us feels ashamed nor fearful of revealing our "secrets." I was struck in comparing our stories that we had different ways of thinking, different organization, different experiences, similar experiences, yet a connectivity.

Melody: I guess I decided to … reconcile—to make amends with myself that the body is art and I'm going to be seeing lots of bodies and that the human spirit is another piece of artistic energy so it's kind of like make the best of your situation …. I'm so pleased and privileged to hear people's stories: they are art.

Dancing Women

Melody: We took an art class together, and we saw ourselves as two ladies dancing together.



Melody: In the class I did this drawing/collage of two ladies dancing. We added handwriting to the image, because part of the duoethnography presentation for us was to express pictures with handwriting and text, the interchange of images with language to seem like an artifact. We wanted it to look like this, as if from a sketchbook.

Lida: We were thinking about Pauline Sameshima's (2009) book about the women on drugs with diaries and pictures. We wanted to do something similar to look like an artifact.

Melody: This was the metaphor that represented that Lida and I became aware that we were both interested in art, but were dancing around each other because of differences we perceived. Now we are dancing together in the duoethnography to create a pictorial reference and explore our own stories. We are now sharing ideas, collaborating and dancing more together instead of dancing around. We support each other in exploring new ways to include our art into our nursing.

Lida: This was and is an ongoing spiral of interacting, sharing, presenting, reflecting, unpacking new insights and evolving new interpretations of themes. And now, as we examine our practice, it's more human.

Unpacking our timelines and our images of nursing and art helped us to see what now seems obvious, that we are artists, even though our families did not support that direction for our lives. We have lived and supported ourselves as nurses, and now we are integrating our personal experience of the deep significance of aesthetic expression into our teaching. The goal is to help our students develop and liberate their skills as holistic beings.

Part Three: Inside Lida's Office

Lida, Melody, and Rick discuss their duoethnography and its discourses that help Rick to uncover his own stories. As we discussed their original paper and its implications for our practice, we sat in Lida's office in the nursing building on our campus. The building was angular and precise. From its windows you could see smoke-like clouds drifting from the top of Mt. Hood and feel the specter of a future eruption. Sitting in her visually rich office—stacks of books, exercise equipment, and drawings filling the space—I thought about how place itself is a worthy topic of a duoethnography (Agosto, Marn, & Ramiriz, 2015).

Rick: It's been about four years since we were part of the curriculum studies class. To me, more than a class it was an experiment in how to experience a course in a grounded and embodied way, in a way that promoted personal reconceptualization and reflexivity.

Melody: It was about curriculum coming alive. In that class, I considered you a curriculum pioneer.

Rick: Wow! Thanks! Well, it's interesting when you think of school curriculum coming alive. It's often the opposite. I'm wondering about how we integrate our own art into our teaching and where the boundaries are for us. You know, we are supposed to bracket ourselves out—to be objective and scientific in our professional practice programs.

Melody: Yes—I teach physical assessment to nurse practitioners and that's where I use the digital stories to try and empower my nurse practitioners who are going into healthcare to really listen to stories. I have my students do a digital story,

but I never showed my own digital story to anyone in my class … I didn't want to set the bar too high and also I think there was a lot of pushback when people heard they had to do a digital story. Students expect to be pushed in art classes to do different things … But in a nursing class? For a couple of students, it was too much for them (Rasmor, 2014).

As a part of professional education, we are taught you shouldn't make it in any way about yourself. It should all be neutral; do not impose yourself.

Lida: We examined our own artistic selves in our class duoethnography. How about you? Are you still making photography which you show in class?

Rick: Well, that's a good question. I am, but in my own photography now I usually take pictures of other people's art. Even though I bring my photographs to class, they're photography of other people's art, for example graffiti in Mexico and Palestine. And … I hadn't really thought of that. I wonder what is blocking me from bringing in my own work. It may be that for me, personally, art has grown from vulnerability.

Melody: That's interesting … Do you think that art makes you vulnerable? Or that vulnerability makes you an artist?

Rick: It must be connected to my past. When I first started to take pictures—to do photography as art—I was in high school in a photography class. This was the time of the Vietnam War and there were huge protests. I went to a conservative public school in Seattle. I was one of a handful of students in my school active in those protests. Perhaps for this reason, my teachers were indifferent to me, basically tried to ignore me. Almost all of the teachers—with the exception of one student teacher in an English class and an art teacher—all I would say—and maybe I'm putting too positive light on it—that I was "different," and—perhaps here I flatter myself—a little "dangerous." Maybe I'm stretching things here to think "the establishment" may have considered me dangerous, but it was a fragile time and I clearly embodied protest and a changing system. Here is a picture of me from high school.

Rick at seventeen

I have long hair, a bomber jacket over the shoulder, white jeans, and "desert" boots. My head is cocked slightly yet my expression is sad. I'm looking directly at the camera—as if with a message for the viewer, perhaps a request to witness the violence and killing in the world. This picture was definitely was not in my high school yearbook; if it had been it would have contrasted sharply to pictures of my peers. The photo of the student members of the "Men's Club," for example, is striking. They are dressed in black dinner jackets and black bowties, standing at a bar (at seventeen) at an elegant restaurant or cocktail lounge. It is as if they are auditioning for membership in the "Rat Pack" with Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., and Dean Martin. While I graduated in the early 1970s, it's hard to date the pictures of the other students in the year book. Cloaked in white privilege, they could be from the early 1950s. Yet, the times "they were a-changing" and I represented a break—and, maybe, the threat of the empire's demise.

Lida: And you were taking pictures at this time?

Rick: Yes, I was taking pictures of things—buildings and acts of resistance, but not of demonstrators. But the person who taught the photography class knew that I was one of the "bad kids," which is actually how I heard myself described. For example, I would wear a black arm band to protest the war and this teacher was mean to me. I think he had been a military person and seemed to consider my existence an affront to his values and way of life. I was shy at the time and certainly did not "act out" in class. He would just avoid and ignore me, as if I wasn't there.

This was when I found that I loved taking pictures. It was like journaling. At the time, it was thought that "the medium was the message" and the medium had to be safe. Even back then,

I thought of art as critique and a subversive act and in that bigoted setting, a critique made you stand out and—for me—standing out made me vulnerable. I have to admit, though, I enjoyed being out of sync with the culture of the school and was very happy to work around the bigots. But now in retrospect, I do realize that at least in my mind, my pictures made me vulnerable. The act of photography for me was double coded: it both gave me voice and agency, but left me vulnerable. But back to the photography class, it's sad, because I could have loved it and started to find my voice and identity. Instead, it made me want to hide myself but show my art.

Lida: Can you describe the pictures you took back then?

Rick: My first pictures were of people I knew who had a daring presence. In one picture at my high school, one person I knew was trying to strike another person with a stick. They are in the street and engaged in a violent dance. The picture was blurry and in black and white. There is tension and passion in the picture. But most of the pictures somehow highlight human-made environments and human constructions. The pictures encourage the viewer to deconstruct the images. Eventually, what I began to experience with art was … a certain hope for change … and in a sense, personal efficacy.

And I definitely wanted to guard this happiness—to keep it on an island. So, early on through this process, I began to construct a dichotomy between art and more normative discourses. It was a way for me not to separate but to critique. The problem was, now that I think about it, I slowly became part of the very establishment that I sought to change. And I think that at that point, I didn't want to subvert and destroy my art through my work in teacher education—an inherently conservative endeavor, even with some disobedience on the edges.

And I now I find it challenging to reconcile my art and my work—to construct art that meaningfully critiques what I do. I can bring in photographs of resistance in Mexico or Palestine, which I do and discuss that resistance, but I still keep this critique separate from my own work.

Melody: I find it challenging to use digital storytelling in my classes, but for slightly different reasons. In the physical assessment courses I teach, it's pretty much black and white, like anatomy.

It's like physical assessment doesn't change … physical assessment is physical assessment. But to make it more of an individual process is challenging in some of the things that I teach, so I appreciate how Lida uses art in her classes.

Lida: For me, I was first validated to use art in my own work in an adult learning theory class. She let me include some of my poetry into my final paper. And it was so validating because I had shared my poetry with maybe only five other people in the world before then. Just having that part of me honored in an academic setting gave me this commitment to—OK, I'm going to dig out from under all of this suppression and find a way to help my students find parts of themselves that are buried.

There is a part of nursing education where you have to present a professional demeanor. But, at the same time, we are teaching students to not be judgmental, to really look at authentically accepting and having compassion and not blaming their clients for being ill.

Melody: Personally, I don't like the feeling of missing part of myself. When I worked at the Veteran's Administration, I was constantly taking art classes. It was as if they filled my soul. And then when I came to this university, I took some art classes with Lida, but then I stopped taking them and it's kind of like falling off the wagon for your soul and you need to get back and start doing art.

Rick: It's a dilemma, right? You need to know that you're different and that gives you your agency and your little island of competence and you don't want anyone to take that but when it's integrated into everything you lose that island of agency and safety. But by keeping it separate, you're chopping off some of the other, more vital parts of your life. It's tough.

And when we think about professional preparation, we want people to learn to read themselves and to not just do things that are narcissistic and self-referential. We want to encourage empathy and self-understanding. The arts fit in here.

Melody: Being able to put art in my classroom has been a big challenge and it wasn't until I took a philosophy of education class that I saw the digital story as an assignment and I thought there are all these people—principals and superintendents—who

are getting doctorates. They are well prepared and they are allowing their stories to be presented in a doctoral program. How cool was that? And even when I went to Berkeley to see the Digital Story Center there was a lady who drew her story, so she was not so much into photography but instead used different avenues to express her story. And that's one of the wonderful things about having these assignments: they ask people to bring in different talents and expressions, and then other people appreciate those people in a different way and they create an unexpected community of learners—just like the duoethnography did for Lida and me.

Melody: Well, do you see a big difference between when you didn't try to integrate art into your courses and when you think about it now?

Rick: Well, I think so. When I didn't do it I was just trying to … trying to honor what I thought was the curriculum and what was the content and then I realized I really wanted to start experimenting with knowing the content. And now I realize it's just about us. We are the content. And how we interpret the content, so that has been this huge switch from just using it to learn the content to realizing that we construct the content and we make the content and by using different artistic representations it starts to interact in lots of different complex ways.

Lida: So, using art in our classes, we are pushing a boundary there—a student/teacher barrier— and we are asking students to develop a professional nursing persona at the same time we are asking them to be authentic and real. If we are going to ask them to share their art, then we need to be vulnerable and show our art as we are asking them to do.

Rick: Now I want to integrate it more into my work, but wonder how to do that. You said something that was really good, Lida … you said …

Lida: "Digging out from under the …. just really the lies that are piled on top of it that just takes that initial rejection or perception of being rejected and then there's protection." With our duoethnography, the theme that really stood out for me was what we thought we had to hide and to protect. Because that was one of the most profound parts of it for me. There was

Melody who represented to me in my life the mainstream by having her military background and being …. I just thought well she has the status and I have to hide my hippy background, and Melody felt like she had to hide the very thing that made me nervous.

Rick: And I now—using your lens—am becoming aware of the same subtext—one that was implicit and unstated, that I had to hide part of who I am. Even though there is clear value to the use of arts in teacher education, and an arts-based critique is central to unfreezing perceptions.

When I think about integrating my own art into my practice, I keep coming back to your study. You said something helpful for me, Lida. You said that you saw that Melody's interpretation of your experiences was different from your own interpretation. You then began to change your perception of yourself. You realized that your interpretation is just that—but it could have been a completely different one giving you a different relationship to your experience.

Lida: Right. Whatever happened, happened, but it's your interpretation that frames how you experience it. We were operating under the assumption that we had to hide something, but, well, it's what we THOUGHT we had to hide. We didn't know whether or not we really had to hide it. It's what we thought we had to hide.

Melody: And this is difficult because as an artist you can be self-expressed. You don't have to be hiding.

Lida: In fact, you're just seeking to reveal as much as you can.

Melody: Yeah—to have people understand the message.

Rick: Well, that's interesting. When you think of the artist as someone who wants to express. She's not hiding—well the artist is hiding something—but that's about expression. But then when you prepare to become a nurse, then you have to have the demeanor and a wall—a professional self which by itself excludes and hides. It's a wall around who you are.

Melody: I used to call it the "nose zone," 18 inches from my nose and if people got too close, you are backing up. The nose zone, the no zone. It's like, you can't come into this space because this is my personal space, so I kept people farther away. People

used to make jokes about my personal space. And I don't know if it's like … and they talk about when people become obese, too, like that's a protective shield. You keep people at a distance.

In nursing, you're dealing with people's bodies in the most intimate way—total strangers. Whatever kind of nursing you're in, at some point you are going to be dealing with something that is the most intimate part of them, either physically or emotionally or psychologically and at the same time, you have to maintain a boundary.

Melody: And in our practice, I was thinking, when I see these catastrophic cases that I have to manage, hearing their stories helps me to manage and encompass the trauma. And it's also just finding the worth of another person valuable enough to go through with using art in the classroom. Intimacy, compassion, and the use of art are based on valuing other people.

Rick: And it's probably also about the capacity to understand another person in a way that doesn't take anything away, colonize, or diminish that person.

Lida: It's difficult … It's like a …

Melody: … dance. It's like a dance.

Summary Reflection

Engaged in dialogue in duoethnography, inquirers generate "dialogic imagination" (Bakhtin, 1981). Their dialogues consist of not only conversation, but also transtemporal interactions. On a personal level, the juxtaposition of these dialogues allowed me greater insight into my experience and the dilemmas framing this inquiry. I'm first struck by the difference between my own more individualistic notion of the use of arts in my practice and teaching and Lida's and Melody's. They are describing a more collaborative and collective approach. For example, Lida describes one of her epiphanies as "the goal is to help our students develop and liberate their skills as holistic beings." At the same time, Melody comes to see the body of the other as art. While both discussed holistic approaches in their teaching, I was exploring how I myself could improve or increase my own use of art in the classroom. Examining my past, I can now pinpoint a genesis of this more individualistic impulse. This genesis may stem

from my vision of self as the subversive individual artist critiquing society with his camera, but it's rooted in a perceived frustration at my lack of growth in this role. And my narrative here is very consistent with the ripe North American metanarrative of the strong individual forging and being rewarded for choosing a singular path. Instead of contributing to an ongoing genealogy of meritocracy, my new goal becomes the addition of my voice and collaboratively orchestrating and contributing to a collective text of dialogic art in the classroom. Bill Pinar called curriculum the unfolding of "complex conversations" (Pinar, 2005). With an awareness of this joint construction of curriculum, I am also contributing to curriculum theory.

Even though in my discussion with Melody and Lida I at times emphasized the values of the collective voice in curriculum, what I am now realizing is that for me, this realization was not lived: it was voiced, but not embodied. I can now go back and examine one of my comments from a conversation with them in a more critical light:

> *Rick: I think that for a lot of people it's hard to understand … to realize … that curriculum is not something that we just implement and that it's not just something from the outside but that working with teachers, it's experiential. It's who we really are and people have a hard time thinking—who am I?—because we want to be deeply connected and constructive and so when you bring in the arts people start to see that you can interpret something—say though—photography—you know we do look at something from different ways and see that that is the curriculum and it is connected to who I am and starts to let me see it in more complex and layered ways.*

I can now rewrite this rambling sentence more succinctly as the following:

> *It is difficult for many people, myself included, to perceive of curriculum as not just implemented material. Instead, it is an experiential and collectively lived text. And within this text, it is the dialogues created by collective voices that provide a more critical and diverse lens for all of us.*

It is interesting for me to now recognize a central tension in my reluctance to use more art in the classroom: an individualistic approach to art contradicted my view of curriculum as collaborative and inherently democratic engagement. New possibilities now open for me for the use of art in the classroom and the development of an aesthetic curriculum identity.

Conclusion

In this paper, three interdisciplinary curriculum scholars explored the generative helix of duoethnography and curriculum as we put forth our different views of aesthetic curriculum in relation to our practice. Here we considered curriculum both as text as well as textual mirror. Curriculum gives us, as inquirers, multiple theoretical frames to examine our unfolding lives. It provides space to recognize our positionality, offering a counterbalance to normativity. And it turns space into meaningful place (Sawyer & Norris, 2015). In this inquiry, we considered how curriculum holds the power for dialogic imagination, regeneration and change. The collective artistic engagement by a class is a generative act, a transformative moment of curriculum in flight. In this movement, students, teachers, the milieu, and the human soul mix together to create something new in the world and in themselves. Within this curriculum inquiry, we are dancing to a new tune.

References

Agosto, V., Marn, T., & Ramiriz, R. (2015). Biracial place walkers on campus. A trioethnography of culture, climate, and currere. *International Review of Qualitative Research, 8*(1), 109–126.

Aoki, T. T. (1993). Legitimating lived curriculum: Toward a curricular landscape of multiplicity. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 8*(3), 255–268.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination*. Four essays. Austin: The University of Texas Press.

Connelly, M. F., & Clandinin, D. J. (1988). *Teachers as curriculum planners: Narratives of experience*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Dekker, L. (2014). *Informing nursing education: The meaning and experience of cultural safety as expressed by nurses in the Pacific Northwest*. Pullman, WA: Washington State University.

Doutrich, D., Arcus, K., Dekker, L., Spuck, J., & Pollock-Robinson, C. (2012). Cultural safety in New Zealand and the US: Looking at a way forward together. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing, 23*, 143–150. doi:10.1177/1043659611433873.

Pinar, W. (2005). Curriculum. In S. J. Farenga, B. A. Joyce, & D. Ness (Eds.), *Encyclopedia on education and human development*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe Publisher.

Rasmor, M. L. (2014). *The implementation of digital story telling in nurse practitioner education*. Doctoral dissertation, Washington State University.

Sameshima, P. (2009). *Climbing the ladder with Gabriel: Poetic inquiry of a methamphetamine addict in recovery*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
Sawyer, R. D. (2010). Curriculum and international democracy: A vital source of synergy and change. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, 26*(1), 22–37.
Sawyer, R. D., & Norris, J. (2015). Hidden and null curricula of sexual orientation. *International Review of Qualitative Research, 8*(1), 5–26.