

The Art Room: Reflecting on My Multiple Roles in the Creation of Art Educational
Videos for Children

Zachary Kenny

A Thesis
in
The Department
of
Art Education

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts (Art Education) at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

August 2012

© Zachary Kenny, 2012

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY**School of Graduate Studies**

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: Zachary Kenny

Entitled: The Art Room: Reflecting on My Multiple Roles in the Creation of Art
Educational Videos for Children

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (Art Education)

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with
respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the final Examining Committee:

____Kathleen Vaughan_____ Chair

____Richard Lachapelle_____ Examiner

____Lorrie Blair_____ Examiner

____Kathleen Vaughan_____ Supervisor

Approved by

____David Pariser_____

Chair of Department or Graduate Program Director

____Catherine Wild_____

Dean of Faculty

__August 28__ 2012

ABSTRACT

The Art Room: Reflecting on My Multiple Roles in the Creation of Art Educational Videos for Children

Zachary Kenny

This research creation project uses the methodology of reflective practice as presented by Donald Schön (1983), with adaptations regarding the production of a creative project as proposed by Steven Scrivener (2000) and with the inclusion of active documentation as presented by Nancy De Freitas (2002). As a reflective practitioner, I examine how the roles of artist, producer, researcher, teacher and entertainer contribute to the creation of art educational videos designed for children ages 9-12. The project consists of three research cycles, each with the focus of producing a short, 10-20 minute, episode of *The Art Room*.

Table of Contents

List of Figures.....	v
Episode Guide.....	vi
Introduction.....	1
Background to the Question.....	3
Project Goals.....	5
Literature Review	Artist-producer..... 8
	Teacher-entertainer.....15
Methodology and Procedures	Methodology.....27
	Data Sets..... 36
	Procedures..... 39
	Research Cycle.....40
Discussion and Analysis	Introduction.....45
	Summary of Research.....45
	Cycle One: Artist-Producer.....51
	Cycle Two: Researcher..... 57
	Cycle Three: Teacher-Entertainer.... 65
Conclusions.....	77
Significance of the Research.....	85
References.....	88

List of Figures

Fig. 1. A cereal box and a styrofoam tray get <i>The Art Room</i> treatment.....	3
Fig. 2. Video still of working on a mind-map.....	6
Fig. 3. The CTW (or ‘Sesame Workshop’) model.....	10
Fig. 4. Challenge vs. skill diagram.....	20
Fig. 5. Material experimentation with a plastic book coil.....	30
Fig. 6. Project concept mind-map.....	41
Fig. 7. Graphical representation of research cycle.....	44
Fig. 8. Video still from memory camera segment from episode 1.....	51
Fig. 9. Video still from ice sculptures segment from episode 1.....	55
Fig. 10. Video still from a reflection-in-action session.....	57
Fig. 11. Video still from a reflection-in-action session.....	59
Fig. 12. Initial sketches for Ricky the Recycling Rat.....	67
Fig. 13. The basic mechanic used for Ricky, presented by Jim Henson.....	68
Fig. 14. Andy with newborn Ricky.....	69
Fig. 15. Ricky’s sculptures.....	71
Fig. 16. “Soul Surfing” a painting produced during the project.....	79
Fig. 17. Video still of time lapse mural painting segment in episode 3.....	83

Episode Guide

Episode 1

Length: 9:18

In this episode of *The Art Room*, Zac shows us how to make and use a memory camera. This camera lets us create a lasting memory by framing our view of new friends or places. For this project you'll need an empty tea or cookie box, tape and scissors. Next, Zac turns the kitchen into an art room to make ice sculptures that he hangs in the garden. Needed for this project are a plastic container filled with water, a freezer and some small objects like leaves, flowers or drawings you've made. We leave Zac on the beach, making a sand drawing for Earth Day.

Episode 2

Length: 14:58

Today Zac takes us to the park and shows us how to make a kite out of materials we always have at home. All you need are a newspaper, tape, scissors, measuring tape, plastic garbage bags, an elastic band and string. I bet you'll want to go fly a kite! Zac shares some of his art techniques and tips for organizing materials for future projects in an art supply box. We also learn how to make a stuffed animal out of our left over grocery bags. You'll need scissors, a needle and thread and some scrap fabric or some old clothes that no one wants anymore. Zac makes a cute squirrel but you can make any animal you can think of or imagine.

Episode 3

Length:17:23

Zac makes a new friend, Ricky the Recycling Rat! Ricky shows Zac a few of the sculptures he's made out of recycled objects. Ricky helps Zac make a one-word-journal-jar out of materials he's found in his art supply box. You'll need some paper, markers, scissors, an old jar and your imagination. We then follow Zac on his vacation to the Mexican jungle where he paints a mural for some friends in a room at their eco resort! We see all kinds of cool plants and animals that inspire Zac's painting along with his step-by-step process. Wait until you see the finished masterpiece! Once Zac gets home he and Ricky finish their one word journal jar activity together by pulling a word out of the jar and spinning the art forms wheel. Will it land on Dance, Costume, Flat, Imagine, Music, Theatre, 3-D or Other?

Introduction

The studio-based thesis research project I have completed for my Master's of Art Education focuses on the multiple roles I bring to bear within the process of creating art educational videos for children. The research method is based on reflective practice as presented by Donald Schön (1983), with adaptations regarding the production of a creative project as proposed by Steven Scrivener (2000) and with the inclusion of active documentation as presented by Nancy De Freitas (2002). The purpose of this research was to create a series of prototypes for what may later become a children's art educational television series or web based broadcast. The videos revolve around my interests in art education themes such as creativity, environmental education, and visual/material culture studies. I am the host of the videos, playing a performative teaching role as I demonstrate the production of art activities of my own design. The question I explored through this project was “What can I as a reflective/creative practitioner learn about how the roles of artist, producer, researcher, teacher and entertainer contribute to the creation of art educational videos for children?” I opted not to involve children in this project and instead based my inquiry in secondary research and in informal consultations with a selection of informants including colleagues, friends and family. I completed three research cycles, each culminating in the production of one episode, 10-18 minutes in length, of *The Art Room*. This research report presents a condensed review of the three research cycles. Original data in the form of written journals and records of reflection, audio recordings, and video logs were used as source material for a narrative that encompasses the project from start to finish.

This thesis research project presents a plurality of roles that are simultaneously

diverse and closely related. As an artist I bring my creative vision and imagination, modelling openness and experimentation. Through acting in the videos I also embody the role of artist in a way that required much learning and practice. My performance as an actor was dependant on my ability to direct. Director, editor and scriptwriter were all roles I took on as a producer. The artistic dimension of writing, directing, and editing became obvious and so I have grouped the role of artist and producer into the 'major role' of artist-producer for the purpose of organizing the written thesis. The role of researcher stands out as the umbrella role, encompassing the thinking and working processes of all aspects of the project. It is through my role as researcher that much of the tacit learning in the project was made apparent. As a teacher I developed original lessons focusing on creative thinking and skill development. These activities needed to be presented in a dynamic and entertaining way, and so my role as entertainer was key in adapting the material to be more appealing through the use of puppets, music, and clothing. Accordingly, in this thesis, teacher and entertainer have been combined into another major role, teacher-entertainer. While I have organized the various roles into three separate groups, it should be noted, that at various stages in the project, roles overlapped, changed priority or even all blended together: the task of script writing alone involves artistic input, consideration of entertainment value and the perspective of a teacher ensuring that the content is comprehensible.

Background to the Question

A friend and artist whom I met during my undergraduate studies at the Ontario College of Art and Design planted the initial idea for this project as a seed in my mind over six years ago. Our discussions often revolved around critical art theory, and she remarked on my tendency to reduce concepts to a simple and accessible form. She said two things that have stuck with me over the years; that I will make a good grandfather; and more pertinently; that I should be a kids' TV show host. Gradually, this second statement began to make more and more sense to me as I began teaching art and working with children.

For me, education always comes from a personal place. When I teach drawing, I focus on the techniques and encouragements that I found helpful as a learner. When I teach children, I recall my own feelings towards art and school that I had as a child, and I attempt to cater to those sensibilities in my approach to teaching.



FIG. 1. A cereal box and a styrofoam tray get *The Art Room* treatment.

When I consider the influences that contributed to my own creative endeavours as a child, I cannot ignore the role that television played. I always watched *Art Attack* (Edmunds, 1990-2007), an art making television program for kids. This program never lacked in creative ideas and while I do not remember actually following the activities step by step as the host, Neil, instructed, the program does stand out in my mind as influential. I believe that many process-based techniques were learned from the program and were employed in different ways throughout artistic play. Many other non-art based television and media phenomena also influenced my creative productions. *The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (Luckey, 1990-1993), *Star Wars* (Kurtz & Lucas, 1977), ice hockey, the winter Olympics (Fig. 1), all had tremendous impact on my interests in general and formed the structure and theme of my creative expressions. My brother and I invented an entire hockey league for our stuffed animals that was inspired by, but completely different from the National Hockey League, and even made our own trading cards. The level of creativity that any given media source inspired varied greatly, and seemed to depend on whether or not we owned any of the merchandise: if we owned several *Star Wars* action figures, we would re-enact scenes or situations from those movies, if only one or two were owned, those toys would feature in any number of other creative games. In this respect, I recognize that while viewers may not watch a video and recreate the demonstrated project step by step, it is the provision of clear and useful art making techniques combined with exciting and inspiring themes that will be of real and lasting value to children. For this reason, in *The Art Room* I endeavoured to develop open-ended, idea-generating art activities designed to inspire children to embrace their own unique creative abilities and expressions.

Project Goals

My primary goal was to produce a pilot project version of art educational videos that could provide young viewers with creative artistic opportunities, and to understand the roles I must play in successfully doing so. If a reader has not done so already, I would suggest viewing the three videos that have been created. (Those who do not have access to the DVD with the thesis document may contact me via email to obtain a copy: theartroom@zackenny.com) They can be viewed in any order, however, viewing them in succession makes apparent the learning that took place in each cycle.

The first episode is 9:18 minutes in length, the second is 14:58 minutes and the third is 17:23 minutes long. The content, activities, ideas, techniques and overall tone are oriented to children between the ages of 9 and 12, and aim to appeal to both boys and girls. I am the host of each video, guiding the viewer in a creative activity while encouraging as much free thinking and decision making as possible.

For each role I bring to bear within the project – artist, producer, researcher, teacher, entertainer – I identified both learning goals and productive goals as well research and academic goals.

My artistic goals emerged through practices of ideation and experimentation. We all have a vision of how things in the world work, artists make their visions reality. Often this process is one of trance-like focus (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Reflective practice was helpful in explicating how my creative nature contributed in various processes. I also subscribe to the notion that there is value in receiving art instruction from someone who is a practicing artist and value to an artist teacher to maintain their art practice (Daichendt, 2010) and I maintained my art practice throughout the project. Another

artistic goal was to develop as an actor. Having only minimal experience in this realm, I anticipated a great amount of learning would be necessary. Again, reflective practice was integral in developing my acting skills, comfort and confidence in front of the camera.

As a producer, my goals consisted of bringing my ideas, scripts, materials and lesson plans together into digital video and to edit the footage into a fully realized final product. The unspoken goal is, of course, to create a final product to be proud of. To develop technical expertise in a wide variety of areas was also an important aspect of this role because I wanted to learn first hand about the various aspects of video creation.



FIG. 2. Video still of working on a mind-map.

My goal as a researcher is to contribute to the literature in the field of research creation by publishing a thesis that is a substantial embodiment of the methodology. Through an adapted method of reflective practice, I have attempted to explicate the working, thinking, and learning processes involved in the creative project. The principle of this thesis is presented as a selective narrative, highlighting significant events throughout the project. By proceeding through multiple cycles of production research, I

not only present professional knowledge as a product of research, but also to make use of this knowledge in each succeeding research cycle. In this way my project presents both the conclusions drawn from reflective practice and an evaluation of how those conclusions were useful in the production process.

My goal as a teacher was to develop and teach a variety of activities, ideas and techniques that could be successful in providing young viewers with creative artistic opportunities. Having a strong theoretical justification for my creative choices was also important, and I strove to continuously allow myself to be inspired and influenced by outside sources: academic, popular, or private. The challenge of teaching through what is essentially a “push” technology was anticipated, and research informants were consulted to provide outside opinions about my effectiveness.

As an entertainer I strove to convey my lessons in a dynamic and entertaining way through acting, script writing, costume selection, puppetry, and by selecting interesting set locations. For this project to succeed I knew that I would have to be likeable, interesting, funny and friendly.

The combined goal is ultimately one of project continuation. I aim to continue to produce art educational videos very similar to those I created for this thesis in the future. Being able to base the project in reflective practice was of incredible value as I endeavoured to learn as much as possible about the video production process.

The materials produced for this thesis are not intended for public exhibition and due to ethical restrictions, no children were involved the production or feedback process. All feedback regarding the effectiveness of the produced materials were speculative and experience-based from a panel of colleagues and educators.

Literature Review

Artist-Producer

Here, I offer a survey of historical and existing children's educational media to give context to and identify inspirations for my project. Inquiry into this area of research was instrumental in forming a conceptual framework for my project. I present the challenges inherent in media education and theory regarding possible approaches such as dialogue and puppetry. I also discuss the resources available to me as a new artist working in digital media. Programs discussed include many of my childhood favourites such as *Sesame Street* (1968-present), *Art Attack* (1990-2007), *Mr. Dressup* (Greenfield, 1967), and *Mr. Rogers* (Rogers, 1981-1995), as well as others that I have discovered more recently or have found through this research.

Educational television programming for children has a relatively short history due to the short history of widespread television use in general. In the U.S., televisions were not common in the home or the school until after World War II and before then broadcast stations would have less than 20 hours of programming a week (Levin & Hines, 2003). In the early 1950s, funding was realized for non-commercial, educational television and attention was placed on finding teachers for television and developing quality content (Zaitz, 1960). Professors of education Robert Levin and Laurie Hines (2003) point to Fred Rogers, a.k.a. Mr. Rogers, and *The Children's Corner* winning the Sylvania Award for best locally produced children's television program in the United States in 1955 as a significant milestone for educational television (p. 265). In the late 1960s televised lessons featuring special star teachers and celebrity guests were broadcast to 800,000 students in classrooms across the country (p. 269). Interest was rapidly spread about the

educational potentials of television. Joan Ganz Cooney, a writer and columnist on television, quickly established herself as the authority on children's educational television and in 1968 became the co-founder and executive director of the Children's Television Workshop [CTW] which would coordinate the production of Sesame Street (Davis, 2008, p. 146). Michael Davis (2008), journalist and author of *Street gang: The complete history of Sesame Street*, explains that *Sesame Street* was the first television show grounded in scientific research on television as an effective learning tool for children, and as such, was grounded in a curriculum and was measured according to an evaluation system (p. 144).

“Sesame Street came along and rewrote the book. Never before had anyone assembled an A-list of advisers to develop a series with stated educational norms and objectives. Never before had anyone viewed a children's show as a living laboratory, where results would be vigorously and continually tested. Never before in television had anyone thought to commingle writers and social science researchers, a forced marriage that, with surprising ease and good humour, endured and thrived.” (Davis, 2008, p. 144)

Developmental psychologist and children's television historian, Shalom Fisch (2004) presents a graphical representation of “The CTW (or ‘Sesame Workshop’) model” (p. 16) (Fig. 3).

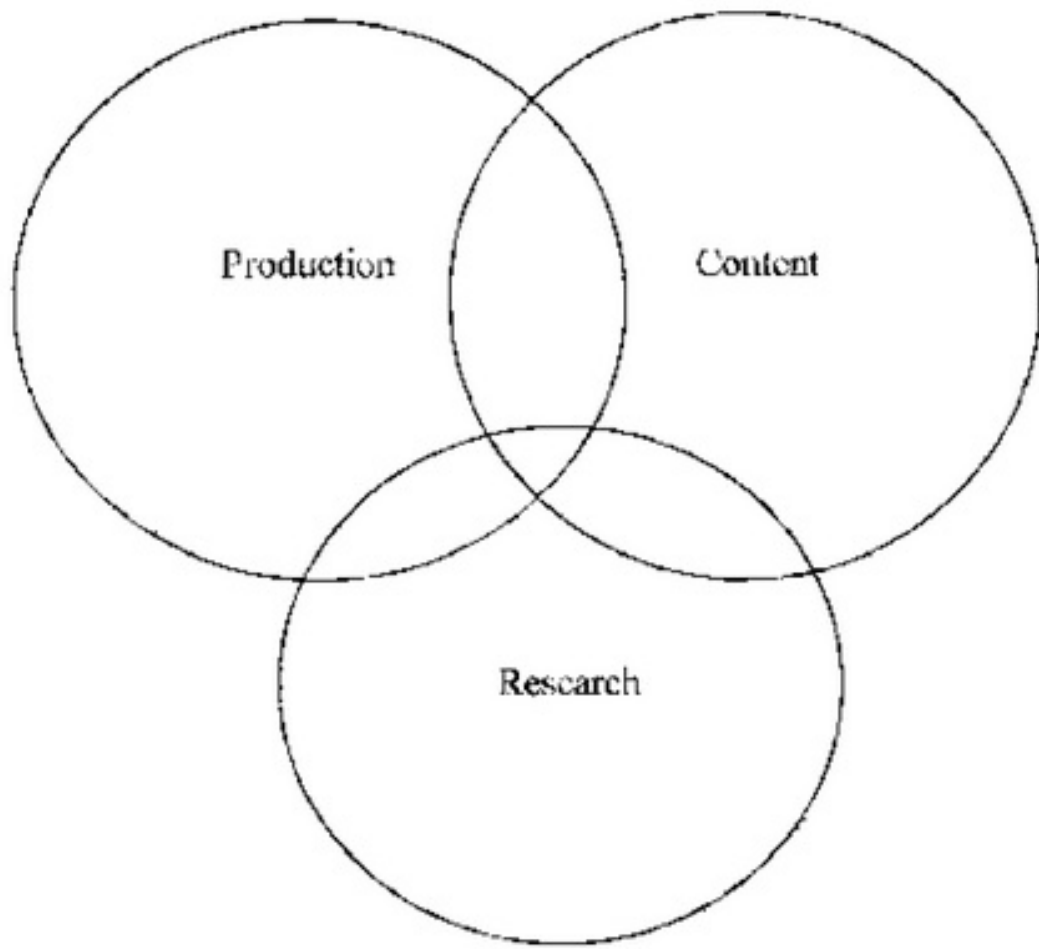


FIG. 3. The CTW (or ‘Sesame Workshop’) model.

This could be seen as one of the first research creation projects of this kind and as such, mirrors the kind of thinking that I bring to my project.

Two studies from 1975 report that kindergarten children who viewed episodes of *Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood* had increased social and emotional capacities, especially when combined with follow up activities reinforcing themes from the program (Friedrich & Stein, 1975). The report also indicates that the use of puppets was helpful, especially for boys, in enhancing sensitivity and empathy. The children used puppets designed after the puppet characters in the episodes they viewed and re-enact social situations in the

show. This research supports my own choice to use a puppet. In my videos, I attempt to make Ricky the Recycling Rat character as approachable and relatable as possible in order to encourage emulation of his openness and artistic explorations.

Conversations of art educational television programs for children tend to focus on *Art Attack* (2010). *Art Attack* aired regularly between 1990 and 2007 (Oatts, 2007) and was a personal favourite of mine. The host, Neil Buchanan, a middle aged British man, was engaging and energetic and the art activities he taught were diverse and creative. Probably the most memorable segment of the show was when Neil would go into a field or parking lot and create a giant artwork on the ground using non-conventional materials such as sports equipment. He would call these “art attacks” and would create one at the end of every show. I remember watching the show as often as I could. However, I would rarely if ever create any of the projects. I would just sit and watch, usually with my brother, and make comments if I found something particularly interesting. In retrospect I think that the show provided a lot of very good art making ideas and techniques. Neil was always making use of recycled materials that I found inspiring because I could always find the materials around the house. An anonymous reviewer of the show (Voltage, 2007) also reports not participating in the creation of the specific activities while describing the program as highly entertaining and educational. A second reviewer explains that Neil Buchanan himself was the main attraction of the show (Booth-Millard, 2005). I find these pop culture tributes coincide with my memories of the show. In this respect, what made the show appealing were the performative elements combined with instruction/demonstration of transferable skills and art making techniques, following the notion that ideas are based on previous knowledge and experience (Csikszentmihalyi,

1996). Indeed, Fisch (2004) summarizes several studies saying that “viewing contributes to educational benefits that not only transfer to new tasks and contexts, but also can endure for years” (p. 26). This idea of transferable skills and ways of thinking resonates strongly with me and I made repeated considerations of how transferrable certain techniques and materials were while formulating content for my videos. *Art Attack* maintains an attractive and easy to use website which displays both archived and new content (<http://www.hitentertainment.com/artattack>).

I Can Make Art Like... is a recent television program produced in Canada in association with the National Film Board (National Film Board, 2010). Each episode is based on an individual historical or contemporary artist. The episodes follow different groups of children as they learn about an artist, and create an artwork inspired by the featured artist. The pace of each ten-minute program is fast, largely abbreviating the creation of the artwork, in my opinion disallowing for adequate instruction of the art making technique and process. However, the program is well suited to be used by a teacher in a classroom setting as each episode is accompanied by a well-conceived lesson plan. The level of creative freedom allowable in the art activities would largely depend on both the students themselves and the guidance and encouragement from the teacher. This type of program is useful to teachers, but I remain skeptical of its appeal to children. One advantage of *I Can Make Art Like...* is that it displays children’s artworks. In this way, child viewers can see what other children have been able to create and can feel encouraged to attempt a similar endeavor. This also may help to encourage teachers who are using the program in their classrooms to publicly exhibit their own students artwork, which as art education professor Enid Zimmerman (2010) states “is of prime

importance... where they can engage in a dialogue with multiple audience (p. 4). While I recognize the value of *I Can Make Art Like...* as a teaching tool, I do feel that the program is dependent on this aspect and this is not what I aim to produce in my videos, which are hypothetically created for the Internet for home use

Recent research indicates that the Internet is becoming very widely accessed by children between the ages of 9 and 17 (Taylor, 2002) and is even moving towards becoming an alternative to television (Ferguson & Perse, 2010). Children tend to use the internet for two primary purposes: 1) for engaging in leisure activities such as finding music, playing games, and surfing for fun, and 2) for communication, i.e.: emailing, chatting, and social networking (Taylor, 2002). A Canada wide study by the Media Awareness Network (2005) indicated that 99% of students use the Internet and that 79% of students access the internet at home, a figure that has likely increased in the seven years since the study's release. The full report breaks down the statistics according to age and indicates that younger children (ages 9-12) prefer to use the internet for playing games, browsing, and school work, while older grades (ages 13-17) tend to make use the internet for its social applications (p. 41, 42). I am designing my program for the 9-12 age range and feel that *The Art Room* would fit into the games, browsing and school work category of internet use.

There are several sites on the Internet where children can access art educational materials. MeetMeAtTheCorner.org (Meet Me at the Corner, 2010) is a website that provides "virtual field trips" in the form of short videos. While the themes of these videos are rarely of an art educational nature, viewers are encouraged to film their own video and submit it to the website. There is a video entitled "How to film a video podcast"

which aims to educate children about filming and editing. Many art educators feel that this hands on approach to media education is helpful in educating students for 21st century society (Buffington, 2008; Haynes, Mandel, & Robillard, 1998; Ito et al., 2008). The videos found on the site all feature children as hosts, although the video and sound editing is of a professional quality and suggests that user-created material is heavily modified.

Many young people are learning useful social and technical skills through “interest-driven activities online” (Ito et al., 2008). These are skills that are becoming increasingly necessary in contemporary society and the presence and integration of technology in educational contexts are increasing. Indeed, the internet and “Web 2.0 is increasingly accessible to students ” (O’Rielly, 2005). Young people are being encouraged to incorporate the interactivity and user driven aspects of Web 2.0 in their school and art projects (Buffington, 2008). Haynes, Mandel, & Robillard (1998), a group of teachers, artists and writers in the department of fine arts at Washington State University, go so far as to suggest that students need to be educated not only in the technical, but in the technologically conceptual, that they “must become media philosophers trained to reflect on the characters of electronic and other media” (p.187). I think that such media education is important to today’s youth and will prepare them for adept engagement in the 21st century cultural milieu. While the videos I have created for this project will not be available to children on the internet, they remain prototypes for videos that will likely be couched in an interactive web-based platform. For this reason, media education curriculum is taken into consideration in this project with regards to the

possibility of a future endeavour, however these considerations will be minimal, and may or may not result in the inclusion of media educational content.

Teacher-Entertainer

In this section I discuss my interests in education and goals as an educator with reference to literature on creativity and environmental consciousness. I also examine concepts of entertainment education and teaching as performance, and consider possible implications for my project.

My philosophy as an art teacher is primarily to enable and encourage creative thinking and making. I believe that environmentally considerate art making is not only a worthy endeavour, but also offers opportunities for reflections of the contemporary cultural sensibilities of production, consumption and waste. When teaching I allow intuition to guide my conduct. I am responsive and my awareness of students as individuals helps me to determine how to proceed with a lesson and when more explanation is needed. I believe that children are capable of incredible insights and amazingly creative thinking and making. My teaching style is conversational and non-hierarchal. The confidence I have in my teaching comes from the confidence I have in student's capacity to understand and learn. Despite the uni-directional nature of media education, it is my confidence in children's abilities that I carry over from the classroom to the set of *The Art Room*. However, since I was not working with a live studio audience, I relied on research present in art education concerning the encouragement of creativity and artistic play. As I was experimenting with materials and developing art activities for my videos, I continuously explored various concepts of creativity and ideas

about how children are creative and how creativity can be encouraged. In bringing my role as teacher to bear in this project, the videos become couched in my educational ideology. By examining the literature in my areas of interest, I strengthened my own understanding and imbued the videos with a theoretical integrity.

I believe creativity is essential to a full and meaningful life on earth. To be creative is to be in control of one's own mind, to see, think, and create new and innovative things in this world (Freedman, 2010). In this regard, I extend my thinking about creativity from an arts-centered notion to a overall way of thinking, a kind of worldview. Physicist and theorist David Bohm (1968) presents this conception and suggests that creativity is the ability to continually learn new things, and re-evaluate previously existing knowledge. In childhood, this is necessary and takes place automatically. Children have inherently creative minds. As we grow older, our knowledge tends to become increasingly static and less able to incorporate new or contradictory information. As creativity theorist and consultant Sir Ken Robinson (2011) puts it; "We don't grow into creativity, we grow out of it" (p. 49). Bohm explains that this is merely a tendency and that through creative exercises and conscious effort, one can retain or redevelop creative capacities. He positions the ability to think creatively as the prerequisite for, indeed, the cause of, creative production (1968, p. 145).

My interest in creativity comes from not only an authentic need to be creative and see creativity flourish in others, but also from a desire to redress an apparent lack of creative practice in schools. Robinson (2006) goes so far as to say that "Schools are killing creativity". Creativity research pioneer Ellis Paul Torrance (1963) even said that teachers are averse to creative individuals because of their questioning and non-

conformist natures. In general, behaviours attributed to creative individuals such as disruptiveness and even obnoxiousness are discouraged and often condemned by teachers (Brichacek, 2012, p. 1). Art educators Flavia Bastos and Enid Zimmerman (2011) cite studies indicating that creativity scores in the United States have been dropping since 1990 and give examples of different first grade students all creating extremely similar artworks (p. 5).

In my experience supervising undergraduate art education students during practicum teaching sessions, it was clear to me that creative thinking was not a real consideration in the development of the lessons. Despite the apparent drop in creative orientation of schools and abilities of students, research is showing that thriving economies need creative individuals now more than ever: the “creative sector” now comprises one third of the United States economy (Florida, 2002, p. xiv). A recent study from IBM (2012) indicates that over 60% of business leaders say that creativity is one of the most desirable traits of employees (p. 21).

What is creativity and how does it function and flourish? It is often said that risk-taking and the willingness to make mistakes is a prerequisite of creativity, that for one to be creative, one must be prepared to be wrong (Robinson, 2011, p. 153). Robinson (2006) adds that the educational structures of schools encourage adherence to facts, concrete knowledge, and “success” and that these favour a way of thinking that is decidedly uncreative (n.p.). Bohm (1968, p. 139) states that it is precisely the fear of making mistakes that gradually removes creative ability from children. Research indicates that children become more engaged learners overall when they are in control of their own decisions and allowed to make mistakes. (Kong, 2007; Pitri, 2001). Rebecca

Isbell and Shirley Raines (2007), both professors of early childhood education, present a comprehensive overview of children's creativity and the arts, highlighting the unique strengths education in the arts hold for providing free thinking opportunities for children. The pair addresses concerns regarding the necessity of a creative teacher, and encourages educators to reflect on their own methods of teaching in efforts to increase the outward encouragement of experimentation and problem solving in the classroom (p. 31). Gude (2010) suggests that teachers make freedom to choose central to their classroom through the provision of a variety of material and possible outcomes of a project (p. 34). Researcher and teacher Eliza Pitri (2001) suggests that the provision of a wide variety of choices, in materials and in solutions to problems, can help teachers to enliven creative experimentation. Gude however warns not to oversimplify this:

“Conditions of psychological safety and freedom that make creativity possible are produced, not merely by the teacher's wishes, but rather by how his or her attitude manifests itself in the range of choices that affect course content, work styles, class discussions, peer interactions, opportunities for playful engagement with materials and ideas, and assessment or the lack thereof” (Gude, 2010, p. 34).

Pitri (2001) presents play as an important element of creativity because it is a free action taken by children, and as such embodies many of the independent decision making processes in which creativity is rooted. She suggests that teachers facilitate different kinds of play within the school. She and others posit that artistic play, along with group problem solving and collaboration provide children with unique situations of idea generation, rejection, and experimentation that help build confidence in creative endeavours (Pitri, 2001; Runco, 2007; Zimmerman, 2009). Elizabeth Wood (2012) adds

that there are “right” and “wrong” kinds of play, and that educators are in a position to encourage pro-social rather than anti-social play. This same value was at work in my childhood home: growing up, my brother and I had very limited access to one of my favourite television programs, the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, because we would inevitably play “Ninja Turtles” and run around fighting each other after viewing the show. Cynthia Hoffner (2009) labels this common behaviour as “wishful identification” and offers evidence to support that most young boys experience the phenomenon (p. 390). With all of these ideas in mind, in my *Art Room* videos I varied the types of activities and techniques in the hopes of encouraging artistic play and aimed to demonstrate non-violence, understanding and open mindedness.

Kaye Thorne (2007), a creative consultant in the UK, approaches the topic of creativity as a plea for teachers to make it a primary concern, and shows how creativity can foster positive identity formation, self-esteem, and overall ability as a productive learner. The extent to which media and schools affect children’s creativity is certainly open to debate and remained an area of interest for me throughout the project. My goal as an educator is to offer children as much freedom in their creative endeavours as possible: an on-going question for this project was how to promote children’s creativity in the non-interactive (i.e. transmission-based) format of video recording.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, a renowned psychologist and scholar, is famous for his notion of the creative state he calls *flow*. Flow, according to Csikszentmihalyi (1998), is an optimal state of being, where an individual is uniquely aware, in control, and at the same time, somehow unconscious of the many detailed actions he/she is taking. Csikszentmihalyi reports on people from several professions, from jazz musicians to

athletes, who all affirm the notion of flow in their own way (2004). He concludes that the flow state is achieved when an individual is making maximum use of their skills while feeling adequately but not overly challenged.

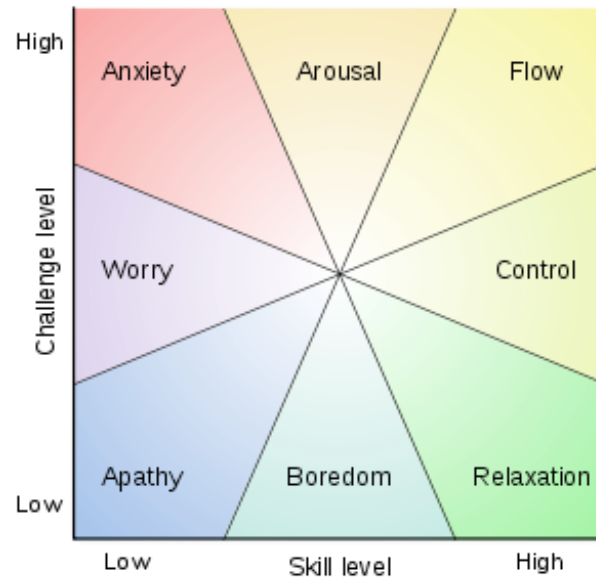


FIG. 4. Challenge vs. skill diagram

Above (Fig. 4) is a graphical representation, adapted by Beatson (n.d.), illustrating the spectrum of daily human experiences according to Csikszentmihalyi (2004). He proposes that the flow state is neighboured by two other states, arousal and control, which, given the increase of skill or challenge respectively, can lead into an experience of the flow state. Within my videos, I provide adequate instruction so that the necessary skills can be learned and utilized effectively. Viewers are challenged in their task of creating original aspects of the activities.

Lowenfeld expresses that every child has the need to create art, “to represent parts of the environment, ... a need to clarify the relationship between objects and people” (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 48). He states that it is the role of the art teacher “to provide the circumstances, the motivation, the materials in such a way that the experience

has to happen” (p. 48). Lowenfeld suggests that the best method of developing creative potential in students is essentially to make the unusual acceptable (p. 85), and that this is perhaps best accomplished through setting an example, that is, by a teacher (p. 87).

Opportunities to embrace one’s creative tendencies and to feel secure in experimentation help develop an open and innovative mind and ultimately enhance the experience of life. In my own art practice as an abstract painter, emotional openness and honesty is integral to the process and allow for free, experimental and personally exploratory experiences of art making. As pre-conditions to creativity, Robinson (2011) identifies a variety of “soft skills” such as the capacity to understand and express oneself, empathy and sensitivity as critical contributors to relationships (p. 175) and proficient artistic creation (p. 192). Developing a personal awareness is a theme that became a consideration of mine in the third research cycle, but is tied to a running theme of the videos, which is fostering an environmental sensitivity.

Environmental education is a primary theme of my video segments. I focus my attention on the pertinent research concerning environmental art education, or eco-art. Eco-art is the use of “natural materials, techniques and/or imagery ... in conjunction with a theme or a set of ideas that raise awareness of humans’ relationship with and/or impact on the earth” (Inwood, 2009). When recycled and repurposed materials are used for art together with ideas about the environment, there is tremendous opportunity for environmental consideration. Questioning the need for new materials and valuing recycled ones are critical steps in fostering an understanding of the student’s own participation in a consumer-based and waste-producing society. Environmentalist and scholar Mark Graham (2007) suggests that making and studying eco-art provides students

with unique appreciation of how art can be a connection between the environment, culture, and community.

The Reggio Emilia approach is one widely recognized in art education for its focus on creativity and the exploration of non-traditional art materials. The pre-school education approach, originating in the Reggio Emilia region of Italy, owes much of its philosophy to various art educators, including John Dewey, Lev Vygotsky and Jean Piaget (Fraser & Gestwicki, 2002, p. 9). Many of the Reggio principles became useful in the creation of my project. One such principle, *the image of the child* as “competent, strong, inventive, and full of ideas with rights instead of needs” (p. 11) translated well to my mental construct of the hypothetical young viewers of *The Art Room*. Another constructive principle is *environment as a third teacher*. In the physical classroom this refers to the design of the space, access to tools, and a variety of materials. In my project, however, the classroom is wherever the viewer decides to create. My task was to widen the conception of art materials and tools so that viewers can feel they are able to be creative making use of whatever is present. A third principle that I find interesting is *transparency*. This is both literal, in the use of glass and mirrors to infuse a studio with light, and also metaphoric, in its reference to being to being open to ideas and influences from every facet of life. This aspect links closely to the research process of reflection and record keeping; being diligent in acknowledging input and inspiration from wherever it may come.

Carolyn Edwards, a professor of psychology at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, writes about the role of teacher in Reggio Emilia schools. She presents the role of teacher as one of constant reflection and revision, “a spiralling, rather than linear, way

of thinking and proceeding is characteristic of Reggio educators [, taking place] within a cycle of days taking place within larger cycles (weeks, months, even years)” (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998, p. 183). Again, this notion coincides closely with my own procedures and the way that my role as teacher was reflected upon and developed.

The Reggio Emilia schools are well known for their use of recycled and reclaimed materials and their connections with local recycling centers. The Remida center, established in 1996, is a hub of reclaimed materials for the Reggio Emilia area. Over 170 companies participate by donating discarded materials, and in turn, Remida serves over 300 schools and art centers in the region (Eckhoff & Spearman, 2009, p. 11). The use and consideration of these materials is meant to establish and nurture a relationship and understanding between the Reggio students and their surrounding environments (Eckhoff & Spearman, 2009). This aspect was of central importance in the development of art techniques and activities for use in my videos.

Focusing on art materials can have a profound effect on how a student conceives of an artwork. The late Stan Horner , an artist and professor at Concordia University, stressed the importance of material considerations in art making. Horner (2009) instructed students to consider the history of materials and highlighted the rich meanings that reclaimed and found objects can bring to an artwork. Recycling and reusing objects for the purpose of art delays or prevents that object’s presence in a landfill. This small difference in waste production can become part of the artwork’s meaning or the object can be examined for other cultural and societal signifiers.

In the videos I have created, I attempt to imbue messages about the environmental impact of waste production and the merits of recycling. The use of reclaimed art supplies

is dually important in that the hypothetical viewers of the videos may not have a full arsenal of tools available, nor the means to purchase them. By encouraging creative use of the materials that are present, I show that even without something that seems essential, creation is possible. I achieved this by purposefully excluding a material such as glue from an activity and demonstrating how pieces of paper can be rolled together to achieve a desired effect. This presents a challenge to the viewer, to see if they can still create something worthwhile without traditional materials. If one rises to this challenge and is encouraged and confident in his or her abilities then it is possible that the young artist will enter into Csikszentmihalyi's flow state, where creativity is at a maximum.

At Concordia University, I was a teaching assistant for an undergraduate practicum course. I saw the anxiety of young teachers in training as they struggled to make their lessons appealing and engaging for students. There is a kind of stage fright that occurs for new teachers moments before the audience of students take their seats in the classroom. I have felt this myself. Teaching is a type performance, lessons are performed in a theatre that is always interactive. In a way, making videos of teaching was less pressure than actual teaching because there is no immediate audience to engage and content can be edited for clarity, effectiveness, and entertainment value. On the other hand, moments of hesitation, mispronunciations, and awkward facial expressions were recorded, played back, scrutinized by others and myself. Performative teaching is an important part of the planning and production process of the videos, and I became acutely aware of the parallels and relationships between teaching and performing through planning, recording and editing the videos.

Literature regarding the performative aspects of teaching was difficult to find. One professor of education pointed to a possibly out-dated conception that teaching is too important a task to consider it as an art form but offers a compromise saying that art is a quest to communicate truth, just as teaching is (Reitman, 1986, p. 137). Another professor suggests that some teachers may have artistic ways of teaching in that they allow intuition to guide their conduct, but that this is ultimately unreliable and that supervision is necessary to ensure standards are met (Hill, 1985).

Charles Garoian, a performance artist, author, and professor of art education, writes about artist Suzanne Lacy's performances as "performative curriculum" (1998, p.128). The pedagogical nature of Lacy's performances is in educating her audience about social or political issues that affect them with the goal of provoking action and change. Lacy's artworks are performed live and often have political agendas. My videos are much less political performance art than they are art education with political overtones: I wish to affect my hypothetical audience members and inspire them to embrace their creativity, and to develop environmental awareness and enhanced appreciation of ready-to-hand art materials.

Many television series are good examples of performance as teaching. I remember being entertained by as well as learning from the above-mentioned *Sesame Street*, *Art Attack*, *Mr. Dressup*, and *Mr. Roger's Neighborhood*. The host of *Yo-Gabba-Gabba*, a current educational television program for young children, dresses up in a bright orange jumpsuit, waves his hands around, and over-enunciates his words. Writer and developmental psychologist Shalom Fisch (2004) suggests that humour, visual action and appealing characters as the primary factors determining the appeal of a program and that

appeal largely contributes to comprehension of educational content (p. 28). However, I seem to recall Mr. Rogers being a calm, soft-spoken man who wore a demure assortment of cardigan sweaters. This variance could be attributed to changes in children's marketing and fashion. It could also be indicative of the variety of teaching styles present in schools. Research, reflection and feedback were all important factors for my own stylistic decisions in my videos, and experience went a long way in providing a sense of confidence in the performance itself.

Methodology and Procedures

Methodology

“Use your methodology to discipline your passion, not deaden it.”

(Rose, 2001, p. 4)

This chapter details the methodology I have adapted for use in this project and in doing so provides an overview of existing literature pertaining to reflective practice and research creation. The quote from Gillian Rose above exemplifies the attitude with which I approach this section. The methodology is in service to the creative project. The method employed through the course of my thesis is based on reflective practice as formulated by Donald Schön (1983), with adaptations regarding the production of a creative project as proposed by Steven Scrivener (2000), and with the inclusion of active documentation as proposed by Nancy DeFreitas (2002). DeFreitas (2010) also suggests that qualitative methodologies remain flexible and open to changes in the process, conceptions of the data and to the research question. Possible changes are in response to reflections or observations made during research. This aspect is especially key in my project where I progress through three research cycles, each evolving and building on knowledge of the production process and ways of thinking about video as a medium for education. It is generally accepted in reflective practice research that issues and goals “change, grow and be given different emphasis as the work proceeds” (Scrivener, 2000). Scrivener also emphasises that reflective practices “must be the maidservant of effective action, yielding to action's inherent structural integrity” (p. 5).

Donald Schön (1983) presents reflective practice as a tool for exploring and developing one's professional knowledge. Schön refers to this knowledge as *knowing-in-*

practice and suggests that *reflection-in-action* is helpful in allowing tacit knowledge to become explicit (p. ix). The aim of reflective practice is to articulate an amount of professional knowledge that is of value to both practitioner and beholder. Schön identifies several professions in which he proposes that reflective practice is particularly advantageous including teaching and art and design. Michael Jarvis (2007) writes on the tacit dimension of creative production and states that “Developing knowledge about the complicated process of making art must inevitably lead to a more enlightened grasp, understanding and encouragement of the artist in the contemporary climate” (p. 201). On the arts in qualitative research, Elliot Eisner (2008) adds that knowledge of art practices are largely ineffable, and that reflection and evocative methods of reporting are needed to communicate the emotional and creative depth of practice.

While reflective practice is the umbrella method of this thesis, there are many aspects of this method identified by Steven Scrivener (2000) as in need of reconsideration with regards to the production of a creative project. Scrivener, a professor of art and design education in Britain, suggests that reflective practice is very well suited to the research of a creative project because it focuses on explicating the creative thinking processes. Scrivener states that when research revolves around a creative project, there is an *artefact* that is produced, and that “the knowledge embodied in the artefact ... can be described separate from it”, additionally, that this knowledge may be transferable to other contexts (p. 1). Scrivener identifies aspects of the creative production process where he suggests are beneficial for the artist/designer to adapt Schön's method. Schön stresses the practice of problem setting and solving as primary sources of practice based knowledge. Scrivener posits that problems encountered in projects of creative production are not

reduced to solutions; rather they are formative steps in the creation process. For this reason, Scrivener suggests that written “description[s] of the creative-production process should be the principle means by which [researchers] demonstrate that they are self-conscious, systematic and reflective creators” (2000, p. 8).

Scrivener adds that “While systematic, relevant and practical methods of recording need to be developed for creative production, useful schemes can be appropriated from other research realms” (2000, p. 9). The variety of actions in my project called for an expanded notion of record keeping, therefore, in addition to written records, I also employed an approach from the research/creation realm: active documentation. Nancy De Freitas, artist, scholar, and editor of *Studies in Material Thinking*, states that “documentation of studio practice is the core issue for a better understanding and articulation of practice-based research” (De Freitas, 2002, p. 1).

“Active documentation ... is a process of knowledge construction that may be regarded as a distinct research method appropriate to practice-based research projects in art and design. It can be used to: a) identify the evolution of a work process; b) capture accidental progress or problematic blocks; c) articulate those phases of work that become invisible with progress and d) provide the detached record that is necessary in the abstraction of research issues” (De Freitas, 2002, p. 10).

In this way, De Freitas (2002) positions active documentation as both a reflective tool, in its ability to enhance the researcher's knowledge of the situation, and as a reflexive tool, in its capacity to inform and influence the active thinking processes of creation. Elliot Eisner (2008) also recognizes the value of creative research

documentation, stating that media such as audio and video may be better suited to capturing the “qualitative nuances of situations” (p. 10). Reflecting using non-traditional forms of research data like video, audio, and photography can reveal additional tacit information and move the researcher from a practice of “ignorance and habit to [one of] knowledge and reflection” (Jarvis, 2007, p. 204). De Freitas (2010) recommends employing a variety of documentation techniques, and evaluating their usefulness to the process throughout the project. She suggests that in this way, the artist/designer will arrive at the method(s) best suited to him/herself. "Accept and capitalize on your personal circumstances and your individual style," says De Freitas (2010, n.p.).



FIG. 5. Video still of material experimentation with a plastic book coil.

I began the project with photography as the main form of documentation, as this was easily done and I was able to highlight specific instances of the working and experimentation process. However, I felt the need to narrate or annotate the still images

and I very quickly adopted video as the primary tool for recording. I was able to record a variety of working practices such as brainstorming and mind-mapping, material exploration and experimentation (Fig. 5), secondary research and evaluation and of course, video production and planning. I used video to enhance my ability to reflect-in-action, as I would simply think out loud during working sessions. I also used audio recording for the occasional reflection on action and practice conversations with research informants as necessary. Other recording methods included notes, sketches, and process artefacts. Each method of documentation was evaluated regarding its effectiveness as a reflective tool. Video was by far the most effective tool as a reflective practitioner as I found that I was able to perform and work naturally and reflect in the moment without interruption to the workflow. It was also most effective at recording the subtleties of my thinking and working process. I would see small things that I was doing, or hear the impact of something that I was saying upon review that I did not notice or consciously acknowledge in practice.

Schön suggests that reflective practice is of particular use when the practitioner is undertaking a project of a unique nature, requiring the acquisition of new skills in addition to the application of existing professional knowledge.

“When a practitioner makes sense of a situation he perceives to be unique, he sees it as something already present in his repertoire ... to see the unfamiliar, unique situation as both similar to and different from the familiar one, without at first being able to say similar or different with respect to what. The familiar situation functions as a precedent, or ... an exemplar for the unfamiliar one.” (Schön, 1983, p. 138).

Reflective practice may be helpful to those practitioners wishing to improve their routine performance, but the real benefit of the method lies in evaluating one's existing knowledge and subsequently approaching a unique situation. This process reveals insights and discoveries about how new knowledge is formed and combined with existing knowledge. The situation evolves and the problem is reframed.

“New discoveries call for new reflection-in-action. The process spirals through stages of appreciation, action, and reappreciation, whereby the unique and uncertain situation comes to be understood through the attempt to change it, and changed through the attempt to understand it.” (Scrivener, 2000, p. 9).

“A creative production project will be grounded in a practitioner's current practice and realized in future projects” (Scrivener, 2000 p.10).

Throughout the learning and working process of creating art educational videos, I encountered a wide variety of unfamiliar situations. Inquiry into art education pedagogy in relation to education through media, as well as the creation of such media, encompassed a diverse array of problem solving, learning, and creative opportunities. Each new situation presented new problems that needed solving in order for production to continue. It is this problematic nature of each aspect of my project that creates ideal conditions for reflection-in-action: “a reflective conversation with a unique and uncertain situation” (Schön, 1983, p.130). I approached each aspect of the project as a unique case and did not apply a kind of standard solution to the problems I faced: each situation presented its own unique set of problems, which I considered on a case-by-case basis. I approached each individual task or problem and attempted to understand it, consciously applying my existing knowledge and asking questions of the problem to inform myself of

the specificities. This is a *reframing*. My effort to solve the reframed problem gives way to a new understanding, requiring more reframing. “The process spirals through stages of appreciation, action, and re-appreciation... The unique and uncertain situation comes to be understood through the attempt to change it, and changed through the attempt to understand it” (Schön, 1983, p.132). As the practitioner I cultivated an ongoing and systematic reflexivity, allowing spontaneous insights to inform the approach, and recording explicit details of the process. Active documentation was included as part of this process, as documentation is a record of the action. The act of documenting, and the thoughts that the act provokes are included in my reflection-in-action records.

Reflection-in-action was the underlying method behind the various aspects and stages of the project. Reflection-in-action (RIA) occurs on the spot, the researcher is conscientious of the thinking and action processes. Schön (1987) explains that reflection-in-action need not interrupt the action itself, but can take place during the action, expanding the practitioner's awareness and adding to the possibilities of responding to thoughts on action and reshaping the active situation (p. 26). The written RIA record is made shortly after (sometimes during) a specific task, while the event is fresh in the mind of the researcher, recounting the thinking in action process. As a research practitioner engaging in reflection-in-action, it was important to acknowledge an amount of tacit knowledge and previous experience I brought to my multi-faceted endeavour. I was also able to recognize gaps in my professional knowledge in order to better direct my research inquiries. Schön (1987) clarifies that the researcher need only explicate those thoughts and actions which are pertinent to the task at hand and that any action contains innumerable implicit skills and thoughts which too engrained and

automatic to bother investigating. “We learn to execute such complex performances as crawling, walking, juggling, or riding a bicycle without being able to give a verbal description even roughly adequate to our actual performance. ... In [these] cases, the knowing is *in* the action. We reveal it by our spontaneous, skilful execution” (p. 24-25). This also furthers the case for using video as a method for recording sessions of working and reflecting to better capture the complete “performance”.

Scrivener recommends a second written record, which he calls the *reflection-on-action and -practice* (ROAP) (2000, p. 9). The ROAP acts as a second stage of reflection, allowing the researcher to return to the observations and reflections that were made in the RIA process, and highlighting aspects of particular interest. This record plays an integral role in supporting the researcher's reflections and helps to make the entire project increasingly accessible to both the researcher and beholder. Mark K. Smith (1994), a scholar of education, explains the need for a reflection-on-action and -practice eloquently: “As we think and act, questions arise that cannot be answered in the present. The space afforded by recording, supervision and conversation with our peers allows us to approach these. Reflection requires space in the present and the promise of space in the future” (p.150). While the RIA record will contain a great deal of information valuable exclusively to the researcher, the ROAP begins to provide the researcher with material that is usable in a final written thesis or research cycle reports.

In order to imbue the project with a measure of ongoing evaluation, and to provide me with outside perspectives on various aspects of the project, I recruited several individuals who served as informal informants for the research. These individuals, selected for their variety of professional and amateur vocations provided occasional

feedback on various aspects of the creative project. Eisner (2008) suggests that research be a collaborative affair, that cooperation and dialogue expand the relationship between art and knowledge. “Knowing is always about relationships”, says Eisner (2008, p. 5). On the social dimension of learning, Ben Kotzee (2012), a professor of social policy and education in London, expresses his view that reflective practice is an “overly individual” method and that involving others in one's practice provides much needed reality checks and different viewpoints that serve to balance the researcher's own reflections. Through discussions about my ideas and theoretical directions and through the review and feedback on created content, I was provided with a necessary step back from the project. The colleagues who acted as informants (who remain anonymous) were able to see the project from their perspective as experienced children's educators, creators of educational and entertainment media for children and as experts in the field of art education. This feedback sometimes consisted of email correspondence and sometimes as conversations, but were always informal and often spontaneous. Reaching out to colleagues for continual valuation and validation also embodies one aspect of my educational philosophy, and essentially one of the reasons I am motivated to pursue this project and that is the African proverb “It takes a village to raise a child”. I recognize that no matter how in depth my own research is, I will always have more to learn from others. I also aim to provide a resource for parents, teachers and children that will add to the educational spectrum, and supplement, if indeed offset the formal education that children receive in school.

The method progressed through three research cycles, each building on the knowledge and experience of the last. Each research cycle encapsulated the creation of

one video from beginning to end. “A creative-production project will be grounded in a practitioner’s current practice and realized in future projects. Consequently, it should begin with reflection on past practice and appreciative system” (Scrivener, 2000, p. 9).

In my project, the creation of one video can be considered a project unto itself, thus, through repetition of the research cycle, I was able to see how the research was contributing to my overall project progress. Within each research cycle, which is detailed in the next section, various ways of recording and sorting data were employed. These methodologies are presented below as data sets. The data sets outlined in this section provided me with the research material that I was able to gather, reflect, and act upon in each consecutive research cycle. The focus of the ongoing inquiry is the process, and importantly, how the process changes as the work progresses (Scrivener, 2000). The product of each cycle is a collection of observations, reflections, images, and videos that illustrate the process based knowledge of the creative project.

Data Sets

Private journal.

This journal functioned as a repository for all things private; feelings, fears, candid musings, interests, readings, and conversations. The journal was a sandbox for exploring a variety of life events and significant content would make its way into the RIA and ROAP reports.

Reflection-in-action record.

Reflection-in-action took place whenever applicable. In the beginning I found it

difficult to navigate this thinking in action practice, but it was made easier through the use of video recording and I became increasingly comfortable with it. As such, the RIA record exists in both written and digital video form.

Reflection-on-action and -practice report.

I attempted to make a ROAP entry twice every cycle, once half-way through the cycle, at the end of the “preparation phase” and once at the end of the cycle after the “production phase”. These entries review and highlight events from the RIA records and report instances of learning and development of skills and techniques from the cycle. The reports act as accounts of the research cycles.

Research log.

Much of my progress was dependant on secondary research, both theoretical and technical. I initially kept this log organized by sorting materials according to themes such as: Art Education Theory (creativity, media education and child learning), Media Reviews (online art education and television programs), Technical Skills (script writing, formal elements of film and video editing). While I continued to seek out pertinent literature to inspire and inform my project, the use of the research log diminished as the research progressed as I would highlight significant influences in both the RIA and ROAP records.

Documentation.

Throughout the creative production project I employed a variety of different documentation methods. In the beginning stages of the project there were sketches,

written notes and the mind-map. During the mind-mapping, I began to use video recording as both a method of documentation and a way to record reflection-in-action. Video was also used to document material exploration and experimentation. Later, in the production stages of the project I recorded rehearsals and also instances of reflection and script revision during filming. These materials will contain evidence and insights of my process of revision which will be of use in subsequent research cycles. I also reflect on how these methods are effective or helpful in the RIA and ROAP records.

Informant input log.

Throughout the research, friends, colleagues and advisors were consulted informally to discuss various aspects of my project. The informant input log is a written document containing accounts of informant input. These instances could be as detailed as meeting with a colleague with the specific purpose of discussing or reviewing my project, or could be as informal as mentioning an idea to a friend and receiving unprovoked commentary. Occasionally excerpts from emails pertaining to the project are also archived in this log.

Artifact.

Finally, the videos themselves, presented in their final form, are the artifacts of the research and embody the culmination of the learning and knowledge of the project. While Schön claims that the artifact produced in research creation must be conceptualized as the solution to a problem or an improvement to an existing solution, Scrivener (2000) suggests this does not necessarily describe the motivations behind

creative production projects. Scrivener makes allowance for practitioners to be inspired by personal motives and adds that the artifact itself is the primary goal of the endeavour and that any knowledge that is reified in it, or results as a by-product of the process is of secondary importance (p. 3).

Procedures

This research follows three cycles of creative production, each revolving around and culminating in a short 10-20 minute art educational video designed for children. To say the initial timeline was heavily revised is an understatement. Following completion of the first research cycle, the initial timeline (which aimed to complete the entire project in four months) was entirely abandoned. However, several observations regarding the design of the research cycle and the encapsulating schedule contributed to the development of a more natural and plausible schedule that was used for the second cycle. The third and final cycle of the research was entirely different from the first two largely because I was working part time and only had three days a week and evenings to put towards the project. I decided that this was actually advantageous to my research as the observations would help me to understand my working process within a variety of circumstances.

What I present below is the initial design of the research cycle. This version is the simplest as it explains each stage individually. As I explain in the main body of the thesis, adjustments were made to the cycle design following completion of the first cycle.

Essentially, stages 3 through 5 were combined into what I called the reflection-in-action spiral, which made up the multimodal and overlapping nature of the preparatory phase of the cycle. Stage 6 comprised the production phase of the cycle and was still well defined throughout the project. Finally, stage 7, pertaining to reflection and reporting came at the end of each cycle.

The Creative Production Research Cycle

1. Mind-mapping and brainstorming.

The first step of the cycle was to brainstorm and create a comprehensive a mind-map as I could. This step helped me to identify areas that required my attention. It was an especially important stage in the inaugural cycle, linking theory, practice, materials, and ideas. Using the mind-map as a springboard, I brainstormed ideas for possible art activities. In each succeeding cycle I returned to the original mind-map and expanded upon it (Fig. 6).

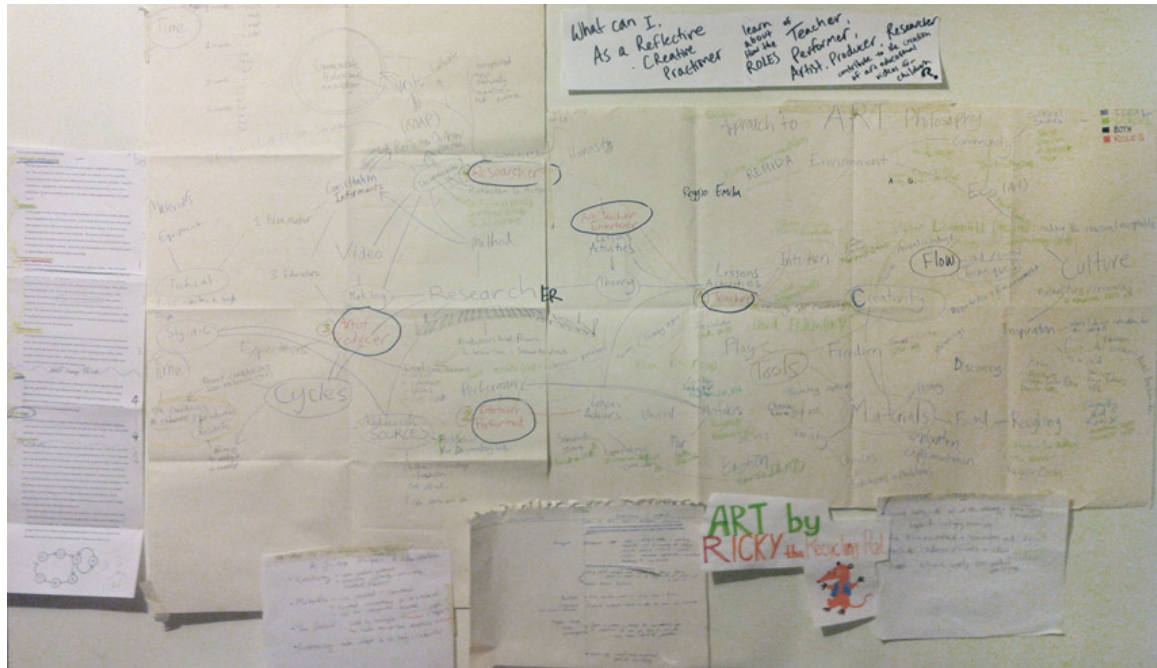


FIG. 6. Project concept mind-map.

2. Gather input.

I compiled an index of information using the headings of: Personal Knowledge, Informant Input, External Research, and Technical Skills. I compiled the Research Log with texts and other resources that served as starting points for theoretical inquiry. I reviewed this compilation and added to new content to the mind map. This process served to equip me with an awareness of the surrounding research and information involved in my project and also helped to locate gaps in my existing knowledge. Essentially, this step was to prepare me for reflection-in-action by acknowledging my own tacit and explicit knowledge.

3. Evaluate present circumstances.

I consulted the mind-map and inputs, and evaluated the project as a whole. This required taking stock of everything that had already been done in the project and

determining where the project needed to go next. Asking questions of the project such as: How are the activities balanced in terms of art for boys/girls? How difficult have the activities been? What themes have been addressed so far? How is the external research influencing my ideas? I determined one problem or a small group of related problems to work on such as, organizing research materials, experimenting with art materials, or researching an area of interest. This step was repeated as long as something stood out as needing attention. When all significant issues had been addressed and worked on through reflection-in-action (Step 4), the project moved onto the planning stage.

4. Reflection-in-action.

I approached the chosen problem(s) and worked to solve it with special focus on reflection-in-action. This involved identifying specific issues from my secondary research and determining how they could be addressed in the video. Details of this thinking process were written promptly in the RIA record. I then returned to step 3 to determine if more problems needed solving or if the project could move into the planning stage.

5. Plan

Conclusions drawn from step 4 were used to develop and formulate a plan for creating the video. RIA and ROAP were be used whenever possible. Tasks included: writing a script, gathering needed materials, deciding on camera angles/close ups etc, booking any needed equipment (and ensuring I am knowledgeable with it), and arranging the space in which I would film. Documenting the activities in this stage was important.

6. Act-create.

Following the plan of action, I would create a video. RIA and ROAP were used when applicable. I constructed any props that I needed for the set, filmed the video, edited the video, and sometimes added music. Documentation was also of special importance in this stage.

7. Reflect and report.

This is the final stage where I reflected and reported on the entire cycle. I would write an ROAP based on recent RIA entries. I would also write an expanded reflection of the act/create stage and review the documentation from the process. I reviewed the completed video in relation to the rest of the cycle, and also as a stand alone art educational material, and attempted to determine how successfully themes and goals were incorporated. Essentially, I provided an overview of the cycle, highlighting moments of reflection-in-action that were especially significant. I detailed the new knowledge that was gained through the cycle, and identified areas of possible improvement in the working process. The goal of this report was to provide me with an understanding of how the research method helped or hindered my process, and how I might adjust my approach in the following research cycle.

“Here, the researcher should reflect both on the project as a whole in relation to the issues explored, the work produced, development in appreciative system, and the reflection on action and practice itself. Pre-, within- and post- project reflections will provide the primary material for communicating and sharing

experience with peers, together with descriptive records of the work and decisions made” (Scrivener, 2000, p. 10).

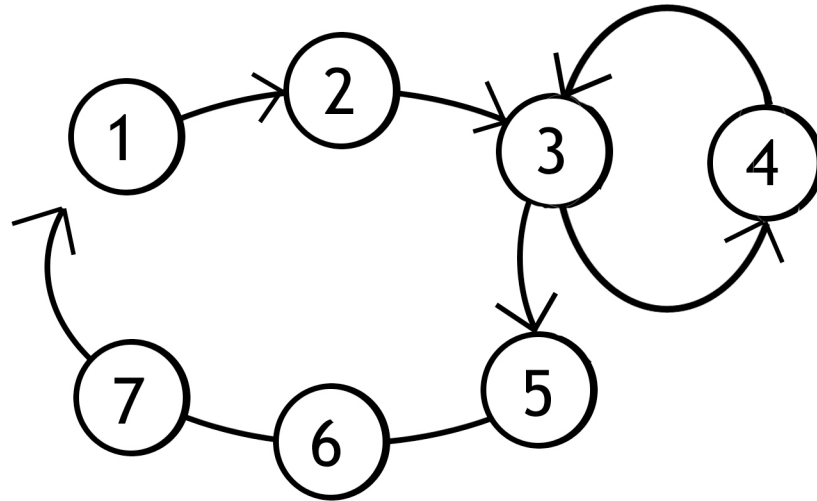


FIG. 7. Graphical representation of research cycle (modified reflective practice)

The research cycle begins and ends with a compilation of acquired knowledge. This is in respect to reflective practice being centered around the acknowledgment of existing knowledge, and the recognition of how new learning is incorporated into one's own understanding. Throughout the entire research cycle, extensive journaling took place in order to maintain a consistent awareness of implicit knowledge and external knowledge sources. Both the end of cycle reports and the final thesis offer details of the working and thinking processes, and give insights into how these processes can be enhanced, reflected upon, and developed. As Scrivener (2000) suggests, the final presentation of knowledge should be of value to others pursuing the production of a creative project (p.1) and offer strategies for action that other practitioners may employ to extend their own repertoires (p. 13).

Discussion and Analysis

Introduction

This section looks at each of the three research cycles through the lens of one of the three major roles, artist-producer, researcher and teacher-entertainer. The discussion focuses on instances where these roles were especially significant to the project.

As the first research creation cycle began in April 2010, I laid out a detailed and rigid schedule of research events. Each of the seven cycle stages (see Procedures pp. 39) was to last three days. I would work eight hours a day, five days a week, giving each production cycle one month. I would complete three cycles and proceed to complete the written component of my thesis in another month, allowing one month for final revisions and to schedule my thesis defense for August 2010. Now, two years later, I am aiming to defend my thesis in August of 2012. Needless to say that the research cycles and schedules changed significantly. These changes were prompted by reconsiderations of the project as a whole after the second cycle and also a reorienting of the working process from full to part time for the third research cycle. In order to provide a basic understanding of the research creation process, and to provide context to the selected instances of significance presented in the next three chapters, I have compiled an abbreviated summary of the entire project below.

Summary of the Research Creation Cycles

The first cycle, my “dive in” cycle, was extremely exciting, I had just completed my thesis proposal and had done a great deal of research into theories of creativity and had also been thinking of ideas for art activities and video segments in the months

leading up to the project. I was organized and familiar with the theory, my goals, and my research. I created a mind-map that covered my bedroom wall, linking various concepts, ideas and references. I had my video camera set up on a tripod and would record myself reflecting-in-action. The ideas I developed for video segments were considered and insightful; an decorated empty cookie box became the Memory Camera, a camera which relied on the “photographer’s” memory and attention to detail. I travelled to Vancouver during this cycle and filmed a segment of myself doing a large-scale sand drawing to commemorate earth day. Shells, pebbles and small pieces of wood were collected from the beach and inserted into a container of water which became hanging, melting and biodegradable Ice Sculptures.

The first cycle took about two weeks longer than I had expected and I finished closer to the middle of May 2010, however, I determined that this was due in part to many of the initial hurdles of the project like learning how to edit digital video. I had also reflected that some of the research stages overlapped, repeated, or abbreviated and I created a revised research cycle which was more streamlined and effective, giving extra time where it was most needed, and combining several of the early stages into a “research reflection cycle”. The reflection-on-action and -practice, or ROAP, reports turned out to be real hurdles, as they took much longer to write than I had expected. I had planned to complete an ROAP account twice each cycle: once after the first two weeks, or the “preparatory” portion of the cycle, and another upon completion of the “production” half of the research cycle. Additionally, I compiled a cycle overview at the end of the research cycle. I found these summary writings repetitive and time consuming, but felt they were also necessary in order to have complete data. In the end, I was quite pleased with how

the first cycle went. I was extremely proud of the art activities, lessons and clips I had created and felt I had learned a great deal about the digital video production process. I received positive and helpful feedback via e-mail from two of my four informants. I had a clear direction for the next cycle, and felt the research was evolving nicely.

The second cycle began in late May 2010. I refer to the second cycle as my “disappointment” cycle. Because the first cycle took longer to complete than I had hoped, I wanted to actually reduce the amount of time that the second cycle would take in order to keep close to my schedule. The preparatory half of the cycle, designed to provide me with fresh research and inspiration was greatly shortened, and the few sources I did review were underwhelming and did not provide the kinds of rich inspiration I felt I had for the first cycle. I focused on material exploration and techniques and came up with two activities: stuffed animals made from old clothes and stuffed with plastic grocery bags and a kite constructed using rolled up newspapers as the frame and flattened grocery bags as sails. I also had an additional short clip for the Art Supply Box, a simple cardboard box where potentially useful art supplies could be stored. I wanted the activities to come across as examples of material techniques in practice, encouraging viewers to adapt and repurpose the techniques, but in reflection I think I was unsuccessful in this. The instruction of the activities was too straight forward, and did not contain much in terms of promoting creative thinking. Despite several requests, I did not receive any feedback from my informants on the completed video and this led me to reconsider the feedback system I was using, doubting if e-mail was really the best way to go. Once again, the reports for this cycle were time consuming, which further delayed the completion of the cycle and added to my feelings of general disappointment.

In July of 2010, I decided to begin the third cycle, my “re-focus” cycle, with a review of the first two cycles. This gave me insight into what really went wrong with the second cycle; essentially that it was rushed and congested with forced research steps which did not add anything positive to the process. By the time I had begun the third cycle it was well into July and I realized that I would not be able to complete the project on time as outlined. I considered simply writing the thesis based on two cycles instead of three, but I felt that a third cycle was necessary to really bring the project to completion and to properly learn from and make up for my mistakes thus far. I decided to give myself another year and aim to finish the following August (2011). At this time I was offered a full time illustration job that was much needed and I could not refuse. In the early months of my new employment, I attempted to continue work on my project, but life was getting hectic and I could not give my project the time and focus that it needed. At the end of that next summer (August 2011), I had moved, my life was simpler and it was time to get back to my thesis. My boss allowed me to work only four days a week, giving me the necessary time to focus on my project. Another important realization regarding the project came to me at this time related to one of my primary research goals. I wanted to use this project to learn about my thinking and working processes involved with making children’s educational videos. However, the likelihood that I would ever have the financial freedom to spend all my time producing such videos is slim to none. Since I would most probably maintain a day job in the future, researching and producing the videos in my spare time would actually prove to be much more applicable and useful to me in the future.

I met with my advisor and discussed my thinking with her. She recommended many helpful changes to my approach. One was to simply set aside tasks that were causing me trouble and slowing down my progress, namely, the reflection write ups and cycle summaries. The other was to adopt a more flexible system for informant feedback, allowing casual conversations with friends and colleagues to inform my thinking. Since it had been so long since looking at the theory surrounding my research, I gave myself an undetermined amount of time to read, take notes, and slowly begin to think about the kind of videos I wanted to make.

In the fall of 2011 I began a slow and exploratory process of thinking about what I would do in my third video. I wanted to lead by example and demonstrate collaboration and social art making (Freedman, 2010), I wanted to foster an emotional awareness (Gnezda, 2011) and encourage diverse creativity and experimentation of art forms (Robinson, 2011). As I explored various books (Robinson, 2011; Gnezda, 2011; Kaufman & Sterberg, 2010) and articles (Gude, 2010; Freedman, 2010; Zimmerman, 2010; Perkins & Carter, 2011) and talked with friends, activities began to take shape. That Christmas (2011) I was offered free accommodation at Mis Casas, eco-resort in Baccalar, Mexico, in exchange for a mural painted on one of their walls. I thought this would be a great way to lead by example and demonstrate social and collaborative art making. One of my friends recommended that I have a puppet sidekick, which my advisor had been recommending since the project's inception. Ricky the Recycling Rat evolved in my mind over the first few months of 2012 and worked his way into the projects I had been thinking about. Filming of the bulk of the episode began in March and concluded in May 2012. In the end, the third research production cycle was by far the

most successful. I learned much through the process and am motivated to continue this work after I finally defend the thesis this August 2012.

This summary of the three research cycles provides an understanding of the grand timeline of the project as a whole and the general proceedings of the research cycles. The following three chapters each discuss how specific roles within my project were of significance within the individual cycles. Cycle one considers my roles as artist and producer during the production of the first episode. I examine the learning that took place regarding my performances as well as during the editing and postproduction stages. The following chapter concerns the role of researcher within the second cycle, the “disappointment cycle”. Written reflections are used as evidence of the learning process that took place during a tedious and unenthused research cycle. I also indicate how this learning contributed to the success of the third cycle. The subsequent chapter deals with the third or “refocused” cycle and explores the roles of teacher and entertainer as they pertain to my conceptualization and creation of Ricky the Recycling Rat.

Cycle One: Artist-Producer

FIG. 8. Video still from the memory camera segment of episode 1.

This chapter highlights the role of artist-producer within the first research cycle, my “dive in” cycle. While I felt that multiple activities in this cycle reflect the contributions of myself as an artist-producer in this project, in this section I focus on aspects of the filmmaking process, as this is where these roles developed and flourished the most. I began with minimal knowledge of the digital video editing software Final Cut Pro [FCP] and through some of the experiences detailed in this chapter, I achieved a functional understanding of the software. I also learned a variety of filmmaking and editing techniques through the production of the first video and received extremely helpful advice regarding these aspects from one of my informants after he reviewed the finished episode. This chapter contains data samples such as images, video stills, excerpts from both my private journal and my reflection-in-action record as well as excerpts of

informant feedback. These data samples are provided to help illustrate the significance of the events and illuminate my methods of reflective practice and active documentation.

April 27th 2010:

"Hi I'm Zac and welcome to The Art Room, where any room can be an art room," I say to the small red recording light on my digital camcorder. After three weeks of preliminary research and planning, I am finally ready to start filming. Walking over to the camera I press the record button again to stop recording and proceed to watch the short piece of video. "Pretty boring" I think to myself. I must try to be lively, enthusiastic and energetic. I press record again and try the line a second time with more energy. Repeating the line over and over helps and I can feel myself building up to a good take. I stop worrying about each take individually and instead give myself time to reflect on each take as it happens. I say small things to myself in between each one; more movement, louder, annunciate, more tonal range. I continue until I can tell that I'm getting there. "Good, three more...two more... one more...Pretty good, one more!...Okay!". In this way I embody the role of director as I reflect on and scrutinize each performance and indicate to myself how I can better deliver the material. In allowing my intuition to guide my performance I begin to learn about my role as artist as a performer, and my role of producer as a director in the filmmaking process.

Reviewing the video on my computer I decide that this directing-on-the-fly method is quite effective. It's not as well organized as having each take as a separate video, but works well for this project because I capture not only my progressing performances but also the directional instances which largely contribute an eventual successful take. This is also of additional value as research data. I watch the entire video from start to finish just to get

a sense of the performances in general, the different takes and to see if any stand out immediately. Then, with my notebook in hand, I watch the video again, this time taking notes regarding the start times of the better takes. Finally I skip directly to the beginning of the best takes and decide which one is the best.

(Re-telling, based on material from ROAP, April 27, 2012).

This creative process was unlike anything I'd done before. I've been drawing and painting for so long that I can't even really remember *learning* how to; the tools are just an extension of myself, and they do pretty much exactly what I want them to. Script writing, performing and editing video all presented new problems, which I needed to actively learn how to manage. The software I used for editing my videos is the industry standard, Final Cut Pro. I got a primer in this software from a friend, in exchange for a crash course in web design. Still, there remained many things that I had to learn myself. Eventually I discovered that if a clip has been cropped before being imported into FCP, a video transition such as a fade or wipe cannot be used. There must be excess video for the transition itself, thus, the untrimmed clip should be shortened in FCP, which allows the software to recall the trimmed portions of the clip and use them in generating the transition. In creating videos that could be appealing as well as educational to children, the role of editor became extremely important as I attempted to maintain a high degree of visual action in the video, a major factor in determining appeal (Fisch, 2004 p. 27).

Acting was also a learning process for me. In my years of teaching I had never conceived that I was performing. That concept nonetheless helped me grapple with the nervousness I felt while shooting. I would tell myself "it's just teaching, but without any kids!" (RIA video May 3, 2010). My practice of recording reflection-in-action and simply

thinking out loud helped me become more comfortable in front of the camera. I have heard that people think that their recorded voice sounds strange when they hear it played back. For me, 'strange' is understatement. I was completely taken aback by not only the sound of my voice, but my tone and even pronunciation. A tendency of mine is to speak quickly through small words to get to the meat of my topic, for example, if I wanted to say "Sometimes I like to just go for a walk to clear my head." It would sound something like this "Someties I like t' jus go frwalk t' clear m' head". When we watch a movie or a television show, the importance of pronunciation does not often factor into our thinking, the performer has been trained to speak clearly and any mistakes are edited out. In order for comprehension of the content to take place, all speech, not only critical instructions must be clear and simple (Fisch, 2004, p. 28). I discovered that if I try to over-pronounce each and every word, especially the small words, then it came out sounding closer to what I actually thought I was saying. I developed a kind of outside awareness of my performances, and could identify when I had mumbled through a word. Thus, the role of artist as performer was critical in producing comprehensible art education videos, as I needed to deliver my material in a coherent manner. Additionally, assuming the role of director was instrumental in demanding a higher quality performance of myself as an actor.

In addition to simple and direct dialogue, I also needed to be an interesting character. As Fisch (2004) suggests, comprehension of educational content in video is also reliant on the appeal of the characters (p. 28). Informant feedback was helpful in establishing confidence in my presentation style. While I would watch myself and think

that I look goofy and awkward, one of my informants he had this to say about my presence on screen:

“Your character is awesome, I think you could push your character even weirder... You have a great persona. You’ve got these crazy outfits so you’re this eccentric interesting artist, sort of like Mr. Dressup in a way; he wasn’t a patronizing figure that talked down to me. I felt like he was talking to me like I was up here, and that’s what I liked about you... you make [viewers] feel grown up” (Informant interview, January 24, 2012).



FIG. 9. Video still from ice sculptures segment from episode 1.

This helped me to accept my style of performance teaching and validated the way I feel about teaching in general. I believe that children are capable of amazing things and by treating them like creative individuals I hope to allow that to surface. This feedback helped me believe in myself as a performing artist as well.

It can be seen in through this first research cycle that the role of artist-producer and those roles included therein such as actor, director and editor, were of prime importance in the production of the first video. As a reflective/creative practitioner I learned how these roles worked in concert and depended on each other to produce quality and effective art educational videos. The role of director was significant in recognizing where performance lacked and demanding refinement. The role of performer was instrumental in creating content that was clear and direct thus enabling comprehension, and also in presenting an appealing character, one that children will ideally like, be interested in and look up to. The role of editor was critical in coordinating the filmed material and constructing a flowing and accessible presentation of the content. I learned a great deal about the various production aspects of the videos; refining my skills as a reflective director and developing a functional understanding of the technical requirements of digital video manipulation. The artistry inherent in much of this research cycle was most prominent in establishing a comfort level with myself as a performer, but was also evident in other aspects such as creation of content, script writing and also production elements like video editing. I felt that the knowledge I had developed for myself about these roles and about how they were so interdependent was a significant step towards understanding the overall production process and I was extremely motivated about the second cycle and curious as to what further understanding I would acquire.

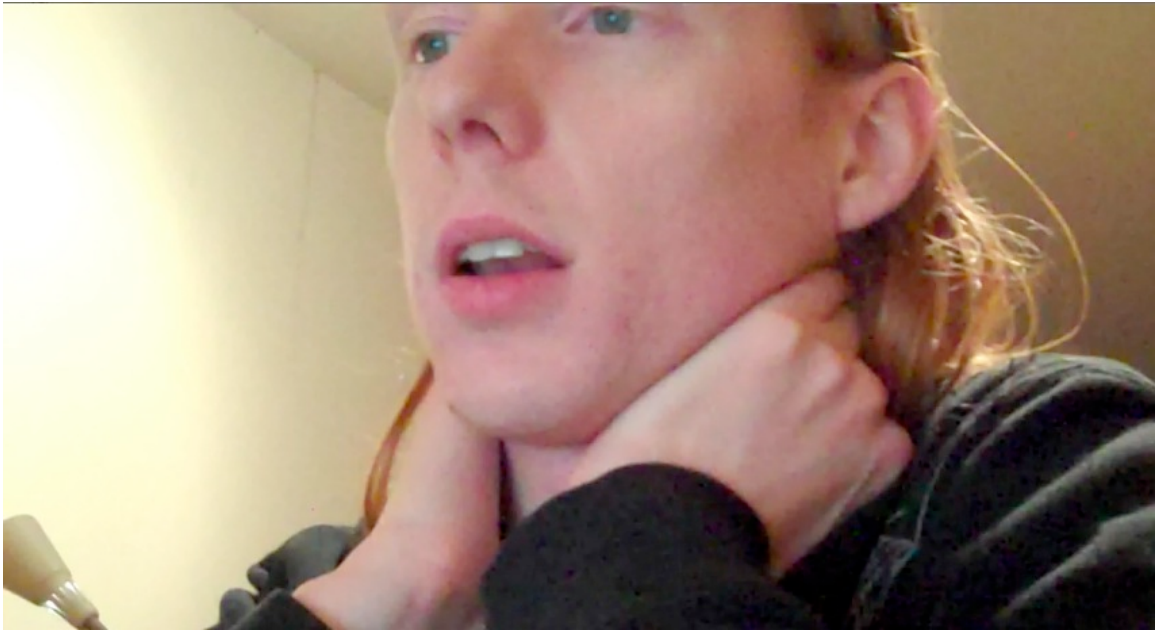
Cycle Two : Researcher

FIG. 10. Video still from a reflection-in-action session.

This chapter examines my role of researcher within the second research cycle. As I mentioned in the overview of the project, the second cycle was largely a disappointment. However, with disappointment comes great opportunity for learning and many developments with respect to my research cycle and methodology were made which contributed to the success of the third cycle. I focus specifically on the records of reflection on action and practice to illustrate how my expectations and preoccupation with schedule and cycle adherence inhibited the flow of natural research creation. This chapter contains data samples from my private journal, my reflection-in-action record and my reflection-on-action and -practice record.

The second research cycle began on May 17th 2010, more than two weeks after my initial schedule dictated. To compensate for this delay and to maintain my overall deadline, I reviewed my records of the first cycle to find anywhere that the research cycle

could be condensed. I was hesitant to do this for fear of shortchanging my process. Having less time for the second cycle was a new problem within the project, which, according to Schon (1983), calls for appraisal and evaluation based on reflections and observations gathered from previous experiences (p. 139).

April 10, 2011

I review the reflection-in-action videos and also my written entries from the first research cycle. I find one video where I am in the kitchen doing a pile of dishes (See figure 3.4, below). "So I started doing these dishes and then realized I was thinking about the project so I just grabbed the camera and hit record." I am talking over my shoulder at the camera and begin to reflect candidly about the state of the project. "There is a lot of overlap" I say, referring to the progression of the cycle stages. "I'll be reading an article and then get an idea for an artwork and then go play around with materials for an hour before coming back to the article. ... The process is not nearly as linear as I imaged it being." The video goes on, I finish cleaning the dishes and even proceed to wipe down the counters, all while thinking out loud about the project. When I finally turn around and face the camera I say simply "Well, that went well, I should do that more often." I recall the instances where I would switch between different tasks and remember feeling somewhat guilty at the time for not just finishing the article. In reflecting back, I see the process as more natural and I see that this moment of reflection as contributing to the acceptance I was finally able to achieve in spontaneous, associative working and thinking to the point where I would even feel excitement at the prospect that a great idea was forming in my subconscious mind. (Retelling based on RIA video, April 10, 2011)



FIG. 11. Video still of reflection-in-action.

Another example of cycle stage overlap can be seen here, in the project's first ROAP entry:

I demonstrate for the camera what I am doing with a plastic bottle when I cut the top off and make a wall mounted pencil holder. This is a type of overlap: I am brainstorming but still doing something which is more closely related to the types of actions I would do in the final stages of the project, ie: act and teach for the camera. The other thing I do is mention how dangerous the use of the exacto knife is and that I should not be doing it, this is all at once reflecting, teaching and performing. (ROAP, April 21st, 2010)

In fact, throughout this cycle, I noticed that despite designating a specific order of actions in the research cycle, the creative process was far messier than I had planned. Acknowledging these instances as overlapping between stages and working towards a

revised cycle structure was a significant step towards a more natural work structure.

Jarvis (2007) suggests that this kind of intuitive learning is common and gives the example of reading a book and then later realizing the importance and meaning of the content (p. 206). Relatedly, community and social education theorist Mark Smith (1994) points out:

“As we think and act, questions arise that cannot be answered in the present. The space afforded by recording, supervision and conversation with our peers allows us to approach these. Reflection requires space in the present and the promise of space in the future” (p.150).

I reviewed the cycle stages and decided that stages three, four and five (3: Evaluate present circumstance, 4: Reflection-in-action and 5: Plan) were the most prone to overlap and combination. I combined these stages into what I called the RIA spiral, a thinking and working phase couched in reflection-in-action, open to exploring a variety of sources and inspirations and moving in and out of actually planning parts of the episode. This represents a reframing of the situation as described by Scrivener: (2000) “As the professional tries to make sense of it, he also reflects on the understandings which have been implicit in his action, understanding which he surfaces, criticizes, restructures and embodies in further action” (p. 6).

There still remained the issue of beginning the cycle late, and at this point, I was still working with my original four-month timeline in mind. To streamline my activities, I determined that since much of the mind-mapping and brainstorming had been done as preparatory work for the first cycle, it was not such a necessary stage to include in the second cycle. Also, since I had only one email from one of my informants reviewing the

completed first episode, the second stage (Gather input) could also be significantly shortened. In an excerpt from my ROAP from May 27th 2010, I detail my revised timeline for the second research cycle.

Stages one and two were shortened to one day each. Stages three, four and five were combined into what I now call the RIA spiral which still involves the three independent stages, but recognizes the implicit overlap in the three. The RIA spiral lasts seven days. Stage six, the production stage, has remained four days long and includes filming and editing. Stage 7, the cycle reflection, remained two days long.

I refer to the first half of the cycle as the “preparatory phase”. This is where most of the external research takes place, where I am looking for inspiration, reading articles, books, experimenting with materials and techniques and talking with people about my ideas. I have since seen that abbreviating this part of the process resulted in less considered art activities that I was generally unenthused about. Nevertheless, as soon as I felt I had enough material to fill the episode I went forward with the planning and production stages. This had a cascading effect through the rest of the cycle as I moved quickly through the planning stages, simply sketching out a basic script and thus forcing myself to improvise on the spot. I later reflected on the impact this had on the timeline as a whole:

I need to make sure that I have a quality script to follow otherwise I stumble around and make it up as I go. Which is fine for filming, but a headache for editing. I need to make sure that I do three takes of every

scene. I also need to clearly identify the “scenes” instead of just going from line to line and editing together a series of lines. (RIA, June 9th 2010)

I repeatedly noticed that my efforts to condense the research creation cycle had the opposite effect.

I think the main thing that I’ve been realizing is that I can’t really do a rush job, and that if I try, it ends up taking longer because each aspect has not been considered carefully enough. (RIA, June 11th 2010.)

I was also so preoccupied with completing production that my journal entries and reflection-in-action records are minimal. While I do give action and production of the artifact precedence over reflective reporting as Scrivener (2000) suggests should be the case in creative production projects (p. 3), I nevertheless felt as though this was detrimental to the integrity of the research and the knowledge that was available to me through this cycle. As Thornton (2005) suggests, an artist teacher should have a philosophical “desire to be authentic in the world” (p. 168). By rushing through the production and also the research aspects of this cycle I felt disappointed in myself as an artist and researcher.

I’m glad the first episode turned out well because otherwise I would be feeling really discouraged! (RIA, June 10th 2010)

Having completed the episode in mid June, I still had the chance to move right into the writing of the thesis report and submit for an August defense.

However, this was really not an option for me as I felt that I had not accomplished my goal of learning about how to create my episodes, I had mostly

just learned how not to. Accepting a summer teaching job ended up being a good decision. I decided not to try and finish the project that summer, but give myself enough time to understand my working processes and reformulate my research creation approach. I was able to produce a fairly comprehensive ROAP on the second cycle, and I felt this was necessary to do shortly after the cycle so that much of the detail could be recorded.

“Reflection on action and practice is not driven by the unexpected per se but by the desire to learn from experience: it is a discipline rather than a necessity for further action” (Scrivener, 2000, p. 8).

One year later, in August of 2011, I decided it was time to revisit the project. After reviewing the first two cycles I met with my thesis advisor and discussed the many of the difficulties that I had getting through the project. Her advice coincided with many of Scrivener’s (2000) suggestions, firstly to “give greater attention to the process of creative production” (p. 9) and to keep in mind that “reflection-in-action and -practice must be the maidservant of effective action, yielding to action’s inherent structural integrity” (p. 9). Possibly the most significant adjustment for the upcoming third cycle was based on my observations that a tight schedule was not conducive to effective action and reflection. I decided to allow myself six months for the third research cycle rather than one and less than one for the first two cycles. I felt that this flexibility would provide me with much greater freedom in the preparatory phase and that this would result in both well conceived activities and well prepared filming materials such as scripts, locations and equipment. By giving greater emphasis

on the preparatory phase I would also move closer to the “Sesame Workshop model” (Fisch, 2004, p. 16), striking a more harmonious balance between research, content creation, and actual production. Recognizing of the importance of theoretical research during the early stages of the project was one of the most valuable lessons I learned from the second research cycle, and became a primary factor of success of the third cycle.

The adjustments I made moving forward were essentially embracing the openness in my process that De Freitas (2010) stresses is so important in producing thorough research. The quote from Gillian Rose (2001) “Use your methodology to discipline your passion, not deaden it” (p. 4) was to be a mantra in the third cycle.

In the second cycle, the role of researcher was critical in two major ways. Firstly, I learned that exploratory research into surrounding theory and themes was essential. Without the intake of fresh ideas and challenging considerations, the content development process becomes stagnant and uninspired. Secondly, the value of reflective practice emerged as the primary tool for recognizing faults in the process. Through journaling and reflection-in-action, often through video recorded thinking out loud sessions, I was able to step back and evaluate various aspects of the project and how I felt about them, often enabling identification of root causes of problems and discovering solutions that could either be immediately implemented or carried over to the next cycle.

Cycle Three: Teacher-Entertainer

This chapter highlights my role of teacher-entertainer within the third research cycle. The concept of education being entertaining is not so common in academic literature, however, it becomes obvious in the context of educational media such as video, which has strong ties to pop culture media and the world of entertainment.

Upon review of my first two episodes, I felt that they lacked dynamism, that is, were insufficiently entertaining. This chapter focuses on the conception and production of Ricky the Recycling Rat, the puppet sidekick whose presence in the third episode was important to creating an entertaining and dialogical dynamic. This chapter contains data samples such as images, video stills, excerpts from both my private journal and my reflection-in-action record as well as excerpts of informant feedback. These data samples are provided to help illustrate the significance of the events and how they relate to the research question, “what I can learn from the roles of teacher and entertainer in the production of my videos for children?”

December 15, 2011:

*I'm in the middle of a six-hour bus ride from Montreal to Toronto and I'm reading Sir Ken Robinson's recent book *Learning to be creative* (2011). After reading a section about the history of creativity in education, I set the book aside and let my mind wander. I previously would have forced myself to keep reading at least until the chapter was over, but I feel I've learned the importance of giving myself time to digest the text and let my mind wander to wherever it needs to. The idea of a puppet comes to me and I hear the distant and repeated suggestions of my advisor Kathleen saying something about dialogue. An image of a small rat puppet pops into my head, a recycling rat! No, that's too weird and gross. A rat is no good for a kids'*

show, I think; my puppet needs to be something likeable, like a bird, or rabbit. With my eyes closed I try and think of what kind of creature my puppet sidekick should be. Maybe the puppet should be something fantastical, embodying the concept of out of the ordinary and the unexpected as suggested by Lowenfeld & Brittain (1982, p. 87). A rat is unexpected. What kind of creature would best be embodied by my friend and collaborator in this third episode, Andy? I think, remembering our conversation months ago about him wanting to be a part of the show. Arty the artistic... Carl the creative... Maybe if I think of names that will help me decide on a character. Suddenly my girlfriend's Dad's name pops into my head, Ricky. Ricky the Recycling Rat! Oh, and what a good rat voice Andy has! There was no more denying it. My sidekick would be a rat.

"You're Ricky the Recycling Rat" I tell Andy and I watch as his grin turns into his characteristic chuckle. "Hey Zac, what kinda art are we making today?" he says in a nasally New Jersey accent. It's my turn to chuckle. It's perfect. "Well today we're going to be making a feelings journal" I say in my art teacher voice. "Feelin's?!" Andy says "I thought we was gonna be makin' art?!". The dialogical dynamic is already there. "This is perfect!" I say and explain how the dialogue between us will be a great way for me to give validation to the activities that I'm presenting in the video. If Ricky has this somewhat cynical but open mind about things, kids will be able to relate their own discomfort with doing something like writing down their feelings with him. He's a tough, no nonsense, New Jersey artist rat, and he's willing to experiment and try out something new, he's leading by example. I explain that he's an artist who uses objects from the recycling to make his sculptures.

(Re-telling based on records of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action and -practice from December 15-19, 2011)



FIG. 12. Initial sketches for Ricky the Recycling Rat.

January 28, 2012:

Andy and I had set aside a day to get together and construct the puppet itself. We began by looking at the sketches I had done for the design (Fig. 12). As we began to construct the mouth structure, it was looking pretty silly and the mouth control was not as elegant as I had envisioned. We proceeded to search the Internet for images and videos of puppets and puppet making. As it happens, Muppets' puppeteer, Jim Henson (IPTV, 1969) had produced a nice 15-minute video explaining how to make a variety of puppets. As we watched, I got a brain wave. In the video, Henson puts a piece of cloth over one hand and points his index finger upwards. He then pushes a tennis ball with a hole in it onto his index finger over the cloth. A face is produced on the tennis ball and cardboard

rings are slid onto his thumb and middle fingers over the cloth. Henson then shows a version where the cloth has been sewn in such a way as to give arms (Fig. 13).



FIG. 13. The basic mechanic used for Ricky, presented by Jim Henson (IPTV, 1969)

I decided that this two part system would well and while not allowing for mouth control, gave the puppeteer direct control over the posture and arms, allowing for a very expressive puppet. I formed tin foil into a rat head shape over Andy's index finger and made a cover for the shape out of the orange corduroys. With a couple straight pins for eyes and an elastic band around the nose, Ricky the Recycling Rat was taking shape. I sewed together a body leaving a hole at the top. Andy put his hand into the body and stuck his index finger through the top. I placed the puppet's head onto his protruding finger and we both laughed hysterically. Ricky was born (Fig. 14).



FIG. 14. Andy with newborn Ricky.

I wanted Ricky to not only be a sidekick, but also an artist in his own right, an independent creator with his own practice and his own gallery. I felt this would help establish his character quickly, giving him more significance as a feature in the videos. Giving Ricky's character so much strength rests on the concept of leading by example (Bastos & Zimmerman, 2011; Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982). I imagined Ricky to be a little older than the target audience, and that he is confident, adventurous and not afraid to be himself. As Fisch (2004) points out, children are more apt to like strong characters that are a little older than themselves (p. 28). I wanted to set a good example with Ricky and also bring out his personality.

In creating Ricky's persona, we needed a series of artworks made from recycled material that would be on display in his gallery. I wanted Andy to have his hand in this process as well. I advised Andy that the sculptures should be large and striking. Looking at some examples of modern public sculpture, we got together to create Ricky's repertoire. In episodes one and two, I had inserted short clips of arts and crafts with little to no instruction, the wind chimes and the paper cup guitar for example. My goal with these short clips was to give an example of some activity that didn't necessarily need any instruction; the process was evident in the finished product (and the lack of specific instruction would leave room for creative invention by the viewer.) In the same way, I wanted Ricky's sculptures to present as examples of what can be done with recycled materials. In many cases, the sculptures' various components are obvious and the construction process can be extrapolated by the viewer (Fig. 15). The viewer is creatively re-building the artwork in their mind and learning through that process about techniques that they may have not considered before. My goal as an entertainer is to engage the audience on as many levels as possible and I believe that the artworks we created for Ricky are successful in this.



FIG. 15. Ricky's sculptures made from recycled materials.

“What do you sell a sculpture like this for?” I asked Ricky during a period of improvisational dialogue. “Oh I don’ know, maybe a piece of cheese.” He responded. This kind of playful banter helped both Andy and me get a handle on Ricky’s character. We arranged the artworks on the windowsill and sat behind my small coffee table. We improvised for twenty minutes or so, laughing and talking about the artwork. “What’s this piece about?” I’d ask. “Oh well, it’s about you and me and the people out there... it’s about the four dimensional social over-mind.” Andy and I laughed so hard that one of Ricky’s eyes fell out. Strangely enough, this line, among others, made its way into the final script. The character of Ricky developed and evolved over time as Davis (2008) claims that puppet characters often do (p. 198).

Writing the script was a smooth process because I was quickly becoming familiarized with Ricky. I wasn't trying to establish his character so much as bring it out in the script. I felt I knew how Ricky would react in certain situations and I knew how I wanted Ricky to react in others. I purposefully created situations where Ricky would become confused, unsure or resistant, seeing the dialogue as opportunity to show how someone with a creative and open mind might respond to these situations.

ZAC

Alright, Well here i am back in the studio,
joined by Ricky the Recycling Rat! Say hi Ricky!

RICKY

Ohh, errr, where am I supposed to say it??

ZAC

Just there, to all the kids watching at home.
(Zac points at camera)

RICKY

What? Kids at home? Watching us? Right now?? ...
Well okay. Uhh, Hi there kids... uh, I'm Ricky!

I was able to write this section of script easily because I felt I knew Ricky's character and how he might react to this unfamiliar situation. In a way I echo my own initial self-conscious feelings of being in front of the camera the first time. This embodies the notion of leading by example both in Ricky's willingness to try out something new and in my empathizing with his nervousness and my encouragement of his attempt.

ZAC

Okay, so today we're going to be making a One
Word Journal Jar!

RICKY

One what jar?!

ZAC

It's a one-word journal jar. Just a jar, that we
decorate and then every day try and remember to
write down one word to put in it!

RICKY

(RICKY pauses and fidgets) Err, Zac, Can I talk to you for a second?

ZAC

Oh, um, yeah, what is it Ricky?

RICKY

Well err, I thought you said we were making art, what's with all these words, and the journal??

ZAC

Well, I'm getting to that Ricky, haven't you ever been inspired by a feeling you've had? Or by something that's happened to you? Or by a picture or some music??

RICKY

Oh, uhh, yeah, I guess so. Whenever I see an old can o tuna, I get this feeling in my belly, and I ...

ZAC

That's hunger Ricky, and it's not a feeling, it's just being hungry. I'm talking about being happy or sad, excited, or lonely, or seeing a movie that makes you laugh so hard you cry!

RICKY

Well I tell ya, I'm sad when I get to the tuna can and it's totally empty!

ZAC

Haha, Well, I guess that counts. So anyways kids, what we're going to do is write down one word; a feeling, emotion, colour, or whatever you feel like writing, and put it into the Jar. Then, after a week or two, when there's a good bunch of words in the jar, we can start using them to make art!

RICKY

Now we're talkin!

ZAC

What I have here is an art-making checklist! You can make one like it, or print one out from the link on the website. There are 8 different forms of expression, or kinds of art; Sculpture and Dance for example. The goal is to create an artwork in each of the 8 different media, using a different word from the one word journal jar as inspiration for each one!

RICKY

Well Zac, what's the point of all that? I already make art, why should I have a journal jar and art forms checklist?

ZAC

Well this way, you get used to being in touch with your emotions day to day and also get to try out different art forms that you may have never tried before.

RICKY

Hmm, well, I've never tried any acting before, but if all of them jokers on TV can do it, well then by jimmy, so can I!!

ZAC

That's the spirit Ricky!

This script sample again shows my understanding of Ricky's character as having a strong and confident exterior and an open and sensitive heart; eager and somewhat impatient, hesitant but ultimately willing to try new things. I wanted viewers to relate with Ricky through this dialogue and I imagine they do. When viewers identify with or compare themselves to a television character, they become more emotionally involved with the program and the perceived reality of the content increases (Fisch, 2004, p. 175). Also, since children learn social behaviors through observation, television programs can be a rich source for children to learn about relationships, emotions and interaction (Mares & Woodward, 2011)

Much of my classroom experience in art education has been in coercing students to simply try something new. For many children, fear is a large factor when it comes to the arts: fear not only of failure and of making mistakes (Gude, 2010), but also fear of success as being labeled by peers as sensitive, creative, and smart rather than strong or normal. The script also illustrates the kind of dynamic that could only happen through a

dialogue. Since the project deals with emotional awareness, a concept that young viewers may find difficult, the dialogue presents the opportunity for justification and clarification. Ricky expresses confusion as to the purpose and structure of the Journal Jar, to which I respond by explaining emotions, feelings, and also why they are important to an artist. This kind of validation is something that I had attempted previously in the Memory Camera segment (Episode 1), explaining how it creates a lasting memory and has more meaning than taking a regular photograph. These “teachable moments” help give value to the activity and are something that a child can hold onto while doing something they’re maybe not accustomed to. If a viewer doesn’t feel comfortable writing a journal about their feelings, they can use the one word journal jar and hold onto the concept that they are being aware of their feelings—which in turn will likely help them be a better artist. Robinson (2011) suggests that individuals who nurture sensitivity, empathy and who are emotionally aware, communicate better and become better friends, partners, mentors or teachers for it (p. 175). In this way I strive to be entertaining, interesting and captivating while I subtly teach lessons which apply to more than just art. My goals with Ricky the Recycling Rat were to create this entertaining dynamic which could act as a vehicle for the more abstract and deeper teaching points in my activities and in this I believe I was successful.

The third research cycle was fun, rich and rewarding. My role of teacher flourished as I repeatedly considered how I was modeling social and artistic behaviors in the video. In developing activities that were open ended and individualistic, I was able to transmit the concept of freedom and choice, something that I had found difficult in the previous videos. While in the previous cycles, the role of teacher was present as a

requirement that must be fulfilled, in the third cycle I came to view the teacher role as integral, interweaving all aspects of production from lesson development to character portrayal. The role of entertainer was also ever present in this cycle. The knowledge that a video must be entertaining in order to provide a complete viewing experience drove me to think of ways I could enhance the enjoyment of the episode. The role of entertainer thus encircled that of the teacher, always looking for ways to make the teaching concepts more appealing. The combined role of teacher-entertainer became an excellent way to approach different parts of the process.

Conclusions

This studio-based thesis afforded me the opportunity to pull back the curtain on my own creative process. This was a new approach for me as my painting practice is couched in intuition and spontaneity. I designed the research as a vehicle for my own learning: establishing schedules, landmarks, and designated phases of exploration, experimentation and reflection. In the end I have created three prototype episodes of *The Art Room*. I am very happy about this. While each episode is no masterpiece, as artefacts of a research-creation project, they are very successful. The videos themselves embody the learning that took place. In watching the three videos in sequence, I see small mistakes that I corrected in later episodes, I see improvements in the quality of the lessons and I can start to see myself develop as an actor. As I notice these things, I am reminded of the reflections, and learning that took place during the project: for instance, I remember that I need good lighting, and a good script, I remember that I need time to think about and develop quality activities and lessons and I remember that I need to continuously push myself as an actor and director. For me the episodes are evidence of this and other learning. Through this thesis text I hope that I have been able to open a window into the learning and making process of making *The Art Room*.

Beginning this project, I considered roles that I thought would be needed and or useful in the production of art educational videos for children. I asked myself, how these roles could contribute to the process, how they would be important, and how I would embody these sometimes unfamiliar roles. As a reflective practitioner, I was able to reveal the complex and subtle functions of these roles acting in concert with and often overlapping each other.

Establishing the various roles provided multiple lenses with which I was able to focus my reflections and more clearly identify the significance of my actions. Reflective practice was instrumental in identifying which role, or roles I played in any given action. Video recorded reflection-in-action would lead me to realize that while constructing a pencil holder and reminding myself to speak loud and clearly I was simultaneously acting as a researcher, a performer and a director. Reflections-on-action and -practice would similarly reveal implicit overlapping roles within actions, for example: while reading an article I would play both a research role in broadening the project's academic scope, and a teacher role in considering how the theory could translate into a creative art lesson. The effect was cumulative: each time I would reflect on one or more of the roles, I became more aware of the significance of that role in the project, and thus, reflected on it more often. I would see the importance of realizing the director's role within a moment of spontaneous creativity and would consciously embody that role more often when recording video journals or reading articles aloud. When it came time for the role of director to come into play during filming, I was comfortable and capable because I had learned about that role in previous practice.

The role of researcher was critical in illuminating the creative process and explicating the learning that took place through the project. The various other roles, artist, producer, teacher and entertainer, were the productive force that carried the project to completion. I examine each in turn, below, as I draw conclusions about this work's engagement with my research question, "what can I as a reflective/creative practitioner learn about how the roles of artist, producer, researcher, teacher and entertainer contribute to the creation of art educational videos for children?"

The role of Artist within this project was two-fold. The focus in this research paper is on the role of artist as an actor, but within the project, the role of artist as a creative, empathetic and open-minded individual was also important in research and development processes and also in modelling artistic traits in the videos themselves. My role as a visual artist was especially apparent in the Mexico mural painting segment of Episode 3 and in the construction of Ricky the Recycling Rat. I demonstrated my role as a creative thinker in the conceptualization of art activities such as the memory camera and making a working kite out of newspaper and plastic bags. The artistic attribute of empathy was embodied in the one-word-journal-jar activity and in my dialogue with Ricky. It became clear fairly early in the project that my life experiences as an artist would be extremely beneficial to the project. I also made sure to keep up my painting practice because I knew how important it was in maintaining my artistic sensibilities that I valued so highly in the production of *The Art Room* (Fig. 16).

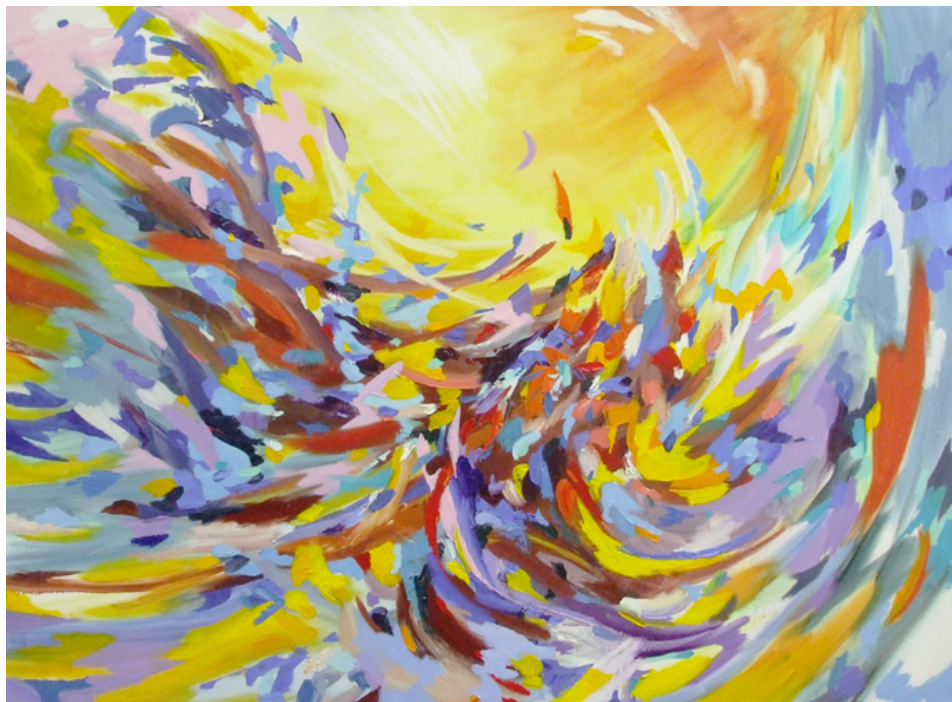


FIG. 16. A painting entitled “Soul Surfing” completed during the project.

While painters paint on canvas, performers use their bodies, voices and costumes to create their artwork in real time. This role was one that I was quite unfamiliar with when I began this research project. As Schön points out though, even unfamiliar situations can be seen by the reflective practitioner to have familiar elements. As I approached the role of artist as actor, I identified various experiences that helped me understand what I was bringing to the role already. Performing magic shows at children's birthday parties, winning a public speaking competition in grade seven, taking an improv comedy class in college, and giving presentations at academic conferences, all contributed to my understanding of the performative role. Of course, this role was critical to the success of the videos, and the learning that took place can be seen best through successive viewing of the episodes. I learned that a measure of enthusiasm is needed to hold the attention of a viewer. When critically reviewing the stuffed animal segment in Episode 2, my lack of on-screen animation makes me feel more like taking a nap than making something. I also learned to speak more clearly, and to be expressive with my voice, body language and gestures. It should be mentioned that I was not the only one in the role of actor. My dear friend Andy's performance as Ricky was pivotal in Episode 3. Andy's New Jersey accent, and intuitive interpretation of my scripts largely contributed to the success of the third episode. My role as actor and Andy's artistry with Ricky were key factors in producing a successful episode.

Over the course of the project several people expressed an interest in participating. Choosing the right collaborator: somebody with a strong, dynamic character and a flexible and cooperative personality was also a choice that reflected success in my role as producer.

The role of producer included several other roles such as director, editor, script writer, camera-man, location coordinator, and all around planner. Having minimal experience in all of these roles meant a large amount of learned needed to happen. Confiding in one informant I said “I should have really taken some classes in filmmaking before this project”, and speaking from experience he replied, “Nah, it’s actually best just to dive right in and start doing it”. Even tasks as simple as writing a script seemed daunting at first, especially because I hadn’t invented Ricky yet and there was no dialogue. Intuition played a large role in many of the creative decisions I was making about the project early on, such as camera angles, lighting, and when to cut and start a new scene. I reflected that some of these tasks seemed to come naturally and I wondered if by virtue of growing up with television I had been imbued with a kind of media conventionality.

The ways in which the many roles of producer worked together and depended on each other was important to learn about. For example, when I produced a good quality script, it was easier to perform and film and thus easier to edit afterwards. It would also be easier to direct, as my lines were already well considered. In being easy to direct I was able to focus on the subtleties of the performance rather than obvious mistakes such as mumbles, ums, and forgotten lines. I picked up on things like where my eyes were directed or how I was holding a prop or tool and how that might affect the final product. The process became a conversation between the roles, one complimenting another, one pointing out a mistake of another and all working together with the same end goal. Playing all of these roles was sometimes exhausting and I would understand why there are so many people involved in professional productions. Mostly however, it was

rewarding and motivating to be doing everything myself and of course, I was able to learn the intricacies of how each role contributes and relates to each other role.

The role of teacher was relatively well defined within the project. There was of course overlap with other roles such as artist, actor, entertainer and researcher, but there was one vital task in the process where the role of teacher stood out as especially significant. That was in taking an artistic idea and conceiving how it could be taught and shown to have opportunities for choice and creative freedom. This was also the most difficult part of the whole project. Being an artistic person with a mission, I was constantly thinking of new artworks and crafts and new ways to use materials. In conversation with one informant she expressed that while many of her colleagues claimed that creativity important to them as art teachers, as soon as they got into the classroom they would rely on activities that were easy, fast and clean, rarely involving creative freedoms. In this way, I had made the role of teacher harder for myself by prioritizing creativity in the lessons. While it is difficult to identify specific learning that took place regarding the role itself, I did learn about how important the role was to the project. In the future I will continue to investigate the factors that contribute to the successful functioning of the teacher role.

The icing on the cake of this project was the role of entertainer. This role progressed greatly through the three research cycles, resulting in higher quality performances, more interesting scenes and dialogues, the use of music and other superficial aspects making each episode seem more polished professional. After my disappointment with the second episode, I decided that *The Art Room* really needed to be concerned with entertainment as well as education.

As entertainment became more of a concern of mine within the project, the role of entertainer overlapped nearly every other role. My research focused on learning about what makes entertaining television programs. My artistic thinking and lesson plan development was examined for the potential contribution to entertainment levels. I created Ricky the Recycling Rat to add to the visual variety of on screen action, and also to add the dynamic of dialogue. In post-production I added music throughout the episode to increase the energy and flow.

These were all aspects that I had learned about through the first two cycles. Watching the first episode and hearing silence in between scenes prompted me to introduce more music in the second episode. Watching educational television and nearly always seeing at least two characters told me that dialogue was an important factor for appeal and entertainment. I even learned how to be more entertaining by varying my voice and using more active gestures. A few of my informants who work in television and children's media were especially helpful in suggesting ways to increase the visual energy of the episodes such as faster cuts and a variety of transitions and camera angles.



FIG. 17. Video still of time lapse mural painting segment in episode 3.

The role of entertainer was of utmost importance in creating *The Art Room* videos for the simple fact of making them appealing and exciting to watch. It is role that I feel underwent the most learning and also that has the most potential for learning to happen in the future.

The production of *The Art Room* for this studio-based research project was possible because of the learning that took place regarding all of the contributing roles and developing an understanding of how they worked together.

Significance

This thesis project has significance for me, of course, and also more broadly for considerations of research-creation methods and creativity in art education.

On a personal level, becoming aware of my own thinking and working practices within the context of this studio-based thesis has provided me with valuable knowledge that I will implement in future video productions. The methodological work and adaptations required to move through three complete cycles of production was especially beneficial to my self-understanding and professional development because they gave me the opportunity to test theories and observations from one cycle to the next.

In elaborating that method and the resulting learning in this text, I believe I have contributed work of significance to research-creation practices. My studio-based thesis thus stands as a substantial embodiment of adapted reflective practice. In following three research cycles through to final production, I demonstrate a critical evaluation of the methodology through accounts of reflection and analysis, emphasizing the crucial factor of flexibility within the method's implementation. The method was highly effective in revealing problems that arose in the project such as overly rushed research stages. In reflecting and elaborating on problems in detail, I was able to develop manageable solutions. In this way, the methodology was a key factor in learning about the research creation process. I have indicated that the practice of reflection-in-action may seem foreign to individuals who like me are largely intuitive and spontaneous workers. To alleviate hurdles they may wish to follow my example in using a digital video camera or audio recorder to capture *ex tempore* reflections for later review. Practitioners wishing to undertake a research creation project will find that I have identified areas of the

methodology that I found to be detrimental to the overall flow and progress of the project, such as long mid and end cycle reports, and may decide to adapt the methodology further based on their own working process, or may simply approach such areas with an informed perspective.

Creativity being a central pillar of this project, I have presented an overview of related literature and expanded on notions such as the importance of creativity in children's lives – a discussion I hope will inform others' art education practices. I believe that parents and educators need to consider the creative freedoms that children have in artistic production, based on my own and others' observations that too much of the art education children receive today is formulaic and uninspired. Determining the level of creativity in teaching art can start with asking, "How many choices are present in this activity?" Freedom of choice, freedom to make mistakes, problem setting and problem solving are all factors for creativity. I hope that my project inspires others to make creativity a focus in arts education.

Within the academic realm of art education I have been able to present this research in various stages of completion at international conferences such as the NAEA (National Art Education Association) annual meeting in March of 2011. I gave one presentation on the content considerations for *The Art Room*, including short demonstrations of two activities. Another presentation focused on the research process, outlining the stages of the research cycle and discussing the adjustments that took place based on reflections. Roughly 65 percent of the attendees were thesis advisers, the rest, students and teachers. I had anticipated the large number of professors and spoke about instances where my own adviser provided crucial input. Both presentations were very

well received and I was provided with encouraging and constructive feedback.

This project is only the beginning for *The Art Room*. With the valuable learning that has taken place, I plan to continue this project into the real world. I will be working to generate funding that will allow me in the coming year to produce between four and six episodes which will be available online at www.theartroom.tv. In this way, this studio-based thesis has the underlying value of being the springboard for a project that will hopefully reach and foster creative thinking and art making in children around the world.

References

- Armstrong, R. (2010). *Broadcasting policy in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Bastos, F & Zimmerman, E. (2011) Surprise me!. *Art Education*, 64(1), 5-7.
- Beatson, O. (n.d.). [graph illustration]. *Challenge vs skill*. Retrieved March 12, 2010, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Challenge_vs_skill.svg
- Bohm, D. (1968). On creativity. *Leonardo*, 1(2) 137-149.
- Booth-Millard, J. (2005). *Art Attack*. *IMDb user reviews for "Art Attack*. Retrived March 12, 2010, from <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0313033/usercomments>
- Brichacek, A. (2012). Why are schools still discouraging creativity? Retrieved July 10, 2012, from http://www.iste.org/connect/iste-connects/blog-detail/12-01-12/Why_Are_Schools_Still_Discouraging_Creativity.aspx
- Buffington, M. L. (2008). What is web 2.0 and how can it further art education?. *Art Education*, 61(3) 36-41.
- Clinton, H. R. (1996). *It takes a village: And other lessons children teach us*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster
- Cole, J. B. (2009) The (not so) creative process: Why the slow, uninspired slog is essential, and can even produce inspired writing. *The Writer*, 122(10) 26-29
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2004). *Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi on flow*. Retrieved February 9, 2010, from http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/mihaly_csikszentmihalyi_on_flow.html
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1998). *Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement With Everyday Life*. New York: Basic Books.

- Davis, M. (2008). *Street gang: The complete history of Sesame Street*. New York, NY: Viking Penguin.
- De Freitas, N. (2002). Towards a definition of studio documentation: working tool and transparent record. *Working Papers in Art and Design*, 2 Retrieved February 15, 2010, from http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes_research/papers/wpades/vol2/freitasfull.html
- De Freitas, N. (2010, February 1). Qualitative, arts based research. Lecture presented at Concordia University, Montreal, QC.
- Eckhoff, A. & Spearman, M. (2009). Rethink, reimagine, reinvent: The Reggio Emilia approach to incorporating reclaimed materials in children's artworks. *Art Education*, 62(2), 10-16.
- Edmunds, T. (1990-2007). *Art attack*. UK: Gullane Entertainment.
- Edwards, C., Gandini, L., & Forman, G. (Eds.) (1998). *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education*. Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Ferguson, D. A. & Perse, E. M. (2010) The World Wide Web as a functional alternative to Television. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 44(2), 155-174.
- Fisch, S. M. (2004). *Children's learning from educational television: Sesame Street and beyond*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.
- Fisch, S. M. (2005). Children's learning from television: It's not just violence. *TELEVIZION* 18, 10-14.
- Florida, R. (2002). *The rise of the creative class: And how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*. New York: Basic Books.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Language, counter-memory, practice: Selected essays and interviews by Michel Foucault*. Ithica: Cornell University Press. (Ed. By D. F. Bouchard.)

- Freedman, K. (2010). Rethinking creativity: A definition to support contemporary practice. *Art Education*, 63(2), 8-15.
- Fraser, S., & Gestwicki, C. (2002). Authentic childhood: Exploring Reggio Emilia in the classroom. Albany, New York: Delmar
- Friedrich, L. K. & Stein, A. H. (1975). Prosocial television and young children: The effects of verbal labeling and role playing on learning and behaviour. *Child Development*, 46, 27-38.
- Garoian, C. (1999). *Performing pedagogy: Towards and art of politics*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Gnezda, N. M. (2011) Cognition and emotions in the creative process. *Art Education*, 64(1) 47-52.
- Greenfield, S. (1967). *Mr. Dressup*. Canada: Canadian Broadcasting Company.
- Graham, M. A. (2007). Art, ecology and art education: Locating art education in a critical place based pedagogy. *Studies in Art Education*, 48(4), 375-391.
- Gude, O. (2010). Playing, creativity, possibility. *Art Education*, 63(2), 31-37.
- Hanson, M. H. & Herz, R. S. (2011) A “toolbox approach” for developing thoughtfully structured creative art experiences. *Art Education*, 64(1), 33-38.
- Haynes, D., Mandel, M., & Robillard, R. (1998). Curriculum revolution: The infusion and diffusion of new media. *Leonardo*, 31(3), 187-193.
- Hill, J. C. (1985). The teacher as artist: A case for peripheral supervision. *The Educational Forum*, 49(2), 183-187.
- Hoffner, C. (2009) Children’s wishful identification and parasocial interaction with favorite television characters. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 40(3), 389-402.

- Horner, S. (2009). Readymades and the art of recycling. *BCATA Journal for Art Teachers*, 51(1), 28-33.
- IBM. (2012). *Learning through connections: Insights from the global chief executive officer study*. Somers, NY: IBM Global Business Services. Retrieved Aug 4, 2012 from ibm.com/ceostudy2012
- Inwood, H. (2009). *Artistic approaches to environmental education: Developing eco-art education in elementary classrooms*. Montreal: Concordia University.
- IPTV. (1969) Muppets on puppets – Jim Henson on ‘Volume See’ 1969. Iowa Public Television. Retrieved January 28, 2012, from http://www.iptv.org/video/detail.cfm/5660/iptv_20090625_henson_puppets_1969
- Isbell, R. T. & Raines, S.C. (2007) *Creativity and the arts with young children*. New York: Thomson Delmar Learning.
- Ito, M., Horst, H., Bittanti, M., Boyd, D., Herr-Stephenson, B., Lange, P., Pascoe, C., & Robinson, L (2008). *Living and learning with new media: summary of findings from the digital youth project*. The John D. And Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Retrieved January 25, 2010, from <http://digitalyouth.ischool.berkeley.edu/files/report/digitalyouth-whitepaper.pdf>
- Jarvis, M. (2007) Articulating the tacit dimension in artmaking. *Journal of Visual Arts Practice*, 6(3), 201-213.
- Kaufman, J. C., & Sternberg, R.J. (Eds.). (2010) *The cambridge handbook of creativity*. New York: Cambridge University Press

- Keast, R. G. (2007) Educational broadcasting in Canada – A brief overview. Retrieved July 29, 2012, from <http://web.archive.org/web/20070921031817/http://www.clt.ca/pdf/EBC03.pdf>
- Kong, S. L. (2007) Cultivating critical and creative thinking skills. In: *Creativity: A handbook for teachers*. ed. Tan, A.G.
- Kotzee, B. (2012) Private practice: Exploring the missing social dimension in ‘reflective practice’. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 34(1), 5-16.
- Kurtz, G., & Lucas, G. (1977). *Star wars*. United States: Lucasfilm.
- Levin, R. A. & Hines, L. M. (2003). Educational television, Fred Rogers, and the history of education. *History of Education Quarterly*, 43(2) 262-275.
- Lowenfeld, V., & Brittain, W. L. (1982). *Creative and mental growth*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.
- Luckey, A. (1990-1993). *Teenage mutant ninja turtles*. United States: Mirage Studios
- Mares, M. L., & Woodward, E. H. (2001). Prosocial effects on children’s social interactions. In Singer, D. G., & Singer, J. L. (Eds.), *Handbook of children and the media* (pp. 183-205). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Marshall, J. (2010). Thinking outside and on the box: Creativity and inquiry in art practice. *Art Education*, 63(2), 16-23.
- Media Awareness Network (2005). *Young Canadians in a Wired World*. Retrieved February 9, 2010 from http://www.mediaawareness.ca/english/research/YCWW/phaseII/upload/YCWWII_Student_Survey.pdf
- Meet Me At The Corner. (2010). *How to film a video podcast*. Retrieved February 9, 2010, from <http://www.meetmeatthecorner.org/episodes/how-to-film-a-video-podcast>

- National Film Board. (2010). *I Can Make Art Like...* .Retrieved February 9, 2010 from http://www.nfb.ca/film/i_can_make_art_like_emily_carr/
- Nordicity Group. (2007). *The case for kids programming: Children's and youth audiovisual programming in Canada*. Retrieved July 12, 2012, from http://www.onf.ca/medias/download/documents/pdf/The_Case_for_Kids_programming.pdf
- Oatts, J. (2007). *Art Attack axed after 18 years*. Retrieved February 9, 2010 from http://www.hitentertainment.com/artattacK/menu_artattacks.html
- O'Reilly, T. (2005). *What is Web 2.0?*. Retrieved February 9, 2010, from <http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/oreilly/tim/news/2005/09/30/what-is-web-20.html>
- Parr, J. M., & Ward, L. (2011). *Promoting urban teachers' understanding of technology, content, and pedagogy in the context of case development*. Journal of Research on Technology in Education, 44(1), 53–73.
- Perkins, E. G. & Carter, M. C. (2011) In search of the wild things: The choice, voice, and challenge (CVC) model for creative instruction. *Art Education*, 64(1) 20-24.
- Pineau, E. L. (1994). Teaching is performance: Reconceptualizing a problematic metaphor. *American Educational Research Journal*, 31(1) 3-25.
- Pitri, E. (2001). The role of artistic play in problem solving. *Art Education*, 54 (3) 46-51.
- Reitman, S. W. (1986). Daring to make teaching an art. *The Educational Forum*, 50(2) 137-148.
- Rivkin, C. (2007). *Yo gabba gabba*. United States: Nickelodeon Network.
- Robinson, K. (2006). *Ken Robinson says schools kill creativity* [video file]. Retrieved January 26, 2010, from http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.html

- Robinson, K. (2011). *Out of our minds: Learning to be creative*. Chichester, UK: Capstone Publishing Ltd.
- Rogers, F. (1981-1995). *Mr. Rogers*. United States: Family Communications.
- Rose, G. (2001). *Visual methodologies: An introduction to the interpretation of visual materials*. London: Sage.
- Schon, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner*. New York: Basic Books Inc.
- Schon, D. (1987). Educating the reflective practitioner: Toward a new design for teaching and learning in the professions. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.
- Scrivener, S. (2000) Reflection in and on action and practice in creative-production doctoral projects in art and design. *Working Papers in Art and Design* 1 Retrieved February 15, 2010, from http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes_research/papers/wpades/vol1/scrivener2.html
- Singer, D. (1984-1994). *Sesame street*. United States: Children's Television Workshop.
- Smith, M. K. (1994) *Local education*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Spradley, James. P. (1980). *Participant observation*. New York, NY: Holt Rinehard & Winston.
- Taylor, A. (2002). Keeping up with the kids in a wired world. *Multimedia Schools*, 9(2) 40-43.
- Thorne, K. (2007). *Essential creativity in the classroom*. New York: Routledge.
- Thornton, A. (2005). The artist teacher as reflective practitioner. *International Journal of Art & Design Education*, 24(2) 166-174.
- Torrance, E. P. (1963). *Education and the creative potential*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press
- Voltage, E. (2007). *A great family show for arts & crafts enthusiasts!*. IMDB user reviews for "Art Attack". Retrieved March 12, 2010, from <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0313033/usercomments>

Wood, E. (2012). The state of play. *International Journal of Play*. 1(1) 4-5.

Zaits, A. W. (1960). The history of educational television—1932-1958 (Ph.D. Thesis).

Wisconsin University, Madison.

Zimmerman, E. (2010). Reconsidering the role of creativity in art education. *Art Education*, 63(2) 4-5.