Beyond the Interview:
Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology for the enhancement of social-emotional competences for teacher candidates in art education

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Abstract

Beyond the Interview:

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In this dissertation, I embark on an exploration of the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology, examining its potential to enhance social-emotional competence among art education teacher candidates in Quebec. Drawing on the theoretical framework of critical pedagogy and utilizing a bricolage approach, I engage in a reflective journey, connecting personal experiences with wider socio-educational contexts.

The research unfolds in three parts. Initially, I examine the integration of oral history and photography in research-creation methodology. Despite the tensions, I underscore how this methodology can foster key social-emotional competencies such as self-awareness, active listening, shared authority, and empathy. Next, I engage six participant collaborators to validate the pedagogical benefits of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation. Their insights reinforce the potential of this methodology to enhance teaching and learning, shaping its potential application in art education teacher training programs. In the third phase, I experiment with different curricular models. Ultimately, I conclude that a tailored undergraduate course provides the most beneficial framework for teacher candidates to fully integrate and effectively utilize this methodology.

In conclusion, I propose that the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology has potential for developing social-emotional competence, specifically enhancing self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, among art education teacher candidates. Despite these promising findings, I acknowledge that my dissertation marks just the beginning of a larger exploration. I believe that continued exploration will strengthen the framework of this methodology and its wider application in art education, ultimately contributing to the development of a new generation of empathetic, self-aware, and socially conscious educators.

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INTRODUCTION

Rationale for investigation

This dissertation encapsulates a deeply personal journey. It represents an intimate exploration and reconciliation of my professional identities as an educator, an artist, and an oral history practitioner. Through these pages, I embark on a self-reflective dialogue that maps the evolution of my roles, revealing how they intertwine and mutually inform one another within my professional practice. This inward-facing journey represents a crucial step in defining and shaping my coherent professional identity that brings together education, art, and oral history into a synergistic whole. Consequently, this dissertation stands as a testament to my personal evolution, capturing the intricate process of shaping an investigation that resonates genuinely with who I am.

Yet, this dissertation extends beyond my personal journey. While it is deeply ingrained in my personal experience and the intricacies of my professional identity, it simultaneously addresses an outward-facing, pressing issue of our time in Quebec—the concerning rate of teacher attrition and professional disengagement. Numerous studies suggest that at least 25% of new Quebecois teachers leave the profession within their initial years, with half considering abandoning their vocation due to its burdensome nature (Gingras & Mukamurera, 2008, Letourneau 2014; Karsenti et al.,2015; Rojo & Minier, 2015),

Research by Rojo and Minier (2015) from the Université du Quebec highlights that a significant contributor to this stress is the difficulty in managing interpersonal relationships, including those with students, colleagues, and parents. This dilemma is exacerbated by the findings of the Santé et bien-être des enseignants report (2021), commissioned by the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation du Québec, which underlines the vital importance of teachers' mental health and identifies the development of social-emotional competence as a crucial part of the solution. Despite this, education scholars Claire Beaumont and Natalia Garcia (2020) reveal a disjointed presence of social-emotional competencies within the professional expectations and foundational curriculum for teacher training programs across Quebec. Of the nine universities they investigated, none offered a course specifically designated to the teaching of social emotional competencies to students or for the personal development of future teachers.

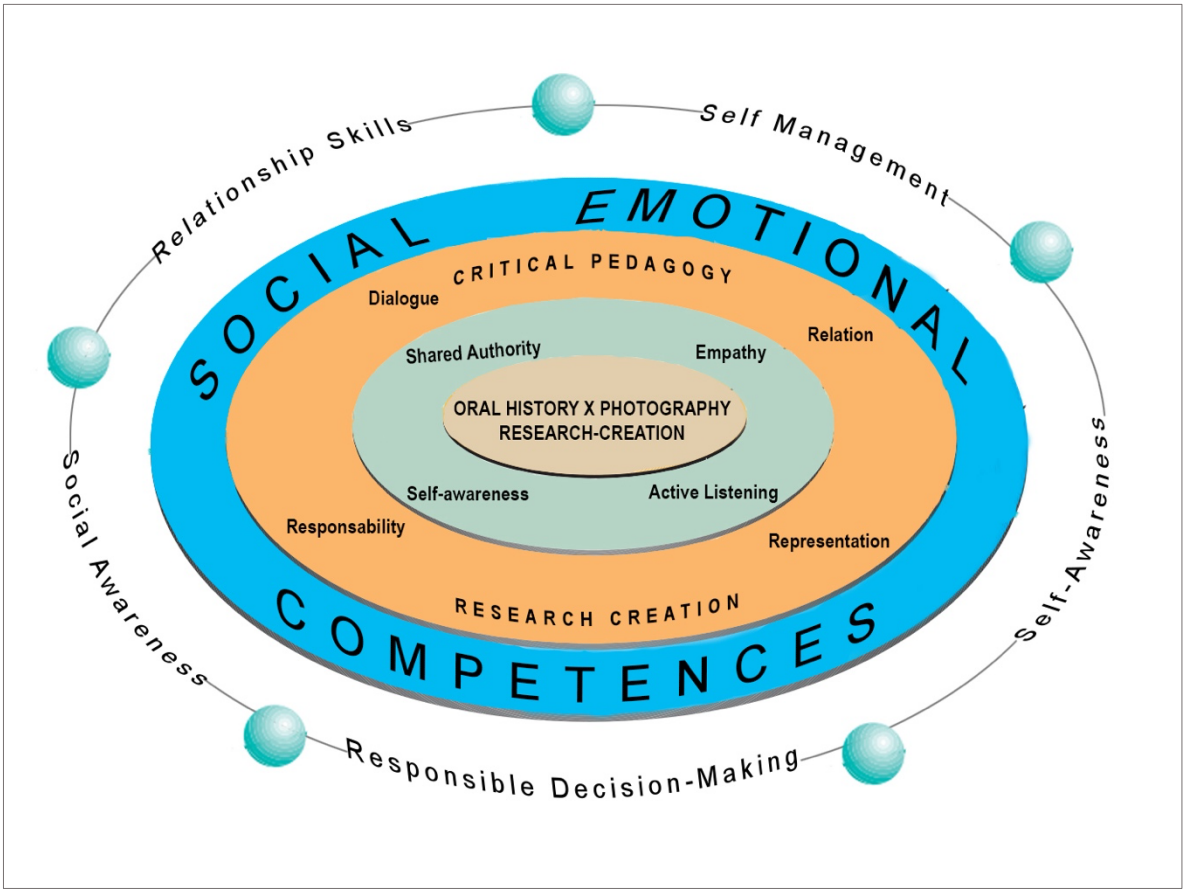
This discrepancy creates an exigent gap that I seek to address in this dissertation. As an educator, artist, and oral history practitioner, I propose an approach that not only speaks to me personally but also addresses this larger societal issue. The integration of a methodology I developed, Oral History x Photography Research-Creation within art education may offer a potential pathway to bridge this gap. By nurturing teachers' social-emotional competencies and equipping them with innovative pedagogical tools, I believe that we may be able to address teacher attrition rates and enhance the resilience and effectiveness of our educators.

This dissertation, therefore, represents an intersection of the inward and the outward as it combines my personal exploration with the broader narrative of education in Quebec. I hope that the insights gleaned from this exploration will not only enhance my own understanding and practice but also contribute meaningfully to the collective effort to address the challenges in our educational landscape.

The following diagram encapsulates the intertwined elements of my research and illustrates how they interact and inform each other. The heart of this diagram, and indeed my research, is Oral History x Photography Research-Creation. It represents the foundational methodology from which all else emanates. Encircling this core are the four key principles intrinsic to this methodology: shared authority, active listening, empathy, and self-awareness. These principles act as guiding tenets in the application and interpretation of this research. Moving outward, the next concentric circle symbolizes critical pedagogy which is a theoretical lens through which I approach this methodology. Critical pedagogy illuminates our understanding of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation, and influences how we enact, interpret, and reflect upon it. Within this layer, I consider elements of dialogue, representation, relation and responsibility, which also become crucial when engaging with the research-creation aspect of this methodology. Lastly, encompassing all the inner circles is the outermost ring of Social-Emotional Competences. This vast periphery symbolizes how practising Oral History x Photography Research-Creation, grounded in its key principles and approached respect through the lens of critical pedagogy, can lead to the development and enhancement of social-emotional competencies. Ultimately, this diagram highlights my belief that by engaging with the complexities of this multi-layered practice, future educators can cultivate their social-emotional skills, ultimately leading to a more engaging and inclusive pedagogical practice.

Figure 1

Oral History x Photography Research-Creation diagram



Statement of inquiry

To shape and structure my exploration, I articulate a primary research question that guides the entirety of my investigation:

- In what ways can the practice of an Oral History x Photography Research—Creation methodology contribute to the development of social-emotional competence among teacher candidates in art education?

This inquiry serves as the central theme that binds the various components of my research. This main question unfolds into a set of interconnected sub-questions that

allow me to delve into specific aspects of the broader inquiry. Each sub-question corresponds to a specific part of the thesis and together, they offer a layered understanding of the main research question.

In the first part of my dissertation, I embark on a thorough evaluation of my method throughout a research-creation project I conducted in 2017. This critical examination allows me to delve into the first sub-question:

- What are the benefits and tensions associated with integrating oral history and photography into a research-creation methodology?

In the second part, I turn my attention to the pedagogical implications of the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology. In collaboration with six practitioners from the fields of oral history, education or the arts, I seek to answer:

- In what ways can an Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology enhance teaching and learning processes?

Finally, in the third part of my dissertation, I navigate through the practical realm of curriculum application, exploring the sub-question:

- What are effective strategies for implementing an Oral History x Photography Research-Creation curriculum for art education?

Through this three-part exploration, my objective is to provide a comprehensive response to the central research question. By weaving the various strands of my exploration, I seek to understand how the implementation of an Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology can potentially influence the development of social-emotional competencies among future educators.

Theoretical Framework

This research is examined through the lens of critical pedagogy. My approach aligns with the emphasis on authentic dialogue, reflection, and critical analysis of lived

experiences, as underscored in seminal works by the pioneer of critical pedagogy, Paolo Freire (1970/2000). Freire's critical pedagogy revolves around the principles of dialogue, reflection, and active participation in knowledge construction, asserting that learning should be a process of consciousness-raising, critical questioning, and transformation. In this pedagogical approach, the learners are not mere recipients of knowledge but active constructors of meaning. It fosters a pedagogical process where both teachers and students learn from each other in a mutual process, challenging the traditional hierarchical structures within education (Freire, 1970/2000).

In practising Oral History x Photography Research-Creation within the context of teacher education, I seek to provide an environment where future teachers are encouraged to engage with their personal narratives and societal contexts as envisioned by a key contributor to the field of critical pedagogy, Joe Kincheloe (2017). By facilitating genuine dialogue about their experiences, teacher candidates are prompted to critically analyze their perceptions and assumptions. This mirrors the critical pedagogy's approach of understanding the world in terms of interconnections, viewing educational challenges as part of the interactive context between the individual and society (McLaren, 2016; Ross, 2016).

Moreover, my research advocates for a praxis-oriented approach that intertwines theory and action in a continuous dialogue as suggested by an expert in critical art pedagogy, Richard Cary (2012). This praxis lies at the heart of my work, where teacher candidates are encouraged to reflect on their learning and apply their insights in a real-world context. Just as praxis in critical pedagogy denotes practical activity informed by human interests and values, the practice of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation serves as a platform for student teachers to engage with life and community, thus promoting their social-emotional competencies (McLaren et al., 2010).

The course outline I propose at the end of this dissertation aligns with the aspirations of critical pedagogy as described by curriculum studies expert, Wayne Ross (2016), who emphasizes the need for a learning environment that is not about "showing life to people but bringing them to life" (p. 218). It is designed to be a critical response to the current state of teacher training programs in Quebec, as revealed by Beaumont and Garcia (2020), with the intention to fill the gap in the development of social-emotional competencies in future teachers. My research, while firmly rooted in my personal experiences, strives to contribute meaningfully to the collective effort of enhancing the

resilience and effectiveness of our educators, thus reflecting the transformative spirit of critical pedagogy for which McLaren (2015) advocates.

Methodology

On this dissertation journey, I approach my task as a bricoleur, grounding my research within the versatile framework of bricolage method. Much like how Freire (1970/2000) encourages learners to question, analyze, and reconstruct their world, a bricoleur similarly engages in a process of inquiry that is not linear or rigid but adaptive, flexible, and reflexive (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004).

An expert in cultural studies, Kathleen Berry highlights that bricolage, similar to critical pedagogy, understands the necessity of incorporating multiple perspectives and modes of understanding to capture the complexities and diversities of experiences (Berry, 2006). This critical, multi-perspectival, multi theoretical and multi methodological approach, as characterized by education specialist Matt Rogers (2012), embraces the multidisciplinary and pluralistic nature of this investigation. In my research, the interplay of multiple disciplines—education, art, and oral history—mirror the interdisciplinary dialogue encouraged by both, bricolage and critical pedagogy. It allows for interlinked and comprehensive understanding, where the lines between teacher and learner, theory and practice, and the personal and professional often blur (Freire, 1970/2000).

The research process for my dissertation embraces the adaptive and organic nature of the bricolage approach, as outlined by Berry (2006), rather than adhering to a rigid blueprint. In this vein, I draw upon a diverse set of tools and methodologies, inspired by the conceptualization of the bricolage method by Kincheloe (2011). First, I integrate oral history interviews and visual methods under the broad term of research-creation (Paquin& Noury, 2020). As noted by my thesis supervisors Lorrie Blair and Kathleen Vaughan, research-creation offers several benefits, such as the ability to embody the research (Vaughan, 2009) while infusing a sense of wonder and pleasure into the process through artistic components (Blair, 2016). Further, I employ qualitative interviews and archival analysis methods when seeking to advance knowledge about

my practice, thereby drawing on practice-led research methodologies (Candy, 2006). The last part of my dissertation shifts the focus towards learner-centred curriculum development (Glatthorn et al.,2018).

This investigation, at times unpredictable and messy, embodies the flexibility inherent in the bricolage approach (Rogers, 2012; Berry, 2006). My research activities are shaped by an ongoing, reflexive dialogue between the data, the literature, and my evolving understanding of my research questions. This reflexivity, a crucial element of bricolage (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004), enables me to combine and recombine diverse methods, ultimately facilitating a multilayered interpretation of my research questions.

Consequently, it is through the lens of critical pedagogy and the application of the bricolage approach, that I examine the potential of the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology in contributing to the development of social-emotional competence among teacher candidates.

Dissertation structure

I commence this dissertation with a prelude, retracing my life's journey to the events and experiences that laid the groundwork for this research. Of particular note are two foundational projects, "Twinkle's Other Story" and "Through Their Eyes", which have been instrumental in shaping this study. This section serves dual purposes: Firstly, it positions my own experiences within the framework of this research, illustrating my journey to this point. Secondly, by delving into these two projects, I offer an account of my initial encounters with oral history and portrait photography methods. These experiences, in turn, stimulated reflections and refinement of my process into a unified methodology that holds the potential for a broader application.

The dissertation subsequently unfolds into three segments: (1) methodology, (2) pedagogy, and (3) curriculum. In part one, my focus is directed towards the evolution of the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation as I examine the benefits and tensions associated with integrating oral history and photography into a coherent methodology. I begin by defining two key concepts for this section—oral history and

portrait photography. I first offer a comprehensive overview of oral history as a dynamic and creative field, discussing its development, fundamental principles, and the relationship between interviewer and interviewee. I emphasize the elements of subjectivity, shared authority, and reflexivity that characterize this method and its potential for rich, multidimensional narratives. Subsequently, I examine the complex dynamics of portrait photography, focusing on the intricate interplay between the photographer and the subject, and highlighting how subjectivity shapes both the creation and interpretation of photographic portraits.

In the chapter titled "Learning to Listen", I start with a discussion of the interplay and power dynamics between oral history and photography in research-creation processes. I present a range of examples from other projects that demonstrate the variable relationships between the two disciplines. I then reflect on my experiences navigating the intersection of oral history and photography, acknowledging the tension and dynamic power shifts. This includes a transition from shared authority during the initial photo-interview to my more dominant role in the post-interview creative process, where I negotiate authority between the photograph, the narratives, and myself. Specifically, I reflect on my experiences interviewing and photographing three participants from the "Through Their Eyes" project, examining how my own interpretations and emotions influenced the final imagetext product. I grapple with the ethical boundaries of representation, learning to respect and amplify the authentic voices of my subjects while acknowledging the inevitable presence of my own interpretation. In the subsequent chapter, I introduce Oral History x Photography Research-Creation as a coherent methodology that intertwines oral history and photography within a research-creation framework. I emphasize the critical role of the researcher in shaping the final product and identify four core principles: shared authority to varying degrees between the researcher and the participant, active listening[1] and observation, empathy towards the participant, and the researcher's self-awareness and self-reflection throughout the process.

[1] When I refer to 'listening' throughout this dissertation, I am specifically referencing the firsthand experience of actively engaging with the interviewee during the live interview process. This notion of 'listening' extends beyond the auditory act; it incorporates the emotional and empathic engagement derived from observing non-verbal cues, processing emotional nuances, and experiencing the immediate context. It does not imply subsequent encounters with the material, such as listening to a recording or reading transcriptions, which may offer a different quality of engagement and interpretation. I discuss listening, specifically active listening in more depth on page 52.

In part two, my focus shifts from the creative processes to the exploration of the pedagogical potential of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation. I begin by introducing two key concepts—oral history as pedagogy and empathy. The concept of oral history as pedagogy encompasses students' role as researcher-historians, active learning through shared authority, and emphasizes the importance of active listening. I highlight the significance of post-interview interpretation and how students creatively disseminate oral histories, bridging the gap between personal narratives and public understanding. Next, I present a comprehensive exploration of empathy, its components, and significance, including its neurological basis and the potential for its development across a lifespan. I examine how the incorporation of empathy in educational practices, particularly in art education and oral history projects, can foster an environment conducive to understanding diverse perspectives and ultimately stimulate motivated action.

I commence the following chapter, "The Deep Dive" by reflecting on my personal journey as an educator as I trace the challenges and pivotal moments that shaped my teaching philosophy and practices. Drawing parallels with my work on the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation, I emphasize the importance of active listening, shared authority, empathy, and self-awareness in my teaching philosophy. This connection enables me to postulate that the methodology I developed has the potential to enhance teaching and learning processes that foster the development of social-emotional competences in teachers.

Next, I delve into the specifics of my fieldwork, with the purpose to validate my hypothesis regarding the pedagogical potential of the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation. This process involved recruiting six participant collaborators, each with a background in oral history, education, or the arts, to participate in this methodology first-hand. My main objective is to examine how this methodology can enrich teaching and learning, therefore I only briefly discuss the specific adjustments I made to refine my methodology in this chapter. Detailed discussions of my photo interview and creative processes have already been presented in part one. Following the participants' engagement in Oral History x Photography Research-Creation, I conducted follow-up interviews with each one. In these interviews, we discussed their personal views on the pedagogical potential of my methodology, based on their firsthand experience. In the subsequent chapter, titled Impressions Replayed, I

highlight the personal accounts that the participants shared during their follow-up interviews. My focus is on analyzing the themes that frequently surfaced in these discussions. These themes include their experiences of being interviewed and photographed, empathy, shared authority, active listening, and self-awareness. Finally, I conclude the second part of this dissertation by presenting the creative outcome of this research-creation, a project titled Life as We Know It *(fig. 2).*

Figure 2

Life As We Know It.

Note. Poster for the creative outcome of this research creation. Own work.

In part 3, the final segment of this dissertation, I explore the practical applications of the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation pedagogy through various curriculum models. The key concepts framing this section are critical curriculum theory and social-emotional competences. To begin, I delve into critical curriculum theory. This exploration aids my comprehension of curriculum design, its execution in the real world, and its socio-cultural ramifications. I engage with the current scholarship to analyze varied definitions of curriculum, with focus on highlighting the presence of

hidden power dynamics and emphasizing learner agency. The investigation of critical curriculum theory informs subsequent discussions on diverse curriculum models for the effective application of the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation pedagogy. The final key concept I address is that of social-emotional competences, with emphasis on relational competence. Drawing from contemporary research, I delve into the dynamics of relational teaching and learning. This examination of relational competence supports the central argument of this dissertation that the practice of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation substantially fosters the development of relational competence.

The following chapter, "Practical Implications," starts with my experience of incorporating the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology into an undergraduate time-based media course's curriculum. Next, I discuss my role as a guest speaker at a graduate seminar in research methods, with a focus on the diverse artistic outcomes and critical reflections resulting from students' engagement, as well as an evaluation of the methodology's adaptability. I then share my attempts to implement the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology through a one-day workshop, where I confront unexpected challenges and draw lessons that highlight this approach's limitations. Additionally, I address whether photography is a vital component of this methodology and I discuss the importance of experiencing the methodology both as a conductor and as a participant. After exploring and implementing various approaches, I argue that a dedicated undergraduate course, specifically designed for teacher candidates, is the most promising platform for implementing Oral History x Photography Research-Creation in a pedagogical context. The final chapter of this dissertation is a model course outline specifically designed for art education teacher training programs. The model I propose facilitates the comprehensive immersion of future teachers into Oral History x Photography Research-Creation, which fosters both professional and social-emotional competencies essential for their teaching profession, as stipulated by the Ministry of Education (2021). This course outline, a synthesis of my learning and experiences, is meant to serve as a dynamic guide for curriculum development and as a roadmap for my future research pursuits.

In the concluding chapter of my dissertation, I retrace the path of my journey, an expedition that ultimately led me to a comprehensive understanding of how an Oral

History x Photography Research-Creation methodology can enrich the social-emotional competence of art education teacher candidates.

PRELUDE

How it all begins

During my childhood, one of my most treasured activities was to spend the night at my grandmother's house. Late into the night she would tell me stories about her childhood and youth. Listening to her anecdotes, I felt transported to a world that was markedly different from my own. My grandmother's small, viewed through my eyes of a child from a large city, appeared to be a dull and uneventful place. However, through her stories, the town was transformed into a bustling hub of activity, replete with lively characters and intriguing occurrences. Through my grandmother's stories, I was able to envision her family home as it once was. One of the largest houses in the town, it served as both an inn and a tavern for those conducting business with the nearby iron mine.
Some of the stories my grandmother shared with me made me laugh, while others evoked a profound sense of sadness. Through her narratives, I learned a great deal of information about my family history. I also gained knowledge about a myriad of other subjects. I discovered the significance of the iron mine and how it contributed to the prosperity of the Balkan region before the Second World War. Moreover, I learned about the war itself through the lens of my grandmother's experiences. I recall her recounting her teenage years and how she was consistently frustrated with having to learn a new language, depending on who was occupying the town at the time. As a result of my grandmother's recollections, I acquired a deeper understanding of the complexities of the Second World War. I also discovered how the end of the war brought about significant changes in the area, as a new regime took control. My grandmother spoke passionately about the government's expropriation of her family's land and wealth, providing me with a unique insight into an aspect of history that we were not taught in school. Ultimately, through my grandmother's memories, I gained a more comprehensive understanding of the past. Through her stories, I learned history.

Years have passed since those days I spent at grandma's house in the small town in the Balkans. Another war started in the region and my family and I eventually resettled to Canada. An adolescent in foreign surroundings, I turned towards the visual arts as an outlet to help me navigate my new reality. Due to, what I felt was, a lack of technical skill or talent in drawing or painting, photography became my chosen medium of expression, eventually inspiring me to pursue my studies in a Professional Photography program at college. During the three years I spent there, I remember crossing paths

with participants from LOVE, a violence prevention program that taught photojournalism to disenfranchised youth. We would often share the darkroom, lingering around chemical baths while waiting for our pictures to develop. We were about the same age (I was seventeen when I joined the program) but never really interacted. That said, I couldn't help but admire the raw and impactful pictures captured by the LOVE participants. While our program drilled us on the technical aspects of photography, their pictures were all about storytelling. The intensity in their pictures would sometimes make me uneasy, but it also piqued my curiosity about the stories and people behind these images.

My stint as a professional photographer was short. After spending a few years capturing moments at theatre plays and weddings, I decided to return to school. I earned a degree in art education and started working as a high school art teacher. I loved my job, but after a half-decade, I felt the need for a change. When I was planning to take a break from teaching, I noticed a job posting for a position at LOVE and by the end of that summer, I was working there as a program coordinator.

One of the first things I learned at my new job was that LOVE, short for Leave Out Violence, was founded by Twinkle, a woman from Montreal whose husband Daniel was killed by a fourteen-year-old boy. After grappling with grief for years, Twinkle realized that the boy who committed the crime was as much a victim of violence as her husband and she was. She decided to find a way to help other young people escape the cycle of violence in their lives. Understanding the potency of visuals and words in the media, she teamed up with a professional photographer and a journalist to create LOVE (Kabiljo, 2019).

When I first met Twinkle, she lived up to my expectations—assertive, a tad intimidating, the lifeblood of LOVE. When she set her sights on a goal, she pursued it relentlessly and if something was not to her liking, she didn't hold back her dissatisfaction. But when it came to the teenagers, her demeanour softened. She was gentle, approachable, and it was evident that the youths felt an instant bond with her. During the six years I worked at LOVE alongside Twinkle, I told her story many times, at first to the youth and later, as my position evolved to executive director, to the CEOs of multimillion-dollar corporations from whom I was soliciting funding for the future of the organization. With any audience the story had the same effect: All were touched and inspired by Twinkle's resilience, her ability to turn a personal tragedy into a success

story and inspire thousands of young people over the years to speak up and share their stories through writing and photography. For me, as for everyone else, Twinkle and LOVE were inseparable, two intertwined threads of the same story.

After I left LOVE to pursue new challenges, Twinkle and I stayed in contact. Over time, our conversations moved from professional to personal. We formed an intergenerational friendship, and I began to glimpse Twinkle's story that I did not know, one composed of complex life experiences that made her into the woman she was. Undeniably, Daniel's tragic death and the events it triggered played a significant role in shaping her, but they weren't the only influences. Through our encounters, I understood that Twinkle sometimes asked herself if her entire existence was reducible to the public face of one well-known tragedy. As our intimacy grew, so did my interest in learning more about and revealing Twinkle's other story, the one I was just coming to know. Even though at the time I did not practise photography anymore, images remained my preferred means of expression. I wanted to use photography to reveal Twinkle' life story; the one before and after the tragic event that changed her life so profoundly. But how would I avoid producing yet just another interpretation of who I thought Twinkle was, instead of who she really was or, at least who she perceived herself to be?

Falling in Love With Oral History

At that time, I had recently begun my doctoral studies in art education. Through my courses, I learned about and became increasingly interested in the research-creation methodology, and I began to explore different methods I could use for my creative project with Twinkle. As part of this exploration process, I followed a seminar in oral history methods. While I learned about oral history, I made connections to my own experience. I related to its organic and fluid nature and I recognized how unpredictable it could be.

I recall being especially drawn to the humanistic nature of oral history and one of its cornerstones, the notion of shared authority. Michael Frisch (1990), an oral historian who first applied the term "shared authority" to the oral history dynamic, urged researchers to challenge the conventional power asymmetry between the interviewer

and the interviewee, to eschew the premise that authority resides exclusively in the hands of the researcher, and to recognize equally the expert authority of the researcher and the experiential authority of the interviewee. In a world of academia, as I learned, it was common for authors to write in passive voice, a person to become a participant, and lived experiences and creative expressions to be acceptably referred to as data. Oral history was different. Practitioners of oral history did not appear to study their subjects; researchers didn't seek to distance themselves from those they worked with. They recognized that the interview impacted both, the interviewer and the interviewee, and subjectivity was acknowledged rather than avoided (Freund 2014)[2].

Shared authority, I remember, felt like a breath of fresh air.

The project with Twinkle was barely shaping itself in my mind, but I knew at the time that I wanted to extend shared authority beyond the interview and into my photographic practice. I found myself wondering if a successful interview could turn knowledge about a subject into knowledge with the subject, as suggested by experts in oral history, Henry Greenspan & Sidney Bolkosky, (2006), then could a similar principle be applied to creating photographs with the subject, rather than of them? Would I be able to apply the concept of shared authority in the creative process? How would the final project manifest itself—Would I create a photo essay? Would I include words? Would I be able to portray a life story in a fraction of a second it took to capture a photograph?

Amidst these ponderings, it struck me: there was an overwhelmingly singular "I" permeating my process. For someone who wanted to place shared authority as a priority, it didn't seem like the best start. It was then that I realized I needed to welcome the unpredictable and start by finding out if Twinkle was even willing to be a part of this journey. To my relief, she agreed, even though I was under the impression that it was more of a personal favour to me than genuine interest.

[2] I discuss oral history method in more detail in Key Concepts in Part 1.

Twinkle's (Other) Story

I remember the initial interview with Twinkle, which also happened to be my very first oral history interview, as a bit uncomfortable and awkward. Both of us were nervous. But as soon as I pressed the "record" button, all reservations seemed to vanish. Over the next few weeks, Twinkle and I met three times, recording over eight hours of conversation. She reminisced about her past, we examined old photographs, and visited places she used to frequent in her youth. This process helped us uncover various snippets of information. As we delved deeper into personal topics during our conversations, I was given a rare insight into the complex individual that Twinkle was. She shared stories of her childhood, her school life, her first kiss, her family, friends, and lovers, and her love for dance, art, and music. As Twinkle shaped her memories into narratives, I found myself captivated, envisioning the lively characters and situations she described. She shared an old photograph of herself playing the piano, the same piano that sat in her living room. Another picture showed her father in his riding boots, which I noticed were hanging from a shelf in her office. The blending of past and present through these photographs and Twinkle's stories, allowed me to understand how these pieces contributed to the person I was getting to know.

After our interview sessions, we brainstormed ideas for photographs, drawing from the objects and moments that had significance in her life. Remembering the picture of Twinkle as a child at the piano, I suggested we take some photos inspired by it. Twinkle found the original photo, and I photographed her with the image of her younger self in the foreground, and her current self in the background, playing the piano. The setting was candid and relaxed and I was under the impression that she forgot my presence and transported herself into the past.

When I proposed the idea of photographing her father's old riding boots, she enthusiastically strapped them on and sat at her father's desk. I began to shoot—the boots were out of focus, Twinkle was examining a photograph of her father, holding his old pipe. As I took more photos, I gradually moved closer, cropping out the surrounding objects. Among the numerous photographs, I knew when I had the one I sought. I showed it to Twinkle, and she agreed: We had captured the perfect shot (fig.3).

Figure 3

Twinkle

Note. The photograph that perfectly represented Twinkle. Own work.
When exhibited, the photograph is accompanied by an audio excerpt from the interview:

> *So, I've seen in this process all the mishmash of who I am, but I've also recognized that it's turned me into a person that thinks in a multifaceted way; that will spend time with people who feed that need in me, to think not outside the box but outside any box. In other words, I don't fit into a box. The only time I'll fit into a box is when I die. But I don't fit into a box. I fit into the moment.*

The photograph, seemingly straightforward, captured various aspects of Twinkle I had come to know during our meetings. She was wearing her father's boots. From her stories, it was clear she admired her father deeply. After his passing, she took over the family business, symbolically filling his shoes. Her feet on the desk suggested confidence and assertiveness. The boots, the focus of the photograph, were worn and stained, symbolizing the long and often difficult journey of Twinkle's life. Twinkle herself, however, was out of focus. This blurred depiction of Twinkle mirrored the part of her personality I came to know: a woman who, despite her strength, was quite shy and preferred to stay out of the spotlight. She looked at the camera with a faint smile, adding a layer of intrigue. Through this photograph, she was telling her story, the story

of a woman beyond the tragedy that defined her public image. This was Twinkle's (other) story.

The Unexpected Turn

A few months later, inspired by the success of Twinkle's (other) story, I was eager to test my method on a larger scale. Equipped with my audio recorder and camera, I headed to Santa Marianita, a charming village on the Pacific coast of Ecuador. This would be my third time returning to Santa Marianita, a place that had become dear to my heart. I first discovered this idyllic beach settlement during a backpacking adventure through South America a few years prior. Enchanted by the place, I stayed in Santa Marianita considerably longer than I initially anticipated. The following year, just before starting my doctoral studies, I returned expecting another relaxing experience. However, shortly after my arrival, a powerful earthquake struck the area[3]. Santa Marianita was spared from major damage, but the neighbouring city of Manta suffered greatly. With most of its infrastructure severely damaged or destroyed, casualties multiplying each day, and access to basic needs like water, food, and shelter becoming a privilege, I spent the following weeks helping in any way I could. I sorted donations at a local church, distributed food in the most impacted neighbourhoods, and after six weeks, returned home physically and emotionally exhausted. Yet, due to the overwhelming experiences shared, I formed a strong bond with the place and its people, knowing I would one day return.

I began my doctoral studies shortly after returning from Ecuador. As I explored various research topics, I continuously sought ways to connect them to my earthquake experiences and their aftermath. Growing increasingly interested in oral history and

[3] A global news organisation, The Guardian (2016), reported one week after the disaster, that the magnitude 7.8 earthquake, Ecuador's worst in nearly seven decades, killed near 700 hundred people, injured about 12,500 people and at least 130 individuals were still unaccounted for. In 2021, The World Bank reported that since the earthquake the government has taken a more proactive approach and has committed to strengthening pre-disaster risk reduction and post-disaster response (https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2021/04/27/a-cinco-a-os-del-terremoto-ecuador-sigue-trabajando-en-su-resiliencia-frente-a-desastres).

inspired by my project with Twinkle, I decided to return to Manta to photograph and interview residents about their earthquake experiences. I didn't know what I would do with this information afterward, but having a reason to go back to Ecuador was enough. As my planned trip approached, I grew increasingly nervous about my research. Over a year had passed since the earthquake, and communication with the people I had met there was scarce. I was afraid I wouldn't find enough participants for my research. I shared this concern with one of my thesis supervisors, Kathleen Vaughan, who responded with a warm smile and a question: "Well, wouldn't that be wonderful?" (Personal communication, 2017).

In that moment I realized how self-centered and focused solely on my research I had been. Just like in the beginning of my project with Twinkle, I was once again only thinking about the outcomes I wanted to get, I had already imagined what the result would look like, esthetically and content wise. Even though I had shared the experience of the earthquake with the residents of Manta, this was not the theme of my research; I was looking to develop a methodology that combined oral history and photography. Why was I focused on the earthquake to the point that I was worried that people might overcome their terrible experience because that would have a negative impact on my research? As an emerging scholar, I realized that I had fallen for the sensationalist aspects of the research. Stories of fear, loss, and grief accompanied by photographs of storytellers amid crumbled houses and destroyed neighbourhoods would certainly strike an emotional chord with the public. While there would be potential benefits to the participants as a consequence of collecting and disseminating their stories (McCarthy, 2010), their principal role would be reduced to the embellishment of my project. If shared authority was indeed a cornerstone of oral history, I was headed in the opposite direction. For my endeavour to be successful at all, I needed to be clear about my intention. My goal was to test on a larger scale the methodology that combined oral history and photography. The story of the earthquake was not part of my intention and I needed to give it up to preserve the integrity of my project.

With my travel arrangements to Ecuador already in place, I decided to continue with my plans, but shifted my focus from Manta and the earthquake to conducting research with Santa Marianita's residents. Since my first stay, I was fascinated by the eclectic mix of people who lived there, ranging from families who had lived there for generations and never ventured far from Manta, to expatriates from Canada and the US who built

upscale homes, and tourists, kite surfers, and backpackers who, like me, fell for the charm of the quiet beach and often extended their stays for long periods of time. Given the diversity in age, cultural background, and reasons for being there, I anticipated that interviewing and photographing the residents of this unique place would be an interesting experience. I hoped it would be a good way to test the method I had developed in my project with Twinkle on a larger scale.

Breaking the Ice

A full month had passed in Santa Marianita, and my audio recorder and camera were still hidden at the bottom of my suitcase. With each passing day, a creeping guilt began to weigh me down due to my lack of progress. I found myself questioning my motives. Was this research genuinely intriguing to me, or was it merely a pretext for spending another summer at the beach? Was I truly equipped to carry out this project, and why did I feel the need to use air quotes when referring to it as research? I found the idea of approaching anyone about the project daunting, and an underlying fear that nobody would want to participate troubled me. I knew it was not uncommon for oral historians to have difficulty to find willing interviewees. I thought back to Anna Sheftel's (2013) experience in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina, where many people turned down her request to participate, resulting in three grueling months to secure her first interview. Similarly, Stacey Zembrzycki (2009) had to enlist her grandmother's help, in a last-ditch effort to find participants for her project documenting the history of Sudbury's Ukrainian community. As these stories swam in my head, I had to wonder: Why would strangers wish to share their life stories with me

In retrospect, I realize that the month spent seemingly "lounging" on the beach was far from unproductive. It provided me with an opportunity to mingle with people, engage in conversation, and acclimate them to my presence. It was a process of building trust, which naturally takes time. I realized that I did not encounter this problem when I worked with Twinkle because we had years to get to know each other and establish a rapport before embarking on our project. Eventually, I gathered courage and began engaging people I met, seizing every opportunity to discuss my project. To my surprise, not only did people listen, but some also exhibited genuine interest. In my

conversations, I substituted the term "research" with "project", a subtle but effective change that boosted my self-confidence. While I was a novice researcher, I was entirely comfortable managing projects. A handful of individuals expressed immediate interest (typically won over by Twinkle's story), while others decided to participate after hearing about the interview experience firsthand. By summer's end, I had accumulated nine recorded interviews, which I considered a satisfactory number for someone relatively new to oral history. Ultimately, my experience during the three months I spent in Santa Marianita would have a profound impact on my future research.

The privilege to interview nine individuals from diverse backgrounds was a significant learning experience. Their stories provided me with firsthand accounts of historical events I knew little about—the Vietnam War, the dictatorship in Argentina, the 1964 Winter Olympics. Each recounted memory came alive through the words of the interviewees, enabling me to visualize these events as though they were unfolding before me. This was the advantage of oral history that no book, website, or film could replicate.

The final product, a research-creation piece titled "Through Their Eyes", showcases short text excerpts juxtaposed with large-format portraits of seven interviewees. I will delve into the details of some of those pieces further along, but firstly, I will address two pivotal interviews. Though they did not find a place in the final exhibition, those interviews significantly shaped the progression of my methodology.

Growing Pains of Interviewing

My second interview in Santa Marianita was with Mayra, which raised my total of oral history interviews to three. In retrospect, I can't help but laugh at my own naïveté at the time and ponder on my thought process —or rather the absence thereof. If a manual were to be drafted on the pitfalls to avoid while conducting an oral history interview, this anecdote could serve as a suitable cautionary tale.

I had first met Mayra during my initial visit to Santa Marianita a couple of years back. A resident of the village, she handled a small restaurant at the hostel I stayed at. From

our very first interaction, we found common ground—we were of similar age, Mayra liked to chat, and I was eager to better my Spanish skills. Our bond was further solidified the next year when we shared the experiences of the earthquake's aftermath. However, despite our frequent interactions, Mayra's inherent reserved nature ensured I never truly got to know her. Hence, it was a pleasant surprise and certainly a relief when she offered to participate in my project. I wanted to ensure that Mayra's experience would be enjoyable and I thought conducting the interview over lunch at a restaurant would be a nice touch. However, in hindsight, I realize a restaurant was probably the least suitable place for a life story interview. Invasions of privacy, ambient noise, staff interruptions—none of this was conducive to an intimate, personal narrative.

In addition to this, I chose a windy terrace merely a few metres from where the ocean waves crashed into the shore. I didn't have a wind screen for my recorder and I did not use headphones to check the sound quality. Instead, my focus was mainly on making the interview a pleasant experience; I wanted it to feel spontaneous and natural. It was only after the interview when I replayed the recording and could barely distinguish Mayra's voice from the ambient noise that I realized inviting Mayra to lunch after the interview would have been a much better idea.

However, the quality of sound wasn't the only issue with Mayra's interview, although this particular one was not within my control. On the interview day, Mayra arrived at the restaurant accompanied by her two children—a sixteen-year-old daughter and a three-year-old son. I managed to conceal my surprise when I realized that the children would be present during the interview. This being only my third interview, I lacked the experience to know whether the presence of children was unusual or a common occurrence in oral history, especially when interviewing women from cultures with strong family ties. Mayra answered all my questions without hesitation; however, her responses were straightforward, short, and descriptive, never personal or emotional. To this day I am not sure why Mayra chose to bring her children that day and I cannot help but wonder whether the interview would have taken a different turn had she been alone.

The reason why Mayra's interview wasn't part of the final research-creation outcome was quite simple: I didn't get the chance to photograph her. Initially, following the methodology from my previous project, I intended to photograph my interviewees on a separate occasion. But Mayra was always busy at the restaurant, and our schedules

never coincided. Over time, as I will later discuss, my approach to photography changed, making it no longer sensible to photograph Mayra so long after our interview.

Despite the challenges with Mayra's interview, it served as a great learning experience. It gave me important insights into the practical aspects of conducting oral history interviews, such as selecting a suitable location, using the right equipment, and taking into account cultural factors. Moreover, it underscored the need to tailor my methods to each interviewee's unique circumstances.

While Mayra's interview didn't find a place in the final research-creation outcome, the lessons I learned from that experience undoubtedly helped to improve my subsequent interviews.

A moment that was lost

Photography also played a pivotal role in my decision to exclude another interview from the final outcome. Similar to Mayra, I met Juan a couple of years prior, and he was the first person to volunteer for an interview. After the interview, we planned to meet again in a few days to give him time to think about a meaningful location for his photograph. However, Juan was soon hired as a top chef at a prestigious restaurant in the area, and his schedule became incredibly demanding, making it difficult for him to find time for our meeting. Eventually, Juan suggested I come to the restaurant where he worked and photograph him there. I was uncertain whether he chose the restaurant for its significance or convenience, but either way, I had little room to negotiate. I had less than an hour before the restaurant opened to capture Juan in action as he made final preparations in the kitchen. Although I managed to take dozens of photos, I had a feeling that I wouldn't be satisfied with the results.

That night, as I uploaded the photos to my computer and examined them, I realized my premonition was correct. While the photographs (fig.4) were far from terrible, with some even being quite good in terms of timing, lighting, and composition, they lacked the intimate connection I sought. The images seemed more suited for stock photography or a magazine editorial about a chef—they could have depicted any chef.

Figure 4

Juan

Note. The photographs would have made a great editorial spread. Own work.

My disappointment stemmed from the fact that, although I had successfully documented a scene, I remained a distant observer, lacking a connection between myself, the photographer, and Juan, the subject. This was a struggle I had encountered before. I was always drawn to portrait photography but never felt comfortable with it. Whenever I photographed people, I felt intrusive and voyeuristic, as if I was trying to take something that wasn't mine. My experience with portrait photography resonated strongly with Susan Sontag's perspective. Influential writer and philosopher, Sontag

(1977) theorized that photographing people could be seen as an infringement upon them, as it exposes them in ways they would never perceive themselves. I admired the work of photographers who were somehow able to capture not only the moment but also the stories of the people they portrayed. I aspired to achieve the same, but never knew how. The only exception was when I photographed Twinkle. I believed that occurred because of the connection we created through the oral history interview, and I hoped to replicate the same effect with my interviewees in Santa Marianita. However, as I looked through Juan's photographs, I began to doubt myself. Disappointed, I was about to close my computer when another photograph caught my eye.

Rekindling Passion for Photography

I was looking at the photograph of Dalelene, a woman I had interviewed a few days earlier (fig.5). Unlike my previous interviewees, Dalelene was the first person with whom I had little prior contact. I was astonished by her candidness and vulnerability during our interview. After we finished recording, we both sat in silence, allowing the words and emotions still lingering in the air to settle. I felt surprisingly close and connected to this woman I had barely known just a few hours earlier. There was something intense and beautiful about the moment we shared. Wanting to remember it, I asked Dalelene for permission to take her picture. I only snapped two shots, not bothering to move from my chair or think about composition or lighting; this picture was intended solely for me since I planned to return another day to take photographs for my project.

That night, disappointed by the photographs I took of Juan, I spent a long time examining the picture of Dalelene. In the image, she appeared as if staring back at me, neither deliberately posed nor completely unguarded yet vulnerable. The contrast was striking compared to how I felt when looking at Juan's images, where it seemed anyone could have taken his place, and the picture would still be the same. Here, it felt like this was Dalelene, and no one else could replace her in that photograph.

Figure 5

Dalelene

Note. The photograph I took right after interviewing Dalalene. Own work.

Was it a lucky accident, or did timing make the difference? Reflecting on my project with Twinkle, I remembered feeling close to her while photographing her, even though it was some time after our last interview. However, I had interviewed Twinkle three times, spending over eight hours with her life story, and I photographed her only a couple of days later. It was possible that the connection we created during the interviews, even if fleeting, was still present at the time I photographed her. This differed from Juan, where too much time had passed between our interview and the photo session for that connection to remain.

Feeling optimistic about this new possibility, I decided it would be worth a try to photograph my interviewees immediately after the interview, rather than asking them to meet me at another time. As I tested this new approach in the following weeks, my confidence grew after each photo-interview, reinforcing my belief that I had made the right decision. Photographing people no longer felt intrusive and uncomfortable. On

the contrary, I was at ease in the same way I was while asking questions during the interview. It seemed that the same feeling of ease was reciprocated by the individuals I photographed, with no visible tension or desire to "pose" in front of the camera. It appeared that if someone accepted their life story to be heard, it became easier for them to allow themselves to be seen. As the project progressed, photography became less of a separate entity and more of an extension of the interview, a dialogue that continued through the body instead of words. In some ways, I felt that it was not me but the interview that created the photograph.

Of course, I could never objectively assert that the connection I felt was indeed present and somehow captured in the photograph; perhaps it was only my perception that gave me the confidence I needed. However, this inexplicable feeling could be likened to Roland Barthes' concept of "the air" (1980)—that elusive quality of a photograph that does not just capture reality, but somehow encapsulates the subject's aura and value, their "luminous shadow". It's this "air" that I might have sensed, making me confident about the connection I felt. The result was that I was finally able to create photographs of people in the way I had always dreamt of but had never been able to achieve. This pivotal accomplishment laid the foundation for the research explored in this dissertation.

In the following section, I will critically examine my creative process throughout this project, reflecting on the advantages and challenges I faced along the way. This introspective journey led to the development of the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology, providing me with the insights necessary to address my first question: What are the benefits and tensions associated with integrating oral history and photography into a research-creation methodology?

Part 1

METHODOLOGY

KEY CONCEPTS

In this section of my dissertation, I outline the process that culminated in the development of the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology. I establish the foundation of my discussion with key concepts pertinent to this research area: oral history, portrait photography. First, I explore the multifaceted world of oral history. I examine the concept of shared authority, the intertwining of subjectivities and the critical relationship between the interviewer and interviewee within this methodological practice. I engage with the work of notable authors in the field, such as Alessandro Portelli, Michael Frisch and Paul Thomson, amongst others, who have significantly contributed to the shaping of oral history methodology. Ultimately, I aim to emphasize the role of oral history as an active construct that builds on individual experiences and perspectives to create new meanings. Following that, I delve into the realm of portrait photography. Central to my exploration is the subjective nature of this medium, which largely arises from the photographer's perspective. I draw on insights from seminal thinkers such as Susan Sontag and Roland Barthes, highlighting the interplay of photographer and subject, the transformation of behaviour under the gaze of the camera, and the quest to capture a desirable image. Through this exploration, I aim to underscore the participatory nature of portrait photography, drawing parallels with the principles of shared authority found in oral history.

Oral History

Oral history, a dynamic and creative field, is marked by myriad definitions and interpretations. Although common standards of practice exist among oral historians, Donald Ritchie (2003), a prominent oral historian, emphasizes that the field is too dynamic and creative to be defined by a single description. Consensus is that oral history involves recording, preservation, and interpretation of past events, obtained from in-depth interviews concerning personal experiences, recollections, and reflections of the interviewees (Oral History Association, 2018).

Paul Thompson (2017), one of the pioneers of oral history as a research methodology, reminds us that modern oral history gained acceptance among historians as a valid information source in the 1960s and '70s, but it is also one of the oldest forms of historical inquiry. Predating the written word Oral history is sometimes confused with

oral tradition, as orality is a primary information source for both. However, it is essential to differentiate the two. Oral tradition preserves knowledge of past events by passing them down through generations, while oral history employs a methodology that helps us understand past events through the lived experiences, knowledge, and reflections of the narrator. Initially, oral history interviews were perceived as documents containing facts for historians to analyze. Over time, this perception shifted toward viewing oral history as a conversational narrative created through the interaction between the interviewee and the interviewer that originates in a private setting, but its ultimate objective is to create a public record (Grele, 2007).

Renato Rosaldo (1980), poet and anthropologist, emphasizes that oral history involves telling stories about the stories people share about themselves. As Alessandro Portelli (1998), an influential oral historian, explains, "Memory is not a repository of facts, but an active process of creating meanings" (p. 69). Oral history recognizes the subjectivity of both the participant and the investigator. As a result, the oral history record is a product of multi-directional dialogues that occur at various stages of the process, involving the interviewee, the interviewer, and their interactions with cultural discourses of the past and present (Abrams, 2016).

Moreover, oral history acknowledges the interviewer and the interviewee as equal partners, with a method built on mutual respect and trust established through dialogue (Freire, 1970/2000). Wiesner (2021), a social anthropologist, notes that understanding the significance of the relationship allows for deep responsive listening, creating a safe space, and sharing vulnerability.

Contributing to the relational approach, Ted Little and Steven High (2017), prominent scholars in the field of oral history, identify three key principles of ethical engagement in oral history: commitment to the life story as a whole, shared authority, and reflexivity. A life story interview, as the name suggests, considers an individual's entire life[4]. As a hybrid between biography (constructed by the interviewer) and autobiography (guided by the interviewee), the life story interview enables the narrator to understand how their perceptions relate to a broader analysis of the past and present (Carey, 2017). High

[4] Another popular approach in oral history is a testimony interview. Testimony interviews focus on a particular life event within a broader historical context. Widely used in Latin America, testimony (*testimonio)* approach generally provides a platform for marginalized individuals who represent larger groups to reveal forms of oppression and different forms of violence they experienced (Carey, 2017).

(2010) further emphasizes that the focus shifts from the event to the person, and the perspective changes from an outward act of witness to an inward reflection on the meanings derived from one's life journey. Life story oral history helps organize the story into a coherent whole, encouraging the interviewee to reveal their present sense of self and reconstruct that self as a single, cohesive narrative. As Abrahams, an oral history theorist (2016) posits, it is through reminiscence and remembering, a life story is constructed that aligns the interior self with the exterior world.

In striving to achieve the key objective of oral history—unveiling the self (Abrams, 2016)—the interviewer plays a subtle yet essential role. Oral history, through the concept of shared authority, challenges traditional power dynamics, where authority typically resides exclusively with the researcher (Frisch, 1999). Instead, it equally recognizes the expert authority of the researcher and the experiential authority of the interviewee (Thomson, 2003; Little, Miller & High, 2017). The interview process is a collaborative exercise in which the researcher and the narrator work together to gain a deeper understanding of the narrator's experiences (Greenspan & Bolskolsy, 2006). While achieving this understanding is the primary objective, the oral historian, by engaging in the process, inevitably becomes a part of the narrative as well.

Valerie Janesick (2010), an educational researcher known for her work in the field of qualitative research, employs the metaphor of choreography to describe the oral history interview process. Much like a choreographer plans a sequence of dance steps, the interviewer prepares questions in advance, aiming to communicate a story to a wider audience. The metaphor employed by Janesick (2020) can further extend to the execution of the dance, paralleling the sharing of authority in oral history. In a dance, the roles of the lead and follow are clearly defined, with the lead initiating the first steps and setting the tempo, similar to the interviewer establishing the interview's tone by asking the first question. As Portelli (2004) notes, an oral history interview never begins with a narrator's unsolicited, spontaneous speech. The lead partner, responsible for guiding the dance and initiating transitions, mirrors the interviewer's role in steering the interview with subsequent questions. Continuously, the interviewer subtly directs the conversation toward topics deemed important, intriguing, or relevant to their research. Conversely, the follow partner in a dance influences the performance's outcome by communicating their skill and comfort level through subtle visual and physical cues. The lead must then adjust accordingly to match the follow's level. Similarly, in an interview,

the interviewee signals their desire to pursue or shift from a topic through body language, words, or silences. The interviewer must attentively adapt the interview's course to accommodate the contributor's expectations while still pursuing topics relevant to the investigation.

Experienced oral history interviewers are well-versed in the constant push-pull of negotiation and the associated challenge of balancing respect for interviewees' narrative agendas with their desire to steer the story in a specific direction. Although there is a general consensus among researchers that oral history is a collaborative process, it is crucial to note that recognizing the equal power of the researcher and the narrator does not necessarily imply joint decision-making. Instead, power is continually negotiated throughout the interview process.

The investigator's role and the accompanying accountability become even more central to the process after the interview. As Portelli (1998) emphasizes, although oral historians utilize other people's words, they remain responsible for the overall discourse. While most researchers do provide interviewees with recordings or transcripts of the interview and consult with them to varying degrees on relevant content (High, 2014), the final product is ultimately the work of the researcher. Transforming an interview into an oral history requires the researcher to interpret the story. While traditionally interpretation takes the form of a written document, in recent years, oral history has adapted to incorporate interdisciplinary media, including visual arts, film, theatre, and performance art (Little, Miller & High, 2017), further enhancing the richness and diversity of its output.

Organic and fluid in its nature, oral history is a method is characterized by its ability to simultaneously offer a window into the past, capture the intricacies of individual experiences, and foster a collaborative and relational approach between the interviewer and interviewee.

Portrait photography

Photography, in its various forms, has long been recognized as existing in both the world of the art and the world of critical documentation. Langman and Pick (2018), the authors of *Photography as a Social Research Method*, assert that photography plays a crucial role in analyzing society and portraiture is no exception. While the notion of a photograph as an objective representation of truth has been abandoned throughout the 20th century, the subjectivity of photography is still largely considered to emanate from the photographer (Price, 2004). We commonly describe photographers as "taking" a photograph, implying a sense of taking something from another and retaining control of it. Even the language of photography often suggests violence—one aims the camera, shoots a subject, and captures an image. Susan Sontag (1977), an American writer, philosopher, and cultural critic, eloquently elaborates on this point in her seminal book *On Photography*:

> To photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them that they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed. Just as a camera is a sublimation of the gun, to photograph someone is a subliminal murder—a soft murder, appropriate to a sad, frightened time. (p. 14)

However, the subject of a portrait is not entirely passive in the photographic process. Unlike landscape or still life photography, portrait photography is personal and relies on the interaction between the subject and the photographer where both parties consciously cooperate in creating the image (Rand & Mayer, 2014). Sociologist Erving Goffman's (1959) theory of "face" demonstrates that people present themselves differently in various social situations, depending on the impression they wish to convey. Richard Shusterman (2012), a pragmatist philosopher known for his contributions to philosophical aesthetics, argues that this is particularly evident when a camera is present, where people tend to distort their behaviour, often becoming awkward and artificial. French philosopher and semiotician Roland Barthes (1980) echoes this point when he describes the artificiality of posing for a photograph: "I instantaneously make another body for myself, I transform myself in advance into an image" (p. 10). The presence of the camera, not necessarily the photographer, alters a person's behaviour. The camera bears witness to the moment, capturing it

permanently, with the potential to define the self of the subject solely within the parameters of that particular instant (Shusterman, 2012).

The photographer's goal is typically to capture the subject as they appear when the camera is absent, while the subject often aims to present themselves in a way that they wish to be portrayed. As I discussed earlier, Barthes (1980) remarks that an effective photograph portrays not only the person's identity but also their value, capturing what he refers to as the air:

> Thus the air is the luminous shadow which accompanies the body; and if the photograph fails to show this air, then the body moves without the shadow, and once this shadow is severed, as in the myth of the Woman without a Shadow, there remains no more than a sterile body. It is by this tenuous umbilical cord that the photographer gives life; if he cannot, either by lack of talent or bad luck, supply the transparent soul its bright shadow, the subject dies forever. (p. 110)

Photographers deploy different methods to elicit from their subjects the value of which Barthes writes, for what qualifies as value is not necessarily the same for the photographer and the subject. The process by which the photographer engages with the subject is participatory and communicative, "an interactive dance of pose and gestures" (Shusterman, 2012, p. 71). However, differences lie in how this dance is executed. Some photographers seek to control their subjects' representations, directing them to reveal themselves according to predetermined and self-serving ends (Danto, 2011; Kozloff, 2007). In contrast, other photographers approach photography as oral historians approach interviews—embracing self-awareness, sharing authority, and recognizing the individual as a whole rather than merely a subject to be photographed. Contemporary photographer, artist, and writer Andrea Scher (2013) exemplifies this more empathetic and participatory mindset:

> A portrait is not just an image; it's a vibrant collaboration between photographer and subject. The subject might be alone in the frame, but every successful image reflects the talent and expertise of the photographer, and their connection with the subject. (n.d.)

The photographic process, however, doesn't end at the moment the shutter closes. A crucial, often overlooked aspect of the photographer's work involves the selection process that follows the act of shooting. This decision-making stage is where the photographer typically reviews the array of captured images, selecting one or two to share publicly, thus subjectively defining the identity or value of the subject once again (Danto, 2011). The chosen images are often the ones that the photographer believes best represent the subject or the intended narrative. Sometimes this choice is made in consultation with the subject, but often, it's solely the photographer's decision.

Philosopher and art critic, Arthur Danto (2011) elucidates this issue using the term "optical truth". The camera captures fleeting facial expressions unseen by the human eye and therefore unfamiliar to our perception of ourselves and others. The interplay of optical truths and the photographer's selection underscores the power dynamics embedded within the photographic process. A photographer's selective choice could potentially strip away context, present an unfamiliar image of the subject, and generate a perception at odds with the subject's own reality or the reality perceived by those who know them. This emphasizes the fact that subjectivity in photography does not end with the act of shooting but also extends to subsequent stages of selection and presentation.

Relationship Status: It's Complicated

In this chapter, I focus on the interplay and power dynamics between oral history and photography in research-creation processes. I present a range of examples by artists and historians that navigate this interplay and I examine personal examples aiming to highlight both the strengths and challenges inherent to this methodology. Specifically, I reflect on my experiences interviewing and photographing three participants from the "Through Their Eyes" project, examining how my own interpretations and emotions influenced the final imagetext product.

My early encounters with oral history and photography had a profound impact on me. The union of the two disciplines seemed like an exciting new possibility that I was eager to explore further. However, as I navigated this intersection, I realized that while oral history and photography have a longstanding partnership, one discipline frequently remains subservient to the other. This is largely because practitioners may have a preference or greater proficiency in one field, inadvertently causing the other to take a backseat.

Photographers often incorporate oral history into their methodology, both as a tool for personal artistic growth and for providing context and narrative in the dissemination of their work, such as in exhibitions and publications. For instance, in his project "Tehachapi, the yard" (2019), French photographer JR collected portraits and stories of incarcerated individuals with aim to spark conversations around incarceration and the prison system. JR and his team photographed the participants from above and they were invited to share their story in front of the camera. These images were then combined into a large-scale ground installation that was discernible only from an aerial view. While photographs of the installation gained wide visibility on JR's website and various social media platforms, the recorded oral testimonials were exclusively accessible via an application dedicated to showcasing artists' works.

In contrast, Diana Matar's project "Leave to Remain" (n.d.) employs a more balanced approach between photography and oral history. It features portraits and narratives from individuals who sought asylum in the UK after migrating illegally. Matar first

interviewed participants before photographing them in their chosen environments. She then collaborated with them to edit their narratives, which were exhibited alongside their portraits in the final presentation. While there is no detailed information on the actual interview process, the final presentation—pairing photographs with printed narratives—suggests an equal footing between the two disciplines.

From the perspective of oral history, in Oral History and Photography, authors Freund and Thompson (2011) examine different ways that oral historians use photographs to inform their practice. In some cases, photographs are examined as a historical source. For example, historian Ana Maria Mauad (2011) investigates the concept of political engagement as a form of authorship using the work of Brazilian photographer Milton Guran. In this case study, Mauad demonstrates how the politically charged photography of Milton Guran played a crucial role in capturing and shaping social memory during Brazil's military dictatorship.

Furthermore, oral historians frequently utilize photo-elicitation, a method of stimulating responses and provoking memories by incorporating photographs into interviews. As historian Alexander Freund and educator Angela Thiessen argue, the inclusion of photographs significantly alters both the dynamic of the oral history interview and the subsequent narratives (Freund & Thiessen, 2011). This became evident during my project with Twinkle. I recall that, as she sifted through her old albums, her disposition transformed. Although the recounting of her memories was initially intended for sharing and documenting her life story for my research, the process soon seemed to become a personal journey of reminiscence for her.

Finally, as suggested by Freund and Thomson (2011), oral historians may occasionally take photographs of their interviewees and their surroundings to supplement their interviews and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the subject. This approach is exemplified in the book "Portraits in Steel," a collaborative effort between photographer Milton Rogovin and historian Michael Frisch (1993). I recall my excitement when a professor suggested I explore this work, as the project appeared to seamlessly embody the cross-disciplinary dynamic between oral history and photography. In the late 1970s, Rogovin travelled to the industrialized region of Buffalo, New York, where he produced a series of portraits of steel workers, photographing them at their workplace and in their homes. Almost a decade later, after the steel

industry in the region collapsed, leaving most of the workers unemployed, Rogovin returned to the area. He located some of the subjects of his previous project and photographed them once again in their homes. This time he was accompanied by Frisch, who recorded oral interviews of the workers.

I anticipated that Rogovin and Frisch would create a genuine collaboration between the two disciplines, beyond their association as individuals. However, my excitement rapidly dissipated when I realized that, despite their beautiful craftsmanship, the photographs and interviews were presented as two discrete projects, standing side by side but neglecting to engage in a dialogue with each other. Divided into three major sections, the book opens with an introductory text by Frisch that situates the reader within the historical context of the steel industry around Buffalo and explains Rogovin's methods and work. The second section is a photo gallery: fifty-five images of seventeen individuals at their workplace and home and, a decade later, at home. The images are not accompanied by any text or annotation, though they do, as Frisch (1993) suggests, successfully stand on their own as evocative visual narratives moving through place and time.

The third part of the book is a collection of twelve interviews conducted by Frisch in which subjects discuss work, life, and personal experiences. Frisch uses Rogovin's pictures for photo elicitation, opening each interview by requesting the subject discuss the images. The interviews offer an intimate glimpse into the lives and experiences of the interviewees, however, much like Rogovin's portraits, they stand on their own. I am not suggesting there is anything intrinsically wrong with such an arrangement; indeed, it can also be perceived as the photographer and oral historian humbly acknowledging the limits of their expertise. Nonetheless, I was disappointed that the photographs and the interviews remained side by side and didn't engage with each other.

As I delved deeper into the relationship between oral history and portrait photography, I realized the difficulties of combining the two in a way that neither overpowers the other. This difficulty is amplified by a tension between the two disciplines, particularly in terms of power dynamics. In oral history, the power is shared between the interviewer and interviewee, while in portrait photography, as previously suggested by Danto (2011), the photographer's vision often takes precedence, not only during the act of shooting but also through the subjective selection and presentation process.

As the interviewer/photographer, I also encountered this tension. My goal was to challenge the traditional power dynamic in photography by promoting a sense of shared authority between me and my interviewee during the photographing process. In retrospect, I recognize, I was able to relinquish my desire for control over the photograph primarily because I was fully immersed in the interviewee's story. Ultimately, this engagement with the interviewee would allow me to achieve what I have come to see as a harmonious integration of oral history and photography within the context of the photo-interview.

My role as the interviewer/photographer gained even more prominence during the post-photo/interview creative process. Resonating with Portelli's (1998) assertion that oral historians bear the final responsibility for the discourse and end product, it was at this stage that I assumed full control over my creative process. This transition became evident when I chose to use transcriptions rather than the actual recordings, a decision that imposed an extra degree of separation between the narrator/subject and the viewer. This decision was pivotal because it enabled me to underscore a shift in authority. While the initial photo-interview was characterized by shared authority, during this stage, I, as the artist, reclaimed control over the selection of photographs, the excerpts, and the aesthetic choices I made[5].

My process began by narrowing down the selection of photographs to a few that spoke to me and corresponded to the memories from the interview. I then listened to the entire interview, allowing myself to fully immerse in the stories being told and transcribing the excerpts that resonated with me. Simultaneously, I observed how the photographs I chose engaged with hose moments. This back-and-forth process of selecting photographs and interview excerpts would continue until I would be able to narrow down the choices to one image and one paragraph. At this stage, the shared authority between the interviewee and me was no longer applicable. Instead, authority was being negotiated between the photograph, the words and myself.

[5] The original recording, along with an initial selection of photographs, was provided to the participants for their review and approval.

Whose Story is it Anyway?

A significant example of negotiating authority occurred in the post-production of my interview with Ravi. Originally from Bangalore, India, Ravi lived most of his life in the United States before moving to Santa Marianita. While I listened to the interview, I identified various excerpts that were clearly important to him. When he talked about his passion for cooking or the value he gives to education, I could without a doubt recognize how significant these were for him. However, the part of the interview that moved me the most was when he recalls emigrating from India to the US:

> There was always a dream at that time for us for everybody to go to the States. You have to remember, in those days we didn't have the Internet, even the television wasn't that common in India, people had television but not in all parts. In general, communications were more limited… We never really had a visual, other than through watching movies… Today, you go on the computer, and you log in and you can see everything live. It was totally different back then. I don't know, maybe in a way that was good too because you never knew what to expect. When you came, and you landed, and you saw, if was completely flabbergasting because you've never seen something so different. (…) The worst time was after I landed in New York. It's also the jetlag, and the winter… And then the sudden realization; I am here, you know, now you know there is no going back, it's a one-way ticket.

I found myself relating to Ravi's experience on some level, being an immigrant myself. I was particularly struck by his description of the limited communication and expectations he had of the US before he emigrated, and the feeling of shock and realization he experienced upon arrival.

It was then that I recognized that part of me would undoubtedly be present in each of the final pieces. I became aware of my own experiences and how they informed my choices of text and photographs and influenced the final product. This realization led me to understand that my creative process was not about representing the individuals interviewed and photographed, but rather, it was a representation of my experience of the meeting. My choices of text and photographs were informed by my own experiences and biases, making the final product also a representation of myself.

She Speaks With Her Eyes

The interview with Aimee, a young woman from Argentina, was a deeply emotional experience for both of us. At the outset, Aimee was hesitant, often pausing to inquire about the topics she was discussing and expressing her doubts about having a noteworthy story to share. However, as she spoke, her personal narrative intertwined with the experiences of her family and the larger political context in Argentina, where the past continues to haunt the present[6]. Her words were sometimes fragile and broken, but at other moments, they were filled with passion and spoke like a political manifesto, a call to action. Even during the interview, I thought that Aimee's story was probably too complex and emotionally charged to be reduced to a single citation.

A few days later I sifted through the recording of the interview, looking to find the appropriate caption. During this process, I displayed on my screen Aimee's photographs that I previously preselected. Being familiar with Aimee, I recognized different aspects of her personality in each image. As I listened to her story, even though at first it wasn't my favourite, there was one image that particularly caught my attention (fig.6).

The photograph depicts a headshot of Aimee in the lower right corner of the frame, positioned off-centre. She is depicted in profile, looking away from the camera, towards the light and into the distance, as indicated by the tears glistening in her eyes. Her positioning, combined with the depiction of her gaze, creates a sense of introspection and contemplation. However, the framing of the photograph abruptly cuts off Aimee's gaze, preventing her from fully following through with her line of sight. This abrupt cut-off, a metaphor for restrictions and obstacles in her life, leads to a sense of uncertainty about the future. The gesture of pressing her thumb against her forehead, combined with the presence of the half-burned cigarette, further emphasized the complex mixture

[6] From 1976 to 1983, Argentina was ruled by a military dictatorship that committed heinous human rights violations such as torture, extrajudicial killings, and the incarceration of thousands without a fair trial. During the regime, there was widespread enforcement of disappearances for those who opposed the government. An international commission on missing persons estimates that between 15,000 and 30,000 government opponents lost their lives. In addition, as many as 500 infants born in prisons and concentration camps were forcibly taken from their mothers at birth and illegally adopted. For more information see: https://www.icmp.int/the-missing/where-are-the-missing/argentina/; https://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/argentina/argen1201-02.htm).

of emotions conveyed in the image, suggesting a sense of emotional turmoil and distress.

Figure 6

Aimee

Note. The image that captured Aimee's story. Own work.

Marianne Hirsch (1993), a prominent scholar with interest in memory studies, claims that photographs are embedded in narratives and must therefore always be read as imagetexts. Contemplating this photograph, I understood that I was able to grasp the essence of Aimee's story through my interpretation of her portrait. Hence, this time I went back to the interview recording and searched for a citation that complemented the photograph. I was soon able to identify a passage that matched the tone and themes of the photograph:

> As an activist, I'm not good. Because I think I lack knowledge. I lack personality, a lot of things that I don't have. I'm not capable, it seems. And this thing, if there's something that doesn't work in a relationship, I disappear, completely without explanation, without anything. That continues. The pain remains. My

> story, the story of my family is nothing compared to others. I want to help with that. My idea is to work with the families of the disappeared. That's why I studied psychology, sociology and all that because my idea was to be able to work with families. I believe that what is done with love, turns out well.[7]

By combining these two elements—Aimee's words and photograph—I was able to create an imagetext that, I felt, embodied the emotional and political power of Aimee's story. Through this process, the photograph and the text ultimately came together as equal partners in a dialogue, each one illuminating and enhancing the other.

When an Olympian Cries

The most impactful interview I conducted in Santa Marianita as part of the Through Their Eyes project was with Bud. Bud had a remarkable life story. He was a successful businessman and an athlete from a young age. He began his athletic career as a professional skier but later found success in luge, competing in the 1964 Olympics in Innsbruck and finishing 13th, which was the highest record for the US until 2002. During the interview, Bud shared his life story with me. After about five minutes into the interview, he mentioned his friendship with a boy named Bob and how they were like brothers, growing up and spending their childhood together. However, Bob passed away young, in his thirties.

As the interview progressed and the topics were winding down, I remembered that Bud had mentioned his friendship with Bob and asked him to tell me more about it. This prompted a surge of memories that Bud shared with me, including their childhood antics, working in a ski lodge together where they met Ernest Hemingway, and their friendship's abrupt end that came shortly after Bob was diagnosed with terminal cancer. I knew it was common for interviewees to become emotional during oral history interviews, and I was prepared for it. I closely monitored Bud, looking for any signs that he needed to pause to collect himself, as he remembered his friend's last days. With a

[7] The original interview was conducted in Spanish and parts of it have been translated to English for the purposes of this document.

shaky voice, Bud managed to carry on, until the moment when he spoke of Bob's funeral:

> I never cried. This is as much as I cried since that. We buried him in Sun Valley and [there were] all our buddies, we had a group of about 8 or 10 of us. The minister who gave the eulogy at the funeral went off on this religious tangent that just pissed me off. Cause that wasn't what [Bob] was all about. The outdoors, his family, was what he was all about. Just a great guy to be around. And this guy went on a tangent. And after the funeral, one of my friends said, why didn't you cry? And I said, that wasn't Bob. That was bullshit.

At this point, Bud was overcome with emotion. Tears were streaming down his face while he gazed out towards the ocean. As he went on, long pauses were filled with quiet sobs between each phrase:

> And I said, I'll cry sooner or later. …
> I'll cry when I'm out on a duck blind…
> I'll cry…
> I'll cry out on a river…
> [I'll cry] in Santa Marianita looking at the ocean.

As a witness to his raw emotion, I understood that Bud was crying for his friend for the first time after all those years. I could feel my own throat tighten and tears welling up in my eyes. In that moment, I experienced firsthand the immense power of life story interviews to evoke suppressed memories and elicit deep emotions. After some time, Bud composed himself and concluded that his friendship with Bob was a "wonderful, wonderful relationship, great memories all around".

When I started to take photographs, Bud looked out into the ocean, as if he was not aware of my presence anymore. However, as we chatted about everyday life and shared experiences on the beach, the emotions dissipated and once again Bud appeared as the confident man I always perceived. To this day I remember with emotion the special moment I shared with Bud that day. However, the impact of our encounter truly manifested itself when I engaged in the creative process post-interview.

As I went through the process of selecting the photographs to share with Bud, I carefully reviewed all the images I had captured during our meeting. My goal was to choose only a few of the most impactful and meaningful photographs, which would then inform my selection of the most relevant portions of the interview. This was a critical step in the process of compiling the final product, as it allowed me to consider the visual elements alongside the spoken words. Through this process, my goal was to ensure that the chosen photographs, paired with selected text excerpts from the interview would accurately capture Bud's story and convey him in the most compelling way possible.

As a photographer, I was struck by the intensity of the first few photographs I took immediately after concluding our interview. The images captured a man lost in his memories, present yet not quite there. His gaze was low, his jaw tightly clenched, and his forehead furrowed with lines of tension. As I studied these photographs, I could sense Bud's emotions emanating from them. His sadness seemed to extend beyond the bounds of the picture. Reflecting on these images, I was reminded of Roland Barthes' (1981) concept of "punctum" which he discusses extensively in his book, Camera Lucida. According to Barthes, a punctum is a small detail, expression, or accidental element in a photograph that captures the viewer's attention and evokes a personal or subjective response. The punctum, as Barthes explains, is what pierces the viewer and establishes a direct emotional connection between the viewer and the subject of the photograph. However, Barthes also acknowledges that the punctum is an elusive concept that cannot be fully explained or articulated. It arises from a personal and subjective encounter between the viewer and the photograph. As I observed these photographs of Bud, I firsthand experienced the power of the punctum and the potential to evoke an emotional response from the viewer.

Prior to reviewing the interview again, I immediately reflected on the section where Bud became overwhelmed with emotion and tearfully mourned for his friend, so many years later. I was confident that this poignant moment was the narrative conveyed through those photographs. Thus, it was a clear decision to pair the two together. Without hesitation, I believed that the combination of these two elements would result in a powerful image-text fusion that would evoke a profound emotional response from the viewer.

Initially, I was quite pleased with my selection. For a moment, I even considered that my abilities as a photographer had improved, allowing me to capture such raw and genuine emotions. However, soon after, I experienced feelings of discomfort. I knew that the photographs and text I had selected did not accurately reflect the true nature of Bud. The juxtaposition I created only depicted a single memory, a moment of profound sadness that I had personally witnessed and therefore felt strongly about.

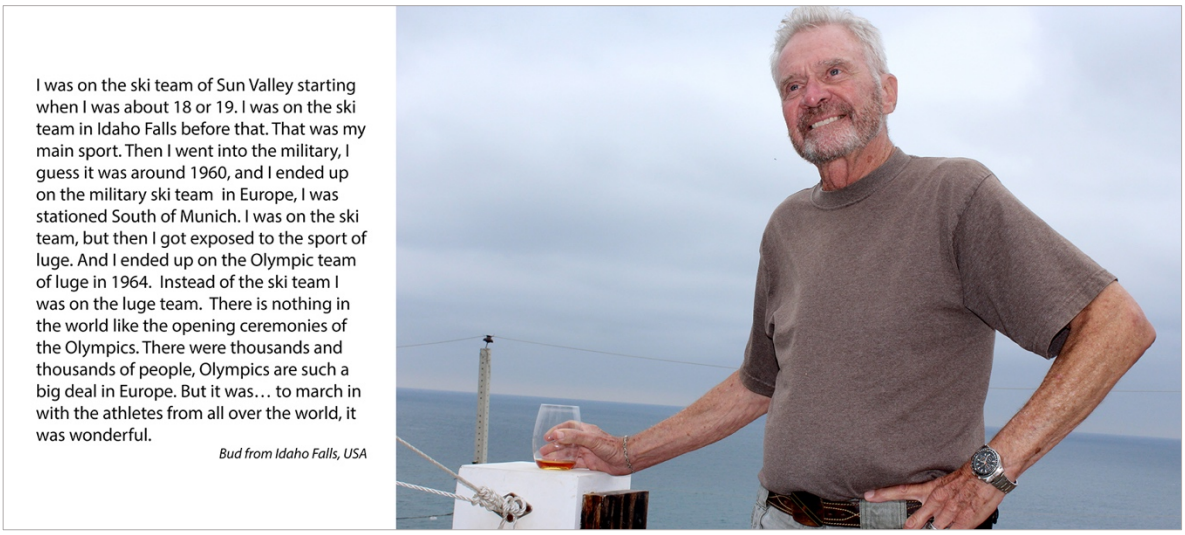
Up to this point, I assumed that the shared authority between myself and the interviewee did not extend into my creative process. I wanted to believe that as the artist, I was free to create my work in a manner that I deemed appropriate, and that the interview and photographs were simply data that I had gathered for my research-creation. In some ways, even though I disagreed with his open manipulation of his subjects (Danto, 2011), I related to Avedon's statement that his portraits were more about himself than about the individuals he photographed (Editorial @ ASX, 2013). However, in that moment I could not ignore the growing sense of discomfort I felt every time I viewed Bud's imagetext I created. How could I indeed reduce an entire life story to one single, poignant memory, mostly to enhance my own photographer ego? I realized that in this case I was no longer claiming the artist's authority—I was crossing an ethical boundary. As these thoughts lingered in my mind, I hesitantly moved the piece that I had previously been so enthusiastic about to the virtual trashcan on the bottom of my screen.

The next day, as I relistened to Bud's interview. I only kept the selection of photographs I took towards the end of our session together. Amongst a few, one photograph immediately captured my attention. In this photograph (fig.7), Bud stands upright with his head held high against a backdrop of the ocean and blue skies. He holds a glass of whisky in one hand while the other hand rests on his hip. His gaze is averted from the camera, implying that he is either lost in thought or reminiscing about a past event. Nevertheless, his beaming smile undoubtedly indicates a sense of contentment and fond memories. This image enabled me to immediately establish a connection with Bud and the life story that he had shared with me, leading me to select it as the appropriate photograph. Instead of relying on my artistic vision, this time, it was Bud's narrative that guided my decision. Subsequently, I was able to pick a suitable caption for the image that centred on Bud's experience at the Opening of the Olympic Games, in which he

participated. With this decision, I was confident that the text and the image would combine to present an authentic portrayal of Bud's character.

Figure 7

Bud



Note: Final rendition of imagetext portraying Bud, presented in Through Their Eyes. Own work.

ORAL HISTORY X PHOTOGRAPHY RESEARCH CREATION

Piecing the puzzle

In this chapter I introduce Oral History x Photography Research-Creation as a methodology that intertwines oral history and photography within a research-creation framework. I emphasize the critical role of the researcher in shaping the final product and identify four core principles: shared authority to varying degrees between researcher and participant, active listening and observation, empathy towards the participant, and the researcher's self-awareness and self-reflection throughout the process.

My experience in Ecuador, particularly the examples discussed earlier, led me to develop the methodology that I now refer to as Oral History x Photography Research-Creation. This approach is not merely a combination of the two fields; instead, it represents an integrated and synergistic fusion of oral history and photography within the context of research-creation.

Oral History x Photography Research-Creation emphasizes the researcher's central role in shaping the final product. As the interviewer, photographer, and artist, the researcher is responsible for the overall discourse and representation of the interviewee's self. This obligation necessitates profound self-reflection by the researcher, as their own experiences inevitably influence the selection of text and photographs.

The process commences with an oral history interview and subsequent photography of the interviewee. Both the interview recording and photographs are shared with the interviewee for approval. Subsequently, the researcher selects a few photographs that evoke memories from the interview and listens to the entire interview, taking notes on the moments that resonate with them. The iterative process of selecting photographs and interview excerpts continues until the researcher can narrow down the choices to one image and one paragraph. This practice underscores the negotiation of authority between the researcher, the photograph, and the interviewee's words. It's worth noting that, even though shared authority is a fundamental aspect of the initial photo-interview, the creative process that follows in this case is not a collaboration. In this phase, authority over the selection of photographs, excerpts, and aesthetic decisions is reclaimed by the artist. Nonetheless, the final product represents both, the individual

interviewed and photographed and the researcher and their own experiences. This negotiation of authority results in an imagetext that captures the interviewee's story as experienced by the researcher.

Through this process, in my role as the interviewer, photographer, and artist, I identified four core principles as the foundational pillars of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation: shared authority, active listening, empathy, and self-awareness.

Shared authority

In the practice of oral history, the concept of shared authority plays a critical role in establishing a sense of equality between the interviewer and interviewee. In my own project, I found that this shared authority was evident throughout the photo interview. During the interviews, I often encountered instances where the interviewees would stray from their life stories and shift their focus to unrelated events or other people. Navigating this challenge required a delicate balance of guiding the interviewee back to their life story, while also allowing them enough time to explore their newly emerged reflections.

The decision to take photographs immediately after the interview enabled me to further extend the notion of shared authority to my photographic process. This approach allowed me to relinquish control over the outcome of the images and instead allowed my subjects to present themselves in a way that reflected their own identities and experiences.

Although I worked alone during the creative phase of selecting and editing the photographs and interview recordings, both my personal experiences and those of the interviewees, as well as our shared experience of the interview process, influenced the outcome of imagetexts that I ultimately created. Shared authority in this context was defined by recognizing the point at which the collaboration ended, marking the transition to an independent creative process.

Active Listening

It may seem obvious to state that active listening is essential to conducting interviews, and that observation is fundamental to portrait photography. However, I found that actively engaging in these practices was what made a real difference in my work. Education scholars, Bronwen E. Low and Emanuelle Sonntag (2013) distinguish between the acts of listening and hearing by describing hearing as a physiological function, whereas listening requires conscious attention and is thus a psychological process. As the interviewer, I recognized the importance of actively listening to the stories being told and the emotions being conveyed, a task that proved to be more challenging than I had anticipated. I quickly realized that in our everyday lives, we rarely engage in active listening and observation. Instead, we often focus on how we relate to the person speaking and what we plan to say in response. Similarly, we are more concerned with how we are perceived, and rarely observe the person we are speaking with carefully.

During the oral history/photo interview, I made a conscious effort to give my undivided attention to the interviewee. It was crucial for me to pay attention to silences and pauses, resisting the urge to rush to the next question. While it may have been uncomfortable to sit in silence, it was necessary to give the interviewee time to think and reflect. Often, these moments of silence led to further revelations or memories.
In addition to active listening, observing body language and emotional reactions was also a fundamental aspect of the process. It was important for me to not only listen to the words spoken, but also pay close attention to the interviewee's posture, gestures, and facial expressions. By doing so, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences and emotions.

Empathy

Empathy is a complex concept that involves understanding, recognizing, and feeling the emotions of others[8]. In conducting Oral History x Photography Research-Creation,

[8] I discuss empathy in more detail in key concepts of Part 2.

empathy is essential to create a sense of trust and rapport with interviewees, allowing them to open up and share their stories in a meaningful and authentic way.

This journey requires a careful navigation between two forms of empathy, emotional and cognitive. Emotional empathy involves experiencing the same emotions as the interviewee, while cognitive empathy involves recognizing and understanding the emotions of others, without necessarily experiencing the same emotions oneself. It is important to note that cognitive empathy does not equate to an emotional detachment but suggests an ability to comprehend and acknowledge the emotions of the interviewee without being consumed by them. By striking a balance between emotional and cognitive empathy, I was able to approach the project with a level of detachment that allowed me to view the interviewee's experiences with a critical eye. I was able to engage with the interviewee's experiences, while also remaining mindful of my own emotions and biases.

Self-Awareness

Engaging in oral history/photography research-creation required a continuous process of self-reflection and self-awareness. It was evident that representing a person and their story was a complex task as there were several layers of separation between the interviewee's experiences and my final interpretation of them. During the photo interview, it was crucial for me to acknowledge my own biases and interpretations and actively work to set them aside in order to capture the essence of the interviewee's story. This required a heightened sense of self-awareness and the ability to remain present in the moment while also maintaining a level of detachment. It was important to listen actively and observe the interviewee without imposing my own interpretations onto their story. The creative process that followed also required a similar level of self-awareness. The memories and experiences shared by the interviewee were filtered through my own unique perspective and creative vision. As such, it was essential for me to recognize the layers of separation that existed and to maintain a balance between capturing the essence of the interviewee's story and my own creative vision.

Reflecting on the question that guided this segment of my research—What are the benefits and tensions associated with integrating oral history and photography into a research-creation methodology? —I found that the integration process requires care,

understanding, and a commitment to respectful representation. By merging oral history and portrait photography, the shared experiences of researcher and participant form a bond that transcends formal roles and shape the creative process. Despite inherent tensions, particularly from differing power dynamics in each discipline, careful navigation allows this methodology to embody a multidimensional, comprehensive research-creation.

In the next part, I explore the pedagogical potential of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation as I seek to answer the second question of my research: In what ways can Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology enhance teaching and learning processes?

Part 2

PEDAGOGY

KEY CONCEPTS

The first key concept I explore in the following section is oral history as pedagogy. This concept encompasses the students' role as researcher-historians, the active learning through shared authority, and the importance of active listening. I highlight the importance of post-interview interpretation and how students creatively disseminate oral histories, bridging the gap between personal narratives and public understanding. Finally, I discuss the integration of oral history with art making and explore power dynamics involved.

The second key concept I discuss is empathy, an integral component of my research. To investigate its transformative potential, I lean on a researcher in social work, Elizabeth A. Segal's portrayal of empathy as a foundation for robust interpersonal relationships and philosopher Amy Coplan's interpretation of empathy as a stimulant for motivated action. Their insights inform my examination of the empathetic potential within the intersection of art and oral history.

Oral History as Pedagogy

Oral history projects, in which student-interviewers adopt the role of researcher-historians to learn about the past and construct meanings based on firsthand accounts, are processes replete with pedagogical implications (Llewellyn & Ng-A-Fook, 2017; Christodoulou, 2017; Low & Sonntag, 2013; Peronne, 2017; Thomson, 2017). One key aspect of oral history is its emphasis on experiential learning through the concept of shared authority. As noted earlier, Frisch (1990) first introduced the term "shared authority" to encourage researchers to challenge the power asymmetry between the interviewer and interviewee, to eschew the premise that authority resides exclusively in the hands of the researcher, and to recognize the expert authority of the researcher as well as the experiential authority of the interviewee (Thomson, 2003; Little, Miller & High, 2017). Consequently, a successful oral history interview highlights the notion of "knowing with" instead of "knowing about" (Greenspan & Bolkolsky, 2006), which, from an educational perspective, means that students become active learners, engaging with their interviewees rather than merely learning about them.

Furthermore, oral history pedagogy enhances the development of students' active listening skills. In traditional education systems, students are often expected to

passively "hear" the teacher, who transmits information in the form of a lecture—a dynamic that Freire (2000) derisively labeled the "banking model of education," which metaphorically reduces students to empty containers to be filled with information from teachers. In contrast, oral history education foregrounds the importance of active listening. Students participating in oral history interviews are encouraged not only to listen to the words spoken, but also to note silences, repetitions, changes in tone, emotions, body language, and other paralinguistic cues; in other words, they are listening for meaning, not just facts (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

While oral history often places emphasis on the interview process, the post-interview treatment and dissemination of information are equally vital. Oral history can be shared through various formats and interdisciplinary media, encompassing essays, visual arts, film, theatre, and performance art (Little, Miller & High, 2017). In pedagogical contexts, Bronwen E. Low and Emanuelle Sonntag (2013), distinguished scholars in the field of education, liken this process of dissemination to curating, which involves producing and sharing narrative responses to life stories and testimonies, while representing history in engaging, tangible forms. Dipti Desai (2001), a prominent scholar in art education, posits that oral history, by transcending the classroom's confines, bridges the gap between school and community, transforming personal stories of students' families and community members into public narratives that foster a deeper understanding of history and culture. This practice of rendering oral history accessible and appealing to wider audiences is where oral history and art intersect.

Several studies indicate that when oral history is integrated with art-making, students engage in a meaningful and thorough creative process (Atiken, 2017; Peronne, 2017, Desai, 2001). Centering learning around relevant and significant issues provides a space for students to explore and challenge power dynamics through art-making (Bradshaw, 2016). Students are encouraged to approach the project holistically, perceiving the art-making aspect not as a mere illustration of the interview but as an extension of it. This immersive approach places emphasis on the entire creative process rather than solely the final product. Furthermore, considerations of shared authority and the ethical implications of respectfully and dignifiedly representing someone else's story, fundamental in oral history, become integral components of the art-making process in an empathy fostering environment.

Empathy

Often described as "walking in another's shoes", empathy is a skill that deepens understanding of our society, leads to a greater tolerance of difference, and enhances civic involvement. This fundamental capability aids in comprehending others' life experiences and is a key cornerstone for cultivating conscientious citizenship (Gerdes et al., 2011). As outlined in the Social Work Dictionary, empathy embodies "the act of perceiving, understanding, experiencing, and responding to the emotional state and ideas of another person" (Barker, 2008, p. 141). Renowned social work scholar Elizabeth A. Segal (2011) underscores the criticality of empathy in fostering robust interpersonal relationships.

Traditionally, the development of empathy, or its deficiency, was predominantly linked to childhood experiences, postulating that a secure, nurturing environment bolsters the pathways necessary for empathy. Nevertheless, contemporary research illuminates that our brain's malleability extends into adulthood, signifying that empathy can be refined and augmented at any stage of life (Gerdes et al., 2011). With the advent of innovative technology and brain imaging techniques, our understanding of empathy's neural functioning has evolved (Iacoboni, 2009; Kaplan & Iacoboni, 2006). Neuroscientists have identified four distinct components of empathy, each integral for a holistic empathic experience, as proposed by Gerdes et al. (2011).

The first component, affective response, is an automatic mirroring of another person's expressions and gestures, an involuntary reaction. The remaining three components, based on cognitive processes, demand deliberate action: differentiating oneself from others, assuming another's perspective, and the capability to regulate one's emotions, thus averting emotional inundation from others' feelings or experiences (Gerdes et al., 2011; Segal, 2011). Neuroscience pioneer Marco Iacoboni (2009) proposes that our brains are biologically predisposed for empathy, indicating an innate urge to comprehend others.

In the educational sphere, the role of empathy is profoundly impactful. Denise Whitford and Andrea Emerson (2019), experts in education studies, for instance, studied the efficacy of empathy-based interventions in reducing implicit bias in pre-service teachers towards students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Their research affirmed

that empathy-inducing activities, such as short story point of view and reflective writing exercises, significantly attenuated bias.

Educational practitioners concur that art education engenders environments conducive to fostering empathy among students (Jeffers, 2009; Phillips, 2003; Bradshaw, 2016; Stout, 1999; Hasio, 2016). They believe that art creation facilitates students to comprehend and contest power relationships in meaningful and relatable learning contexts (Bradshaw, 2016).

Sylvie Morais (2022), an artist and art education professor, echoes this perspective, emphasizing the pivotal role of empathy in art education. She posits that artistic creation and appreciation can be enriched through the cultivation of empathy. Morais (2022) suggests that artist-teachers can foster this empathic environment via interactive engagements with their students, coupled with practices such as meditation and attentive presence. This approach could reinforce the connection between self and others, thus nurturing a vibrant learning space where creativity and relational skills flourish. As philosopher of education Maxine Greene (1995) eloquently articulates, "if those others are willing to give us clues, we can look in some manner through strangers' eyes and hear through their ears" (p.3). This concept is equally applicable to fostering empathy through arts and oral history.

Oral history projects, with their profound engagement, also catalyze empathy development. Paul Thomson (2017), sociologist and oral historian, claims that listening to lived experiences enables us to assume another's perspective, gaining insights into their experiences and recognizing how they diverge from our own. Each interviewee, whether a family member or a genocide survivor, provides an opportunity to understand that everyone has a unique narrative, thereby cultivating a heightened awareness of others around us (Perrone, 2017). Segal (2011) emphasizes that both listening to and sharing people's stories are acts of empathy. In the words of Portelli (2006), "Oral history conveys the sense that history does happen to people like us in everyday places and contexts" (p. xiv).-Philosopher Amy Coplan (2011) calls for a ~~more~~ refined conceptualization, distinguishing emotional contagion (mirroring emotions of another), pseudo-empathy (self-oriented perspective taking), and genuine empathy. Coplan posits that true empathy involves simulating others' emotions while maintaining awareness that these feelings are not our own, indicating the need for conscious regulation of our responses. She emphasizes the necessity to understand individuals

and their contexts from an other-oriented perspective, particularly when our knowledge about them is limited or their context is vastly different from ours. Coplan's perspective resonates with the earlier mention of cognitive components of empathy that necessitate voluntary actions such as understanding another's perspective and controlling one's emotions (Gerdes et al., 2011; Segal, 2011).

This interpretation of empathy can be taken into consideration when engaging with oral history and art education as well, as it emphasizes not just understanding or feeling another's emotion, but also the motivation for action it generates.

One passion that beats them all

In this chapter, I reflect on my personal journey as an educator, drawing parallels between my work on the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation and my teaching philosophy and I delve into the specifics of my fieldwork and all the challenges that came along. I detail my collaboration with six participants, who after engaging in the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology, provide personal perspectives on its pedagogical potential, based on their firsthand experiences.

I often reflect on the two projects that were my early encounters with oral history and photography. I can say with confidence that it was Twinkle's (Other) Story that made me fall in love with oral history and Through Their Eyes helped me, through oral history, to rekindle my passion for photography.

However, teaching has aways been my one true passion.

I was eleven years old when my mother took me to the movie theatre to see Dead Poets Society (1989), a film that would ultimately leave a lasting impression on me. Soon thereafter, I was required to deliver an oral presentation to my classmates. Although I do not recall the precise theme or context of the presentation, I vividly remember talking about the film I had watched just a few days prior. As I attempted to describe the memorable closing scene of the film—where the students, in a show of respect and solidarity, defiantly stood on their desks proclaiming, "O Captain! My Captain!" in response to their teacher's dismissal—I could barely hold myself together. I was deeply moved by the story of Professor Keating (brilliantly portrayed by Robin Williams) and his unconventional pedagogical approach, as well as the profound connections he forged with his students. I remember finishing my presentation as I wiped my tears with my sleeve, as my teacher and classmates looked on in silence. The next student began their presentation. It was about a green parrot pet.

Although I cannot say with certainty whether the film I watched when I was eleven years old ultimately inspired me to become a teacher many years later, I am certain that my concept of the kind of educator I aspired to be was heavily influenced by "movie teachers" such as Professor Keating or Ms. Johnson, portrayed by Michelle Pfeiffer in

the 1995 film Dangerous Minds. Like them, I desired to "get" my students, to comprehend their struggles, to guide them, and to help them unlock their full potential. I was not the only one who felt this way. During my studies in art education, my colleagues in the program shared the same vision. We spent countless hours sipping cheap beer in a local pub, discussing teenage angst, and how, through the medium of art, we, as teachers, would aid our future students in "finding" themselves. Though we were in our early twenties and had just barely left our own teenage years behind, we were convinced that we had everything figured out.

Upon graduating from the art education program, I felt confident in my ability to craft intricate and engaging lessons that would stimulate my students' curiosity and foster their development of artistic knowledge. I also believed that I was well-prepared to handle the unpredictable and complex dynamic that exists between teachers and students, as we had frequently discussed such matters in class. However, I was mistaken.

My first year of teaching was markedly different from what I had anticipated. Like an inexperienced swimmer thrust into the deep end, I flailed about frantically, struggling to keep my head above water. I desperately sought a means of controlling my students, fearing that if I did not, they would control me instead. This became a power struggle, and I found myself yelling frequently and shedding tears after class more than once. I was embarrassed that I had sent so many of my students to the principal's office because I didn't know how to deal with them. In hindsight, I now recognize that my experience was typical of many novice teachers.

Nevertheless, over time, I grew more self-assured and less intimidated by my students. My need to exert control gradually waned, and after a couple of years, I finally felt that I was capable of "managing" my class. I began to take pleasure in teaching once more. One of the most memorable and gratifying experiences I recall from that period was conducting a participatory art-based research project as part of my master's thesis. The project aimed to explore the emerging field of visual culture, and I invited a group of my students to participate by using the Lomography method to create personal visual narratives (Kabiljo, 2009). As we worked on this project together, I felt that my students and I became equal partners in the research process. Despite my maintaining a professional distance and not attempting to befriend my students, we developed a relationship that was free from the usual power dynamic between teacher and student.

This connection continued even after we completed the project and returned to the regular classroom curriculum. The experience highlighted for me the importance of fostering positive relationships with students and the potential for such relationships to enhance both teaching and learning.

As my teaching career progressed, I came to realize that my initial expectations of teaching, influenced by idealized portrayals in movies from my childhood, did not align with the reality of the profession. However, despite the challenges and surprises that came with teaching, I did not become completely disillusioned. Instead, I began to recognize the significance of positive relationships between teachers and students and the transformative impact they can have on all aspects of teaching. While I had only begun to grasp the importance of such relationships at the time, I was aware that there was much more to learn and discover about effective teaching practices.

I truly understood the impact of interpersonal relationships when during my journey at LOVE. Working with youth in the organization's media arts and leadership programs provided me with a new perspective on teaching. LOVE's youth and staff came from diverse backgrounds and all walks of life. Youth and staff alike challenged each other's biases and faced our own prejudice. Through open dialogue, empathy, and compassion, we were able to learn from each other and develop a deeper understanding of the humanity that we all share.

Following my departure from LOVE, I set out on a globetrotting adventure that brought me to Ecuador, among other destinations. Soon after, I commenced my doctoral studies, which ultimately led me back to the country that I had previously formed a strong connection with.

Uncovering Pedagogical Potential

Upon my return from Ecuador, I commenced part-time work as a high school teacher, and concurrently taught an undergraduate course in art education. Despite extensive teaching experience of nearly twenty years, once again I found myself in the position of an expert-beginner (Kabiljo, 2019). This paradox is a common experience for seasoned teachers when they start teaching a new cohort of students. Regardless of

the years spent teaching the same subject or course, each new group necessitates adopting a unique teaching approach as the dynamic unavoidably transforms from one group to the next. Jill Hadfield, a seasoned teacher and author, reinforces this reality, highlighting that the creation of a productive class dynamic is a demanding and complex process that requires substantial patience, flexibility, and negotiation skills (Hadfield, 1992). This assertion is further supported by Shor (1996) in his influential book, *When Students Have Power*, where he recounts his personal experiences of cultivating a learning environment that encourages student-led learning.

While embarking on this process in both of my new teaching roles, I found myself frequently drawing parallels between my classroom experiences and my previous work on the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation. The four principles that served as the foundation of my research-creation methodology—active listening, shared authority, empathy, and self-awareness—were also integral to my teaching practice. While these principles may have always been present, I have now become acutely aware of their significance and how deeply they are embedded in my teaching philosophy. As an educator, my journey has led me to understand the critical role of social-emotional competences in teaching. Social-emotional competences encompass specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes that individuals harness "to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve both personal and collective goals, display empathy for others, establish and sustain supportive relationships, and make responsible, caring decisions" (Fundamentals of SEL, 2020, par 1). From my experience, I have found that active listening, shared authority, empathy, and self-awareness are all vital to the development of social emotional competences. Enforcing those principles enabled me to establish meaningful connections with students, create a positive group dynamic, and ultimately enhance the learning experience for all involved.

The connection I drew between Oral History x Photography Research-Creation and my teaching practice was a pivotal moment that shaped the trajectory of my research. At this juncture, I understood that my interest was not restricted to the methodology itself, but extended to exploring its pedagogical potential as well. I was curious about how this methodology could enhance teaching and learning, especially in relation to its capacity to foster the development of relational competences. Furthermore, I was eager to explore potential curricula that could promote the development of social-

emotional competences using the framework of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation.

This realization enabled me to articulate the focal question of my study: In what ways can the practice of an Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology contribute to the development of social-emotional competence?

Consequently, I restructured my research into three parts. In the first part, I would critically revisit my experience of developing the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation as a methodology and reflect on the benefits and tensions I encountered during the process. In the second part, I would recruit six practitioners from the fields of oral history, education, or the arts. Each participant would first participate in the photo-interview. Then, we would meet for a follow-up interview to discuss their views on the pedagogical potential of the methodology based on their firsthand experience. In the third and final part of my research, I would develop and potentially implement various curriculum models that use Oral History x Photography Research-Creation for the enhancement of social-emotional competences. With renewed enthusiasm and having secured approval from the Concordia Research Ethics Unit, I was eager to embark on the fieldwork[9].

A Deep Dive That Hit the Rock Bottom

In the introductory chapter of this dissertation, I described bricolage as the overarching methodology for my investigation. Like the bricoleur, who uses tools and materials that are readily available, I drew on various methodologies and employed different methods as required. Throughout this process, I was cautioned about the potential for unpredictability and messiness that can arise from the use of bricolage (Kincheloe, 2004). I recognized that the approach I had developed would serve as a general guideline, open to the highly likely need for modification as new information came to light. I approached my investigation with a seemingly paradoxical motto: detailed planning is crucial to enable real-time adjustments without sacrificing the integrity of the project. In essence, I prepared myself to be surprised.

[9] See Annex A for The Certification of Ethical Acceptability for Research Involving Human Subjects.

In the fall of 2019, I began recruiting professional collaborators for my investigation. While there were no set criteria for the participant's profile, I sought individuals whose professional practice was connected to oral history, education, or the arts[10]. My plan was to meet with each participant-collaborator twice, conducting a life-story interview and photographing them during the first meeting, and discussing their experience of being interviewed and photographed personally and in relation to their professional practice the second time we'd meet. However, unlike in Ecuador, where most of the participants had the luxury of a slow-paced beach life with plenty of free time, the recruitment of professionals in Montreal presented its own set of challenges. Time constraints were the main issue, with many potential participant collaborators struggling to find availability in their busy schedules. Despite these obstacles, by March 2020, I had completed oral history/photo interviews and follow-up meetings with four participant collaborators.

The spring that followed will forever remain etched in our collective memory, a time when the COVID19 pandemic swept across the globe, bringing with it unprecedented levels of disruption and uncertainty. The world we once knew was no more, as survival mode became the norm. Against this backdrop, any enthusiasm or motivation I had for continuing my research quickly dissipated. Instead, I focused my attention on tangible ways to contribute to the fragile health and education systems that were struggling to cope with this new reality. During this time, all the progress I had made in my research remained tucked away in a drawer, a reminder of a different era. It wasn't until two years later that I emerged from the pandemic vortex, feeling as though the world was finally breathing again and ready to resume where I left off. However, getting back into research mode was no easy feat. I had to remind myself that doing academic research is like riding a bicycle—once learned, I know that I will always remember how to do it, however, there is a moment of hesitation and insecurity every time I get on the bicycle after a long period of not riding. It took me some time to get back into it and in the months that followed I recruited two additional participants to bring the total number of participant collaborators to six, the objective that I set in my proposal. My interviewees are Emma Haraké, Tanya Steinberg, Scott MacLeod, Mikaella Goldsmith,

[10] It's important to note that Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) were not explicitly investigated in this research. While oral history and photography have traditionally been utilized and interpreted by diverse individuals across a spectrum of differences, such as race, gender, age, and cultural background, this study did not explore these aspects of identity. Future research could delve deeper into these areas, examining how elements of EDI intersect with the practice of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology.

Lauren Laframboise and Benjamin McKeown. While I briefly mention them here, a more detailed introduction to each of them will follow in a later section of this dissertation.

Getting Down to Business

When I first embarked on my field work for this research, I had a general sense of what I wanted to investigate. As I conducted more interviews, my initial ideas evolved and transformed in unexpected ways. It was surprising to me just how much valuable information I was able to gather from each participant. The follow-up interviews were particularly insightful, as they took on an informal and conversational tone and often took unexpected turns. As a result, I found myself feeling overwhelmed at times and unsure of how to make sense of all the information I had collected.
Despite these challenges, I reminded myself that it was okay not to have all the answers right away. In fact, the uncertainty and ambiguity that I encountered throughout this process were an important part of the research journey. Without it, there would be little point in conducting this investigation in the first place. While my inquiry into the pedagogical potential of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation may have seemed scattered and unfocused at the time, the reiteration of the process enabled me to establish other critical features of the methodology itself.

Location matters — At first, I conducted the oral history/photo interviews in a neutral setting at the university. I managed to secure a private location where we wouldn't be disturbed, and I brought tea and snacks to create a more relaxed atmosphere. Despite my efforts to foster an intimate environment, I stayed aware of the surroundings and their impact on the interviewees, particularly during emotional moments. To some extent, it was surprising and slightly disconcerting to witness such vulnerability in a rather stark and neutral setting, as if observing a fish out of water. Capturing photographs of the interviewees in this setting proved to be challenging as well. Although the connection we had established during the interview remained present while taking pictures, it was difficult to translate that connection onto film in such a stark environment, exacerbated by the poor lighting conditions.

In contrast, interviewees seemed at ease from the outset when interviewed in their own homes. They appeared comfortable and in their element, therefore there was no

surprise to see them express vulnerability within the safety and familiarity of their personal surroundings. For instance, during the follow-up interview with Benjamin, he confirmed that the location indeed influenced his overall comfort level, especially while being photographed:

> The photograph experience was a bit uncomfortable for me since I'm not great in front of the camera. I always end up looking either annoyed or unsure of what to do. However, it wasn't a big deal, and it was a quick process. It definitely helped that we took the pictures in my own environment, my backyard, which made it easier for me. Regarding taking the photographs before the interview, I don't think it would have made much of a difference for me since I was already in my own space.

This insight led me to realize that a crucial aspect of oral history and photography research-creation is to conduct the life story interview in a familiar environment, preferably the participant's home.

Timing is everything — During the development stage of my oral history and photography research project, I serendipitously discovered that the timing of photographing the interviewees influenced the outcome of the images I captured. Taking the photographs immediately after the interview made the photo session feel more effortless and comfortable for both myself and the interviewee. As a result, the photographs essentially appeared as an extension of the interview. Once I came to this realization, I never looked back — adopting the mindset that if something works, don't fix it. It never occurred to me again to intentionally choose to photograph an interviewee after a significant time had elapsed. Mainly, I didn't want to risk ending up with photographs that felt distant and staged, as I had experienced before. However, one interviewee inadvertently led me to validate this point whether I intended to or not. Scott was the only participant I hadn't personally met before the interview. As a visual artist and filmmaker who frequently uses oral history as a guideline for his work, I knew his contribution to my research would be invaluable. When we met for the initial life-story interview at COHDS, Scott informed me that he did not want me to photograph him at our current location. Instead, he asked me to conduct the follow-up interview at his home and to photograph him during that meeting.

Two weeks later, we met at Scott's home for the follow-up interview and the subsequent photo session. During the interview, Scott reflected on how his decision to be photographed in a familiar environment would provide a more intimate glimpse into his life and work:

> I asked you to photograph me in my home because, in the context of our interview, I wanted to invite you into my world. Showing you my illustrations for my graphic novel, The Irishman Child of the Gale, and providing you with a better understanding of who I am was important for me. Although skilled storytellers can record stories anywhere, I believed that inviting you to my home would bring you closer to my universe. After seeing your work and the photos you took for your last project, I felt it was necessary for you to visit my studio or my living environment.

As I had already observed from prior interviews that participants appear more at ease in familiar environments, I understood why Scott preferred to be photographed at his home. However, taking the photographs proved to be a challenging task. Even though Scott appeared at ease in front of the camera, I felt that the connection between us, present after the first interview, had faded. Consequently, the photographs I took felt posed, formal, and failed to effectively portray Scott as he was immediately after our initial interview.

Though the discomfort I experienced during the photography session may not be apparent to the viewers, it allowed me to recognize a crucial aspect of my methodology: maintaining shared authority between the interview and the photography requires capturing the images immediately after the interview. Adopting this strategy guarantees a more genuine and truthful representation of the interviewees, enhancing the overall significance and effectiveness of the project.

The artist is always present — Initially, my creative output from the oral history and photography research project consisted of an imagetext that juxtaposed the interviewee's portrait with a text excerpt from their interview. While I, as the artist, understood that the artwork aimed to portray my interpretation of our encounter rather than representing the individual themselves, I realized this intention might not be clear to the viewer. Although my presence in the process was fundamental, I was essentially

absent in the final work. To address this, I modified the creative output by adding an oversized sticky note on which I wrote my thoughts or feelings that led me to choose that specific interview excerpt.

The sticky note has become a crucial element in representing my personal connection to the subjects and their stories. Through the process of interviewing and photographing participants, I became deeply immersed in their life experiences, emotions, and thoughts. The sticky note serves as a visual manifestation of my inner thoughts and reactions to the narratives they shared with me.

Moreover, the sticky note embodies the concept that my artwork is an interpretation rather than an objective representation of the subjects. It acts as a constant reminder that the final piece is a blend of the interviewees' narratives and my understanding of their experiences. This acknowledgment of subjectivity invites viewers to engage with the artwork on a deeper emotional level and encourages them to reflect on their perceptions and experiences as they connect with each narrative[11].

Consequently, the sticky note, in addition to the photograph and text, has become a vital component of my artwork. It not only bridges the gap between my intentions and the viewer's interpretation but also enhances the overall emotional depth and meaning of the pieces[12].

Untangling Thoughts

The concluding phase of this segment of my investigation involved analyzing data from follow-up interviews conducted with six participant collaborators. Initially, I was uncertain where my investigation into the pedagogical potential of oral history and photography research-creation would lead. I adopted a constructivist learning theory

[11] I am grateful to my co-supervisor, Kathleen Vaughn for her thoughtful suggestion of incorporating the subject's thoughts via a sticky note, in addition to my own. This would indeed present a more holistic view, truly reflecting the shared authority in this process. While this isn't incorporated in the current work, I look forward to exploring this concept in my future research.

[12] I have simulated the inclusion of the sticky note in the presentation of the Life As We Know It project on pages 93-99.

approach, which posits that individuals actively construct their own knowledge and that reality is shaped by the learner's experiences (Travers et al., 2000). In this context, I was both, investigator and learner. As a result, with each subsequent interview, my questions evolved, based on insights gained from previous interviewees. Furthermore, unlike life story interviews, where I carefully avoided inserting myself into the conversation, follow-up interviews were more dialogic. At times, these interviews resembled brainstorming sessions rather than guided discussions. Upon a thorough examination of the interview transcripts, I identified recurring themes echoed by multiple participant collaborators: being interviewed and photographed, empathy, shared authority, active listening, and self-awareness. These common threads provided further insight to address my guiding inquiry: How might the practice of an Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology foster the development of social-emotional competence among teacher candidates in art education?

In the following section, I further explore those themes through participants' personal accounts. However, before delving into the details, it is essential to introduce the individuals who generously contributed to this investigation and provide some context for each interview.

Emma Haraké is an artist, educator, researcher, and community organizer. She holds a Masters degree in Art Education from Concordia University. At the time of the interview, Emma was the head coordinator at the Center for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (COHDS). My acquaintance with Emma dates back to a graduate seminar in 2016, and we have maintained a professional and amicable relationship ever since. Emma was the first person I interviewed for this investigation, and both the life story interview and follow-up occurred at COHDS.

Tanya Steinberg, a researcher and teacher, holds a PhD in Geography and a master's degree in History. She incorporated oral history as a crucial method in her research during her Masters thesis. While I had briefly encountered Tanya at various events at COHDS, our relationship was not particularly close. I conducted the initial interview and photographed Tanya at the university library, and subsequently, we met for the follow-up interview at COHDS.

Scott MacLeod, a multimedia artist, musician, and film director, frequently incorporates oral history in his artistic endeavours. He possesses a BFA with a specialization in

printmaking and a Masters degree in Art Education. Unlike the other participant collaborators, I hadn't previously met Scott before the interview. The initial interview took place at COHDS, and at Scott's request, the photoshoot and follow-up session occurred at his home.

Mikaella Goldsmith, a youth worker and activist, holds a diploma in social work and a BA in Human Relations. Our collaboration was particularly close, as we had previously worked together at LOVE for several years and developed a close friendship. The first interview and photographing session took place at her home, while we conducted the follow-up meeting at my house.

Lauren Laframboise holds a Masters degree in History and is currently working towards her PhD. Lauren and I both participated in a graduate reading group, and often crossed paths at COHDS. She is one of the collaborators I interviewed post-pandemic. I conducted the initial interview and photographed Lauren at her home, and we subsequently met at COHDS for the follow-up interview.

Benjamin McKeown, a high school teacher specializing in social sciences, holds a BA in education. He has taught in schools in Montreal, China, Korea, and Japan. Benjamin and I have known each other since high school, as we were part of the same group of friends. Over the years, our contact diminished, but we would occasionally run into each other at social gatherings. Benjamin is the last participant I interviewed and both interviews were conducted at his home.

The following section delves into firsthand testimonies from the follow-up interviews, focusing on key themes that are pivotal for this investigation: being interviewed and photographed, empathy, shared authority, active listening, and self-awareness[13]. The personal narratives of the participants provide a window into their individual experiences and the underlying dynamics within the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation.

[13] For improved readability, the interview passages quoted in this section have been carefully edited to enhance clarity and coherence. The purpose of these modifications is to present the participants' thoughts and experiences in a more accessible manner, while maintaining the integrity and authenticity of their original intentions. All participants have reviewed and approved the edited version.

On being interviewed

Personal accounts from Emma, Tanya, Scott, Mikaella, Lauren, and Benjamin as they reflect on their interview experiences provide a valuable insight into the interview process from the interviewee's perspective.

Emma reflected on the transformative power of interviewing and highlighted the progression from initial discomfort to an eventual state of openness:

> Being interviewed can be a vulnerable position to be in. Initially, I wasn't very aware of my body language, but during the interview, I had an interesting moment where I realized I had become more relaxed and leaned forward. This shift was interesting to notice, especially as someone who is used to doing interviews, and it made me more appreciative of the responsibility that comes with it. At first, I was guarded and focused on what I didn't want to share. However, as the interview progressed, I became more comfortable and shared more. I still kept some details to myself, but I found it refreshing to have shared authority and control over the version of myself that I presented. I believe there are some benefits to being interviewed. Having the time and space to share uninterrupted for almost an hour can be therapeutic. Additionally, it makes me more aware of the stories I tell. After the interview, I reflected on what I hid, what I didn't, and what I ranted about. This reflection helped me understand why I tell certain stories and how I present myself. Being self-reflective is always helpful in understanding how we stage our stories.

Transitioning from Emma's observations, Tanya reflected on vulnerability in storytelling. She disclosed her initial hesitation, followed by an emotionally intense, yet rewarding, interview experience:

> When you asked to interview me, I was hesitant at first. I had refused every interview before, but there was something about this opportunity that intrigued me. The experience itself was incredible, but also emotional and difficult. I found it hard to filter through everything I wanted to say, and the questions brought up a lot of memories and emotions. It made me realize how difficult it is to tell your story and be vulnerable in front of others. But in the end, I came away with a new appreciation for what I ask others when I interview them. It's not easy to

> go back in time and relive certain experiences, but it's important to share those stories. During the interview, I was really worried about how it was going to go. I had prepared as much as I could, but I still felt nervous and unsure of myself. But as the interview went on, something shifted. You had a way of asking questions that made me feel comfortable and at ease. I started to forget about the recorder and focus on the conversation we were having. By the end, I was surprised at how emotional I had become—I don't usually let my guard down like that in front of strangers. Despite the difficulty, I don't regret doing it. We all have our own struggles and experiences, but sometimes we keep them bottled up inside. That's what oral history does—it gives space for people to talk about their stories.

Building on Tanya's viewpoint, Scott experienced the interview as an exploratory journey into his personal history, leading to self—reflection and some emotional moments:

> As someone who's interested in life history, being interviewed was a fantastic experience for me. I've been working on my own personal project, my hero's journey project, which stemmed from a paper I wrote on life history. I typically spend an hour a day at a café, working on my life-history project, so going through it with you was like having an organized treatment session in my head. So sitting down with you was perfect timing, as it allowed me to review my life history and sort through my thoughts. It was really useful to review the chronology of events and reflect on their outcomes. Being in a semi-formal setting with you to do this kind of work was extremely helpful. I'm a strong believer in this process and I'm grateful for the opportunity to have gone through it with you. The interview was generally comfortable without any significant uncomfortable moments. However, there were some personal details that I chose not to share on tape, which I shared with you after we stopped recording, but it was manageable. I felt comfortable enough with you to continue the conversation afterwards, even inviting you into my own home. We did hit some rough patches during the interview that brought up emotions and caused me to become teary-eyed, but that's just part of being human and going through life experiences. Reliving traumas can be difficult, which is why some people choose to sign off. However, I believe in the value of this type of work

> and choose to be selective with what I share. My own life-history project is about giving others a window into an artist's life, including the ups and downs that I've experienced. I believe there's value in sharing these stories, as they can serve as templates or models for others to change their own lives. Any good story has a kernel of truth that we can take away, whether it's an epic myth or an autobiography. In short, I think this type of work is important and I'm committed to it.

Shifting to Mikaella's account, her first-time experience of sharing her entire story aloud led to surprising, emotional reactions:

> Looking back, I remember feeling more emotional than I had anticipated during the interview. It was the first time I had ever shared my story in a consecutive manner, so hearing it out loud was pretty intense. I had previously only shared bits and pieces, so it was a new experience for me. The emotional impact of reliving my story was what stood out the most to me. I wasn't uncomfortable during the interview. I am comfortable with my story and I also felt comfortable with you as the interviewer. It was just surprising to experience the emotional intensity that came with sharing my story in its entirety.

From Mikaella's revelation, we move to Lauren's perspective, who acknowledged the challenge of vulnerability and the complex dynamics of the interview setting:

> It was an interesting experience. It felt almost like a therapy session, where I was being very autobiographical and vulnerable. I find it challenging to be vulnerable in general, so it was emotionally difficult for me. I felt like the vulnerability was very one-sided, and I wished I could ask you the same questions in return. We have a professional/friendly relationship, and those are the types of questions I would ask to get to know someone better. It was interesting to think about doing an interview with someone you're friends with, but not having that reciprocity of conversation. I wasn't uncomfortable in the sense that the questions weren't difficult or uncomfortable. It was more that I hadn't really thought about my life in that way before. I felt hyper aware of the way I was constructing my own life story, perhaps because I'm an oral historian and understand that the process of constructing a life story is mediated and

changes over time. I may have been overthinking it, but it was an interesting experience overall.

Finally, Benjamin shared his initial uncertainties about the interview process. Despite the initial discomfort, he felt more at ease as the conversation unfolded:

> Before the interview, I didn't really know what to expect. I thought it would be more about my experiences as a teacher, but I was open to anything. After the interview, I went over my answers and thought about things I could have said differently or more effectively. When you're just talking, you don't always think about everything you want to say. I stand by my answers, but with more time, I could have phrased some things better. I felt uncomfortable at first because it's not something I'm used to. If there had been a camera involved, it would have been even more challenging. As we went on, I started to forget about the microphone, and it became easier. It's always strange to talk about yourself so much and have it be a one-way conversation. As the interviewee, I felt like I needed to keep talking. However, because we have a personal connection, I felt comfortable sharing more than I would have with a stranger. But, since it was only one sitting and one perspective, it doesn't fully represent my life. If I had to write it or create a presentation on it, it would have been quite different. Whenever you talk about personal experiences, there's a certain level of vulnerability. While my life hasn't been a rollercoaster, and I didn't have any big secrets to reveal, talking about love, breakups, and family can be personal and revealing.

On Being Photographed

This section captures participant's reflections as they grappled with their feelings in front of the camera[14]. Through their diverse perspectives, we gain insight into the inherent vulnerabilities, power dynamics, and transformative potentials that arise when camera is present.

[14] A forthcoming section on p. 93 features selected photographs alongside text excerpts from the interviews, each accompanied by my interpretative sticky notes.

Emma navigated the intricate balance of being both, the subject and the artist. Her reflections revealed the power dynamics and vulnerabilities encountered when switching from behind the camera to in front of it:

> Being photographed was disorienting for me because I see your work on the walls every day, and it's exciting. However, being seated and photographed while discussing other topics made me reflect on the nature of our conversation. After the interview, I began contemplating how my photographs were captured while I was discussing something unrelated. While I found the process of being photographed enjoyable, it did make me feel vulnerable. I am uncomfortable with being photographed and having someone else take my pictures added an extra layer of vulnerability. I am grateful that the photography took place after the interview. I don't know how I would have fared had we gone into the interview after being photographed. Personally, I felt more tense because being photographed brings up personal issues for me. Even though we moved to a more familiar and comfortable setting where I work, I still felt uneasy. The added layer of vulnerability and being seen by someone else and how I was perceived contributed to my discomfort. As an artist, I make daily choices, and having someone else photograph me shifts my power to them. It was both intriguing and disorienting, causing me to reflect on how I expect others to relinquish their power when I am behind the camera.

Tanya, on the other hand, elaborated on how the post-interview photograph captured a relaxed and genuine version of herself, leading to an unexpected moment of self-appreciation:

> Looking back, I'm glad that you took the photos after the interview. I think they capture a more authentic version of myself than if you had taken them before. They show me as someone who is open and vulnerable, but also someone who is capable of connecting with others on a deeper level. If you had taken photos before we started, I know I would have been even more on edge. I would have been worried about how I looked or what kind of impression I was making. What I found most surprising about the photography experience was that it became a shared, communal moment between us. As we walked, we engaged in conversation and there were moments of levity. I wasn't just standing there,

> nervously posing for a picture—it was a natural and comfortable experience. I usually hate having my picture taken. But in this case, I didn't even notice the camera because I was so focused on the interaction between us. It wasn't until later when I saw the pictures that I realized how much I had opened up during our conversation. Looking at the photos, I saw a version of myself that I don't often see—relaxed, engaged, and even happy. It was a strange feeling, seeing myself like that. But at the same time, it was kind of liberating. For once, I wasn't focusing on all of my perceived flaws or imperfections. Instead, I was able to see myself in a more positive light, and that was a really nice change of pace.

Building upon Tanya's experience, Mikaella delved into the dissonance between her story and her photographic portrayal:

> I am not a fan of having my picture taken, however, I understand the purpose of it, so I was willing to go along with it. As I reflect on our interview, I realize that the order in which you took my photograph had a significant impact on me. After hearing myself tell my story, I was already feeling somewhat disconnected from it. But when I saw myself in the photo, it was as if the dissonance between my story and my appearance became even more pronounced. I remember sharing this feeling with you at the time, and it made me think more deeply about my identity and how others perceive me. If we had taken the photo before the interview, I don't think I would have had this reaction. If I told my story after you already took the photo, I don't think I would notice the contrast between my appearance and my story as much. It was an interesting experience.

Finally, Lauren emphasized both the inherent vulnerability of the process and the abundant potential that arises from incorporating visual elements into storytelling:

> I haven't been photographed very much, other than when I'm on vacation or something like that. I found the photography part interesting because we had built a certain level of rapport during the interview. It wasn't so much the photographing that felt vulnerable to me, but the interview itself. From your perspective as the photographer, I can imagine that it brought something different after having talked to someone for so long. I'm not sure if there would have been a difference if I hadn't just finished an interview before being

> photographed. It did make me feel more comfortable, though. I like the final photo you chose, and I really liked that it was taken in my home. I think there's something special about doing oral history interviews in someone's home because it's such a personal space and it makes you feel more comfortable and at ease. The photo really captured the vulnerability of the interview process and being in the comfort of my own home with someone I trust. Additionally, this experience made me think a lot about the use of visual methods in oral history, such as photography and video interviews. I've mostly worked with audio interviews and transcripts in the past, but through your project, I've come to appreciate the value of visual methods. Taking a photo of the person you interview can capture a lot of information beyond just the person's expression and environment. So, it made me reflect on ways to integrate visual methods into my own practice, while still maintaining the intimacy of audio interviews. Some people may not want to do video interviews due to the intimidation of a professional camera, but a balance of audio and photo methods can still capture valuable information. My experience has made me more sensitive to the visual methods that can be integrated into oral history practice.

On Empathy

As the interviewees contemplated their experiences of being interviewed and photographed, they consistently emphasized the theme of empathy and its profound importance in both the realms of oral history and education. Lauren, Emma and Scott, experienced oral historians, all emphasized the integral role of empathy in oral history, stemming from genuinely listening to individuals with diverse experiences.
Lauren claimed that by engaging in oral history interviews, she broadened her empathetic capacity and exposed herself to a wide range of perspectives she might not have encountered otherwise:

> Empathy is crucial in oral history, and it comes from deep listening to someone whose experiences are different from our own. Understanding and empathy go hand in hand, but it's also possible to feel empathy without fully understanding a person's complex background and life experiences. In my experience, practising oral history interviews has augmented my empathy in many ways. It

> has given me the opportunity to open up to worlds of experience that are different from my own. Learning about someone else's life and the people who exist within their context allows us to extrapolate that many others may have similar experiences. Through oral history interviewing, I've been able to explore a range of experiences and perspectives that I wouldn't have otherwise been exposed to.

Similarly, Emma shared that interviewing people and listening to their stories not only impacted her empathy but also broadened her overall perspective:

> The process of interviewing people and hearing their stories has affected not only my empathy but also my overall perspective. I've learned so much and have become more humble about the things I've learned about people. Learning to stay silent and give people time to tell their stories has been a humbling experience that creates a genuine connection. Additionally, I have become more perceptive of other voices and opinions, which has expanded my understanding of the world. Sometimes, interviewees may share things that I don't necessarily agree with, but I can still empathize and comprehend their perspectives because of the interview process and what they have shared with me. This process has led me to have more empathy towards people, even if we may not always see eye to eye.

Building on this idea, Scott highlighted the importance of being mindful of interviewees' experiences while demonstrating empathy and compassion:

> As an oral historian, I have had the privilege of hearing stories from people who have lived through various experiences. Throughout the interview process, it's essential to be mindful of the interviewee's experiences and show empathy and compassion towards them. Meeting individuals who have faced conflict and trauma has taught me a lot about resilience and positivity and has given me a new perspective on life. It's not a competition in suffering, but rather an opportunity to open up empathy and have compassion for those who have less. Hearing people's stories and seeing how they live their lives is a significant benefit of this kind of work. There have been moments of discomfort when interviewing individuals about their life experiences. It's essential to respect people's boundaries during the interview process as they may unintentionally

> become emotional, and it's crucial to acknowledge their feelings. As an interviewer, it's important to be mindful of the emotional well-being of the participants and not to sensationalize their experiences. I think these great myths, people's stories, their lived experiences, are mirrors in a way and they can reflect back to us. When we connect with a story, we see ourselves in them, and we may better our approaches to living or walk away with a strong symbol that we can use as a tool. I think it's important work and it should be better understood. It's the oldest art in the world—people sitting in caves making paintings, sitting around a fire telling stories. This is what we're made of. This is who we are.

In relation to education, Benjamin's thoughts on the significance of empathy within society and schools resonated with me as he posited that empathy serves as the cornerstone of respect, a crucial element for harmonious interactions. He emphasized the importance of empathy in creating safe and inclusive classrooms, fostering students' sense of belonging, and enhancing their engagement in learning:

> To me, empathy is the foundation of respect. In society, respect is crucial, and school is where we learn to live in society. Although it's not always easy for some students to comprehend, it's crucial to remember that empathy is at the core of it. While students may not remember specific details of what they learned in class, they will remember how to communicate, listen, interact, disagree, and make themselves heard. All of this boils down to respect for each individual and the learning environment. Without empathy and respect in the classroom, students won't feel secure enough to take risks or make mistakes. However, when there is a safe learning environment where people are kind, respectful, and empathetic, real learning can happen. I firmly believe that empathy is a critical component of a safe and inclusive classroom. It allows students to feel heard and understood, which promotes a sense of belonging and encourages them to engage in their learning fully.

Echoing Ben's sentiments, Tanya viewed oral history as a powerful means to teach empathy, particularly to teachers who might face challenges connecting with their students on a personal level:

> I believe that oral history can be a powerful tool for teaching empathy, especially for teachers who may not have the opportunity to connect with their students on a personal level due to the chaos of the classroom. Oral history provides a structured way to get to know someone and to make a social and personal connection, even if it's just through a short interview. It can be a valuable tool for building empathy and compassion, both for the interviewer and the interviewee. I think oral history could be beneficial for teachers at all levels, from interviewing their students to interviewing other teachers or family members. It's a way of stopping for a moment and asking how and who someone is, and it can help teachers to better understand their students and their experiences. I think oral history could be introduced at a young age, even in the early years of primary school, as a way of teaching children how to listen and be empathetic.

Finally, Mikaella's recounting of her experiences in workshops that integrated storytelling with imagery further emphasized the potential of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation in nurturing empathy and reducing judgment within educational settings:

> This project idea reminds me of previous workshops I have participated in, where we combined storytelling with images. I know how powerful it can be. From my personal experience, seeing my own image with my story made me realize that everyone has a unique story to tell. Through sharing stories and creating art, or even taking photographs of those who share their stories, I believe it can foster empathy and decrease judgment. This project has the potential to put people on the same page and help them recognize the value in each other's experiences.

On Shared Authority

The significance of shared authority was evident in the experiences of Emma, Lauren, Scott, Mikaella, and Ben. As oral historians, artists or educators, they have recognized the importance of negotiation of power in their respective fields.

In her discussion on the importance of shared authority in oral history interviews, Lauren stressed the need for adaptability and flexibility as an interviewer, meeting the interviewee where they are and allowing them to guide the conversation:

> When conducting oral history interviews, I believe that shared authority is crucial. As an interviewer, I recognize that adaptability and flexibility are important qualities to possess, and it's essential to have a "rolling with the punches" attitude. However, the extent of adaptability can vary depending on the interviewee. In my experience, some interviews required only a few questions, while others required more prompting, and both types of interviews have taught me a lot. Shared authority, to me, means meeting the interviewee where they are and not being frustrated by the way they express themselves. Instead, I believe that we should let the interviewee guide the conversation and meet them where they are. While I value the interviewee's experience, I recognize that the interviewer also plays an active role and should not fade into the background. When an interviewee goes off-topic, I handle the situation respectfully by acknowledging their contribution and steering the conversation back on track. It's a delicate balance between being adaptable and reining things in at times, and it requires a lot of listening and careful attention to the interviewee's words and actions.

From an artist's perspective, Scott and Emma both emphasized the need for shared authority in representing other people's stories in one's work. Scott advocated for collaboration with experts and other storytellers to enhance the quality of the work, and highlighted the importance of feedback and an open dialogue for the duration of a project to ensure accurate and respectful representation of a person's experiences:

> As a storyteller, it's important to navigate representing other people's stories in your own work. I believe that collaborating with experts and other storytellers can enhance the quality of your work. Seeking feedback and having an open dialogue at the beginning of a project is crucial to ensure that you accurately represent the story and are respectful of the person's experiences… Giving people final cut, allowing them to remove anything that is particularly important to them, is also essential. This ensures that the person's story is represented in a way that they are comfortable with. These practices can be challenging to

navigate without formal training, but they can be learned through experience and collaboration with others in the field.

Expanding on this notion, Emma discussed her own struggles with the ethical issues arising from creating art solely based on others' stories:

> Personally, I find it challenging and ethically problematic to create art based solely on someone else's story. When I was developing my project[15], I had to navigate different roles, including educator, oral historian, artist, and community member, which presented many challenges. To address the issue of shared authority, I found ways to co-create with the individuals whose stories I was using, rather than creating artwork on my own. However, I still held a significant amount of decision-making power in terms of selecting the initial excerpts and framing the project, so it was a constant negotiation process. I like your approach to this project to frame the creation of art as an interpretation of your experience during the encounter rather than representing your interpretation of someone else's story. It makes sense because it acknowledges that your perspective is subjective and that everyone's experience of the story will be different. It's a more sensible approach that allows for creative expression while maintaining ethical boundaries.

Transitioning to the educational realm, Mikaella underscores shared authority as a cornerstone for success. By setting ego aside, she suggests teachers can foster a more inclusive, nurturing learning environment:

> I think it comes down to ego. The best teachers I've seen are the ones who don't have an ego and are willing to try different approaches to help their students succeed. They don't take it personally if a student doesn't understand something and are willing to go the extra mile to help them understand. But the teachers who have an ego and are solely focused on their success rate tend to have the worst success rates and blame it on the students, which is unfair. It's about putting the needs of the students first and being willing to adapt and try new approaches to help them succeed. It's not about protecting your ego or

[15] Emma is referring to the project she conducted as part of her Master's thesis, *Arabic Speaking Objects: A Collaborative Research-Creation Project Exploring Recent Immigrants' Narratives of Displacement and Settlement.* (Haraké, 2019)

> success rate, but about doing what's best for the students. And that's what makes a truly great teacher.

Lastly, Benjamin highlighted the importance of relevance in education and the role of shared authority in achieving this. He suggested that finding out what is relevant to students is a collaborative process, involving open dialogue and empowering students in their own learning:

> As a teacher, I believe that relevance is a crucial factor that we often lack in education today. No matter what subject you're teaching, it needs to be relevant to your students' lives at this point in time. Finding out what's relevant to the students is a collaborative process. It involves discussion and empowering the students in their own learning. It's not about me dictating what they need to learn or how they should learn it, but rather giving them the tools to explore the themes and subjects that they feel are important. It's a challenging process for a teacher, but it's essential to help students understand the real-world application of what they're doing… However, this approach requires trust in my students. I believe that if they are given the opportunity to learn about what interests them, they will learn more effectively. My role as an educator is not to impose what they should learn, but to facilitate their learning journey. Learning is most efficient when students perceive it as valuable and are motivated to learn. There's nothing worse than forcing students to learn something they perceive as pointless.

On Active Listening

Mikaella, Benjamin, Lauren and Emma discussed active listening as a crucial skill that played a significant role in teaching, oral history, and interpersonal communication. Mikaella discussed the importance of active listening and creating a safe space for people, especially in a school setting:

> I've found that most people are willing to share their story, but the reality is that most people don't care enough to actually ask and want to sit and listen. When

> it comes to elderly people, all they really want is for someone to listen to their amazing stories. We all have stories to share, but no one really stops long enough to hear the whole thing. We ask questions to get an answer, but we don't ask questions to give space for another person… It's important to understand that the goal of active listening is not about counselling or being nosy. For me, it's about holding space for people. You don't necessarily need to know all the facts to be able to hold space for someone. When I worked in the school system, I saw that most teachers did not hold space for their students. They reacted to behaviours without understanding the underlying issues. Every action has underlying themes and issues, and it's important to recognize that, especially during teenage years which can be some of the hardest years for anyone. If you come from underserved communities, it can be even more challenging. As a teacher, you have a responsibility to provide a safe space for your students. You may not be their parents, but you are with them for most of the day, and it's our obligation as people who work with young people to provide that safe space.

Emma echoed this sentiment when she reflected on her experience of conducting interviews. While recognizing the value of providing some personal context to make the interviewee feel at ease, Emma acknowledged that her speaking less allowed space for her interviewees to share more:

> When I first began conducting interviews, I used to speak more. However, as I did more interviews, I learned that if I spoke less, the interviewee tended to share more. Additionally, I found that sharing a bit about myself at the beginning of the interview made the interviewee more at ease. However, I would alter my approach based on the goals of the specific interview that was meant for my project. I believe that conversations that emerge during interviews can lead to a different kind of knowledge, which is incredibly valuable. However, I also think that it should happen organically and not be forced. The interviewer should not feel obligated to share their own stories just to make the interviewee more comfortable. It can be a delicate balance to manage, but I believe it's important to keep the focus on the interviewee.

Building on this idea, Lauren focused on the importance of active listening in oral history interviews and highlighted the applicability of active listening in daily life:

> As someone who has conducted oral history interviews, I know that active listening is essential to the process. It's not enough to simply ask questions from a guide; you must be fully engaged in the conversation and respond to what the interviewee is saying. Active listening can be challenging, but I've had training in this skill in other contexts, such as community support. When practising active listening, I prioritize principles like non-judgment and asking clarifying questions while avoiding giving advice or interjecting with my own experiences. These same principles are crucial to successful oral history interviews, where the focus should be on the interviewee and their experiences. Beyond oral history interviews, I find that active listening is also valuable in my day-to-day life. I make a conscious effort to foreground the person speaking in conversations with friends, and I believe this approach helps me to connect better with others.

Benjamin, on the other hand, discussed the value of active listening in a classroom setting. Like Emma, Benjamin acknowledged that his most successful classes were the ones where he limited his input and allowed more space for his students:

> Active listening is one of the hardest skills for young teachers to develop. In my experience, many teachers believe that they need to talk for the full class period, but I disagree. I find that my best classes are the ones where I don't talk much, and the students are empowered to talk amongst themselves. By doing so, they learn in differentiated ways, and I can make more adjustments to the class. I think it's important for teachers to understand how hard it is to sit down and listen for an hour or two as an adult, so why should we expect our students to do the same? When teachers actively listen to their students, they gain a better understanding of where they are in their learning. It also allows students to turn the lesson into something relevant and engage in genuine learning. Some of my best classes have been when students took the lead and had discussions and debates that led to a deeper understanding of the subject.

On self-awareness

Lastly, Mikaella, Benjamin, Tanya and Lauren all agreed that self-awareness is vital for effective communication, understanding, and personal growth.

Lauren discussed the role of self-awareness in conducting oral history interviews, asserting that it's essential to be open and receptive to different perspectives. She suggested that the critical aspect of self-awareness in oral history was recognizing the differences in experience between the interviewer and the interviewee:

> I believe that self-awareness is crucial when conducting oral history interviews. However, I have to be careful not to become too self-aware to the point where it hinders my ability to listen and engage with the interviewee. Sometimes, getting caught up in my own thoughts can create a barrier between me and the interviewee, and prevent me from fully understanding their experiences. It's important to avoid getting caught up in these thoughts and focus on being present in the moment. While it's natural to have doubts or questions about the interview process, dwelling on them can detract from the overall goal of the interview. One critical aspect of self-awareness in oral history is recognizing the differences in experience between yourself and the interviewee. It's important to be open and receptive to different perspectives and fully integrate what the interviewee is saying. By doing so, we can create a more inclusive and respectful space for their experiences to be heard and valued.

From an educator's perspective, Mikaella suggested that self-awareness and humility are crucial qualities for good teachers, as it allows them to recognize their flaws and be receptive to feedback. She believed that teachers could improve their interpersonal skills and better adapt to the needs of their students by remaining self-aware and continuously evaluating themselves:

> In my opinion, being an effective teacher is a combination of innate qualities and skills that can be learned and developed over time. Some teachers may start off with the necessary qualities but become jaded over time. Therefore, I believe self-awareness is a crucial component of being a good teacher. In my personal experience, the worst teachers were those who lacked self-awareness and

> humility. They did not acknowledge their flaws and shortcomings and were unwilling to accept feedback or criticism from students… I think self-awareness is essential because it helps teachers remember that they are human and flawed, just like their students. Teachers should be humble enough to recognize their mistakes and willing to learn from them. However, self-awareness is not something that can be easily taught. It requires a continuous effort to self-check and self-evaluate, something that should be emphasized during teacher education programs. It's essential to teach teachers not only how to teach a subject but also how to develop interpersonal skills and deal with youth intervention… In my opinion, there should be a humanistic component to the evaluation of teachers, which should focus not only on their subject expertise but also on their interpersonal skills and self-awareness. I believe this will help teachers continuously improve and enhance their teaching skills, rather than becoming complacent once they've obtained tenure or seniority. I think effective teaching requires a set of skills that can be learned and developed through continuous self-awareness, humility, and a willingness to learn and improve.

Ben also emphasized the need for teachers to consistently revaluate their methods and be open to change, as different groups of students may require unique approaches:

> I believe that students respond to teachers being vulnerable and not knowing everything. Constantly rethinking what you teach and how you teach it is important. If a teacher has been doing the same thing for 20 years, that's a red flag. Teachers should be aware that what worked well with one group might not work with another. It's not because it's good on paper that it works. Sometimes things work and then you keep them. If I teach the same class twice in one week, and I automatically tweak it without even thinking. It's like being a stand-up comic or a performer, where you constantly adapt and improve your act. Students change, and so should teaching methods. Teenagers today are not the same as they were 20 years ago. They don't read, write, or think the same way. They are much more socially aware and demand teachers to keep up with the times. Teachers shouldn't force students to do things differently than what the real world does.

Finally, Tanya, an oral historian and a teacher, believed that oral history can foster deeper connections between teachers and students:

> Teachers often don't take the time to reflect on their actions and how they may be contributing to a chaotic classroom environment. Oral history provides a unique opportunity for teachers and students to connect on a deeper level. By becoming more self-reflective and understanding what's happening behind the scenes in their students' lives, teachers can create a more positive and supportive classroom environment.

Connections to the Literature

The experiences and reflections of Emma, Lauren, Scott, Tanya, Ben, and Mikaella, situated within the theoretical framework of critical pedagogy, oral history, and empathy, provided me with valuable perceptions regarding the pedagogical potential of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation. Lauren, Emma, Tanya, and Scott's insights from their experiences in oral history underscored Segal's (2011) assertion that hearing and retelling people's stories were both empathetic endeavours. This corroborated the scholarship of Thompson (2017) and Perrone (2017) regarding the emergent nature of empathy from the engagement with diverse narratives.

Lauren's emphasis on adaptability, flexibility, and meeting the interviewee "where they were" echoed Frisch's (1999) introduction of shared authority in oral history research. Furthermore, Scott and Emma's considerations of shared authority in art-making also resonated with the literature's perspective on ethically and accurately representing others' stories. Their advocacy for collaboration, feedback, and open dialogue aligned with the literature's emphasis on curating narrative responses to life stories while maintaining respect for the individuals represented (Little, Miller & High, 2017; Low & Sonntag, 2013).

The methodological approach to oral history adopted by Lauren, Emma, and Scott validated the practice of critical pedagogy, highlighting the intersection between theory and praxis, with a special emphasis on active listening as a facilitator of authentic dialogue (McLaren et al., 2010).

Moreover, Tanya's reflective discourse provided a unique interconnection between pedagogy and oral history, postulating that oral history could engender deeper bonds between educators and students, fostering avenues for introspection and understanding. Her insights resonated with the concept of "knowing with" as opposed to "knowing about" as proposed by Greenspan & Bolkolsky (2006), underlining the empathetic connections that could stem from shared narratives and experiences.
Transitioning the discussion towards education, the viewpoints of Mikaella and Benjamin further emphasized the interconnections between shared authority, empathy, and the tenets of critical pedagogy. Mikaella's reflections on the necessity of self-awareness and humility in pedagogy echoed Freire's (2000) critique of the banking model of education, accentuating the value of shared authority in teaching.
Lastly, Benjamin's thoughts on the relevance and collaborative aspects of education, coupled with empowering learners in their educational journey, was consistent with the scholarly emphasis on the integral role of shared authority in relatable learning contexts (Bradshaw, 2016). His assertion that empathy serves as the foundation for respectful and inclusive educational environments aligned with the perspectives of scholars within the realm of art education (Jeffers, 2009; Phillips, 2003; Bradshaw, 2016; Stout, 1999; and Hasio, 2016).

In summation, the narratives of Lauren, Emma, Scott, Benjamin, Tanya, and Mikaella emphasized the fundamental role of self-awareness, active listening, shared authority, and empathy in both pedagogical and oral history practices. Through their shared reflections, the participant collaborators underscored the intrinsic symbiosis of these principles, thereby consolidating the pedagogical potential embedded within the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology. In this context, I return to my second research question: "In what ways can Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology enhance teaching and learning processes?" Based on the experiences and insights shared by the participants, it becomes evident that this methodology can enhance teaching and learning processes by fostering greater self-awareness, facilitating active listening, promoting shared authority, and encouraging empathy.

On the following pages, I present "Life as We Know It," the creative outcome derived from my collaborative interactions with Emma, Tanya, Scott, Mikaella, Lauren, and Benjamin through Oral History x Photography Research-Creation. In Part 3, the

subsequent section of this dissertation, I will shift focus to investigate effective strategies for implementing an Oral History x Photography Research-Creation curriculum in art education.

Life As We Know It

ORAL HISTORY
PHOTOGRAPHY
RESEARCH CREATION

I never felt that I could re-conciliate the two parts of me, the educator facilitator or organizer and the artist. I started as a volunteer and I took lots of workshops to improve myself, working with refugees, with youth at risk and all that. So I sort of had these two lives and I always had the feeling that the art world is very disconnected from what's happening on the ground. So I never felt a sense of pride of being an artist, even when I sort of made it, not a lot, but I was able to earn my living at least. Because at the same time I would go to these places, and I'm working there for months at a time and it felt so real. And, and then I go over there. It's the same vernissage, it's the same people that you see, drinking wine. It's this whole world that is disconnected but everyone is speaking as if we're changing the world. And it's so easy to buy into that.

It's a funny thing with memory. We block memories until we have to deal with them. I don't know. I just knew I had to go. All I knew was that I had to pack that car and packing the car came out of finally making a choice. I remember vividly I had given myself a date. I remember saying on Monday, June 6th, I'm leaving. And I drove, I don't know what time of day I left, but it was the first and only sunset rainbow I've ever seen in my life. If you ever see a sunset rainbow, a sunset rainbow is perpendicular. That's all you see. So the sun was very, very low and it was straight up right at the bottom of the horizon. And I remember stopping at the first rest area. I saw a sunset rainbow and I thought, yeah. I remember having an incredible sense of euphoria until I realized how much work I had to do to make it, you know, to figure out life.

I could see the rainbow.
I felt the freedom.
I took a deep breath with you.

I can tell you that from an early age, I knew that I wanted to be an artist or do creative things. My mother was an amateur painter. And as she came back from a painting class, an adult class that she started. I saw that she had done this Rocky mountain painting, which represented where she was from in Alberta, I think. And then, I'm in my pajamas, I said, mom, can I do a copy of your painting? And she said, you mean right here, right now? And I said yes. She thought that was charming. So she set up a little easel and our paints and everything. And I did a smaller version, a very crude, smaller version of her painting. My mother gave me the gift of art. Because at that Christmas I had art supplies under the tree. She died very young. I got to have the privilege of art thanks to her.

You talked about your mother and I missed mine.

I'm a youth worker and youth advocate. I've been doing youth work for about 17 years. The reason why I chose to get involved in youth work is because of how I grew up and things that happened to me as a kid. When I was a child, both of my parents were drug addicts and my mom became a single mom in this process. Then she was incarcerated and I went to live with my grandmother as a part of the foster care system. My grandmother was my foster mom. She was great, but there were definitely some generational gaps. My grandmother came here after world war two, so she was very European and didn't necessarily totally understand North American culture. So there's a lot of little things that made me realize how important it was for youth to have support. From then on, all my steps led to the direction of being a youth worker, with a lot of bumps along the way.

I have always admired your resilience.

It felt really liberating to just not know anyone as scary as that is. Realistically, when you are in your first year of university and you're living in residence and stuff like that, it's pretty hand-held, in the grand scheme of things, through those first moments. I definitely had support, but God, I just remember that feeling of being like, Oh, this is exactly what I wanted to feel like. It's cliche but being able to reinvent yourself in a certain way, to reinvent yourself by not actually changing anything about yourself, but just by encountering new people. You are like a fully new person.

I remember how your face lit up when you talked about this.

I don't want her to get lessons out of me. All my dad always said was, do this, do that. I think it's much more the experiences I want her to remember. I'd hate for her to think, he was never there, or we never did stuff together or he was always busy doing something else. And I think when you have a girl especially, when you have a boy too, but I think when you have a girl, you want her to be strong. You want her to be able to make her own mind and hold her own decisions. I would hate for her to be listening to me for advice on how to be and who to be. Right. Because then that defeats the purpose. I'd almost rather just her be strong and capable of saying no. Capable of making up her own mind, regardless of what I say or what I think. Then she's going to be all right.

We've known each other since we were kids .
You haven't changed a bit.
She's a lucky girl to have a dad like you.

PART 3

CURRICULUM

KEY CONCEPTS

In this final segment of the dissertation, I explore the practical applications of the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation pedagogy through various curriculum models. The key concepts framing this section are critical curriculum theory and social-emotional and relational competences.

To begin, I delve into critical curriculum theory. This exploration aids my comprehension of curriculum design, its execution in the real world, and its socio-cultural ramifications. I engage with the current scholarship to analyze varied definitions of curriculum, with focus on highlighting the presence of hidden power dynamics and emphasizing learner agency. The investigation of critical curriculum theory informs subsequent discussions on diverse curriculum models for the effective application of the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation pedagogy.

The final key concepts I address are social-emotional and relational competences, a critical aspect that underlines the importance of fostering supportive teacher-student relationships. Drawing from contemporary research by scholars with interest in relational pedagogy and inclusive education such as Ann-Louise Ljungblad and Jonas Aspelin, I delve into the dynamics of relational teaching and learning. This examination of relational competence supports the central argument of this dissertation that the practice of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation substantially fosters the development of relational competence.

Critical Curriculum Theory

Curriculum theory seeks to understand the development, implementation, and evaluation of curricula in educational settings. The Encyclopedia of Curriculum Studies defines curriculum theory as a diverse field of study that examines the curriculum from various angles, such as historical, political, racial, international, post-modern, autobiographical, and religious aspects (Kridel, 2010). It is closely connected to our beliefs about ourselves and the world around us, reaching into our personal, social, and cultural experiences (Walker & Soltis, 2004).

Former school teacher and scholar, Arthur Ellis (2004) distinguishes between prescriptive and descriptive definitions of the curriculum. The prescriptive suggests what should happen in a planned program or based on expert opinions, while the descriptive definition looks at how things actually happen in real classrooms. Educators

Allan Glatthorn, Bruce Whitehead and Floyd Boschee suggest experience as another term to define the descriptive curriculum (Glatthorn et al.,2018). According to the authors, the experienced curriculum offers a glimpse into the curriculum in action. Furthermore, it is crucial to differentiate between the intentional and hidden curriculum. The intentional curriculum is the set of learnings that the school system consciously intends, while the hidden curriculum encompasses the unintended learnings that occur through experiences inside and outside of the classroom (Glatthorn et al.,2018; Hatch, 2009).

The traditional approach to the curriculum is based on a model that emphasizes the transmission of knowledge and skills from teacher to student. This model is often criticized for being too focused on rote learning and memorization, and for not taking into account the social context in which learning takes place. In contrast, the critical approach seeks to challenge and transform this model by emphasizing social justice, equity, and empowerment (Herrán & Herrero, 2022).

According to an expert on critical research, John Smyth (2010), the approach of critical theory in curriculum studies seeks to uncover and expose the ways in which education can reinforce existing power structures. Lyn Yates (2010), a foundation professor of curriculum, argues that the contribution to curriculum development isn't always about creating a new foundation. Instead, the author emphasizes, critical approach is more concerned with closely examining the curriculum to uncover its unwanted social effects, while also working towards social change and better forms of education. Both authors agree that critical approach to curriculum helps teachers and students analyze how the curriculum may privilege certain viewpoints while marginalizing others. Consensus among researchers highlights the importance of critically examining curriculum to understand how power dynamics play a role in educational policies and practices. Different viewpoints have been brought together by scholars studying critical theory in curriculum from various angles. These include Augustin de la Herrán and Pablo Herrero (2022), pioneers of a radical and inclusive approach to curriculum; Yana Manyukhina and Dominic Wyse (2019), researchers interested in the philosophy of critical realism; and Christine Winter & David Hyatt (2015), experts on the impact of language on educational processes.

Manyukhina and Wyse (2019), examine the connection between learner agency and the curriculum using a critical realist perspective. This approach acknowledges that both

structure and agency influence learning behaviour and educational outcomes. Critical realist perspective recognizes that learners are active participants, capable of making choices and acting independently. The authors argue that by considering the various levels of context affecting learner agency, educators can design more learner-centred curricula that foster students' ability to act autonomously and make their own decisions (Manyukhina & Wyse, 2019).

In addition, Winter and Hyatt (2022) bring the focus to examining curriculum through the lens of critical discourse studies. This approach looks at how language is used in social situations and aims to understand how conversations and writing are influenced by society and culture. The critical discourse helps analyze how power dynamics are hidden in the way we talk and write, and how they affect our actions. Winter and Hyatt (2022) claim that, when applied to curriculum studies, this approach helps break down the structure of curriculum to find power imbalances and work towards creating a more fair and equal educational system.

In contrast, Herrán and Herrero (2022), put forth a radical and inclusive approach to curriculum. This approach advocates for a shift in educational focus from societal demands to fundamental human needs, such as survival, development, and achieving inner evolution. The authors argue that traditional curricula are often centred around local and present interests, while disregarding universal and future goals. In order to achieve a more complete education, Herrán and Herrero (2022) argue that a third, radical dimension based on consciousness is needed to add depth and meaning to the curriculum. This radical dimension is considered by the authors as essential for a more complete education and can be achieved by expanding the focus of traditional curricula beyond social and personal demands. While it shares some similarities with critical pedagogy, Herrán & Herrero, 2022) insist that the radical and inclusive approach goes beyond confrontation and focuses on finding common ground between opposing views.

In conclusion, Coşkun Yaşar and Aslan (2021), authors of an extensive literature review on curriculum theory, underscore the crucial role that understanding this field of study plays in promoting effective educational practices. The authors emphasize that future research should focus on exploring new theoretical perspectives on curriculum theory and examining their implications for educational practices.

Social-Emotional Competence

Social-emotional competence is the amalgamation of cognitive, affective, and behavioural skills including self-awareness, self-management, social understanding, relationship abilities, and responsible decision-making (Durlak et al., 2011). It encompasses emotional processes, social interaction abilities, and cognitive control, embracing aspects such as emotional comprehension and expression, behavioural regulation, empathy, perspective-taking, social cue understanding, navigating social scenarios, and cognitive flexibility among others (Jones & Bouffard, 2020).

The importance of social-emotional competence is rooted in its central role in facilitating an individual's efficient functioning in their personal, academic, and professional lives. Psychologist Joseph Durlak posit that social-emotional competence is integral to academic success (Durlak et al., 2011). Curriculum study and pedagogy scholars, Linor Hadar and Oren Ergas (2021) further contend that in times of uncertainty, like during the COVID-19 pandemic, social-emotional competencies (including resilience, adaptability, empathy, and self-regulation skills) can be instrumental in successfully maneuvering volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous conditions.

Within the education sector, teachers' effectiveness hinges significantly on their social-emotional competencies. Scholars with interest in the role of emotions in learning and teaching processes, Meirav Hen and Marina Goroshit (2016) argue that teachers with high emotional self-efficacy, teaching self-efficacy, and empathy are more likely to establish a positive classroom atmosphere, which subsequently enhances student engagement, motivation, and learning.

A study conducted by preschool education specialist, Marie Andre Pelletier (2022), identified self-awareness as a primary training need, especially for novices in the teaching profession, highlighting the need for continuous training programs that focus on socio-emotional and relational skills. This view is endorsed by Hadar et al. (2021), who argue that developing social-emotional competencies in teacher education should be prioritized through opportunities for experiential learning, mentoring, and supportive networks. Similarly, Stephanie Jones and Suzanne Bouffard (2020), prominent researchers in education, recommend integrating social-emotional learning skills into daily interactions with students. They promote a more academic curriculum-

integrated approach, which can potentially augment academic achievement, behavioural adjustment, and emotional health.

Unlike fixed personality traits, social emotional competencies are dynamic and can be nurtured over time (Vlasie, 2021). It follows that teacher education programs would greatly benefit from embedding these competencies in their curriculum and training, ensuring that future teachers are well-prepared to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of their students.

Relational competence is an integral part of social-emotional competences. Defined as the ability of teachers to develop supportive relationships with their students, it involves communication, differentiation, and social-emotional skills (Sjögren & Riber, 2021), and contributes to positive outcomes such as improved academic performance, social development, and overall well-being (Aspelin & Jonsson, 2019).
Several studies have established a positive correlation between teacher-student relationships and student academic achievement and engagement, highlighting the importance of building strong relationships with students (Aspelin, 2023; 2021; Hickey & Riddle, 2022; Ljungblad 2021;Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004; Roorda et al. 2011; Vidmar& Kerman, 2016 and Rowe et al.,2013).

One aspect of relational competence explored by Andrew Hickey and Stewart Riddle (2022) is the significant role informality plays in cultivating inclusive and socially just learning experiences. The authors, whose research examines democratization of schooling systems and equity in education, suggest that informality is crucial in shaping both the learning process and the interactions between teachers and students across various contexts. Hickey and Riddle (2021) further emphasize the importance of fostering deep connections among learners, teachers, and the curriculum through a relational pedagogy that promotes a participatory and dialogic learning environment.
Reflective practice is another crucial aspect of relational competence that can support effective teaching. According to education scholars Peter Gossman and Sue Horder (2016), teacher education programs should focus on developing preservice teachers' reflective skills to improve their professional practice. By reflecting on their teaching practice, teachers can identify areas for improvement and develop strategies to address them.

Ann-Louise Ljungblad (2021), a prominent scholar with interest in relational pedagogy and inclusive education, proposes Pedagogical Relational Teachership (PeRT) as a theoretical perspective that can support the development of trustful teacher-student relationships and sustainable conditions for student participation. PeRT is based on the idea that teaching should be understood relationally, which means that teachers need to be aware of the relational aspects of their work and how they can use these aspects to create positive learning environments. Developing relational proficiencies such as empathy, communication, and collaboration can help teachers contribute to creating more equitable and participatory learning environments.

Researcher with a keen interest in relational competence, Jonas Aspelin (2021), introduces the concept of "teaching as a way of bonding" and presents three main ideas: (1) bonding is essential for teaching; (2) there are qualitative differences between "social bonding" and "relational bonding"; and (3) teaching is best understood in terms of "relational bonding". Social bonding refers to the basic communication between teachers and students, while relational bonding involves a deeper, more personal connection between them. The author emphasizes that both types of bonding play a role in the teaching process, but relational bonding is what ultimately gives teaching its true meaning. Aspelin and Jonsson (2017) collaborated to conceptualize the teachers' relational competence using Thomas Scheff's theory of interpersonal relationships[16]. Their study found that preservice teachers need more training in developing supportive relationships with their students and that teacher education programs should focus more on developing preservice teachers' relational competence. Similarly, education scholars Pontus Sjögren and Henri Riber (2021) highlight the importance of incorporating relational competence into teacher education programs to help upcoming teachers work more consciously towards students' needs and emotions.

In order to provide quality education and foster student growth, it's becoming increasingly apparent that teachers need to possess more than just subject matter expertise (Hadar et al., 2021). Numerous recent studies emphasize the importance of

[16] Scheff's micro-sociological theory emphasizes the significance of social bonds in human behavior, generated by primary motives. These bonds are built through attunement, achieved through cognitive and emotional understanding, and mutual respect between individuals. Differentiation is another critical concept in the theory, referring to the balance between closeness and distance in relationships. Emotions, such as shame and pride, play a vital role in signaling the stability of social bonds. Scheff's theory highlights the importance of understanding relational patterns, conditions, and structures in human conduct (Aspelin and Jonsson, 2017)

social-emotional and relational competencies in teaching and recommend their integration in teacher education programs (Aspelin & Jonsson, 2017; Jones & Bouffard, 2020; Gossman & Horder, 2016; Sjögren & Riber, 2021, Vlasie, 2021, Pelletier, 2022). However, as Aspelin (2021) recommends, more research is needed to explore how different approaches to teacher education can impact student learning outcomes, and how best to incorporate relational competence into teacher education programs.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Testing the Waters

In the preceding part of this dissertation, the focus was on my journey of exploring the pedagogical potential of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation, a journey that saw me engage in enriching dialogues with fellow professionals from the arts, oral history, and education sectors. In this chapter I explore various curriculum models for practical implementation of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation within educational settings.

As a practitioner with a teaching background, the discussion of the pedagogical implications of this evolving methodology did not satiate my curiosity. I was driven by an urge to see the results of its implementation by others in a tangible, practical context. This opportunity presented in 2018 when, as a doctoral candidate, I was entrusted with the responsibility of teaching an undergraduate course on time-based media. Although the pedagogical potential of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation in nurturing social-emotional competences was not fully realized at that point, I integrated an assignment focused on its application as a fundamental component of the course. To ensure the methodology was aligned with the course objectives, I undertook the necessary modifications to cater to the course's emphasis on time-based media production[17].

Recognizing that oral history recordings fall under the ambit of time-based media, I structured an introductory assignment early in the course. This allowed students to engage with the outcomes of an oral history project—specifically, the participation and critique of the Lachine Canal audio tour, a fragment of the larger Post/Industrial Montreal research initiative (Canal, n.d.).
Subsequently, a few weeks into the course, I allocated a four-hour session dedicated to familiarizing students with the oral history method. This was achieved through an "Introduction to Oral History" workshop that I had previously facilitated at Concordia's Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling. I introduced fundamental interviewing

[17] I received the authorisation from the Ethics committee to conduct research with the students enrolled in the course, however, the implementation of this assignment was conducted as a pedagogical implementation. No new research data was collected, nor were participants asked questions with the intent of gathering research data. My reflections stem from my own observations and lived experiences as an educator and institutional teaching evaluation mechanisms, not from research procedures.

techniques such as shared authority and active listening and engaged students in discussions around the ethical considerations inherent in both the interview process and the creative phase.

During this session, students had the opportunity to conduct practice interviews with their peers. This exercise was pivotal as it not only offered students a chance to fine-tune their interviewing skills but also provided an experience of being interviewed, thereby promoting reflection on the process from the viewpoint of a participant.
For their concluding assignment, I asked the students to produce a time-based media artwork, employing oral history as a research tool. They were expected to interview a selected participant and reflect on the ensuing interaction through their artistic creation. The project, ranging between three to five minutes, could incorporate audio, visual, or both elements. Additionally, I asked them to write an accompanying artist's statement.

I had the privilege of teaching the Time-Based Media course twice, integrating oral history as a significant element on both occasions. The course evaluations revealed mixed responses. While some students conveyed dissatisfaction over the perceived neglect of the technical aspects of time-based media, the majority from both cohorts responded affirmatively to the inclusion of oral history. Notably, during the assignment presentation and critique discussion, a considerable number of students acknowledged their appreciation for the challenge of manifesting their interaction with another individual through their artwork.

From Research to Practise

In the autumn of 2022, I was extended an invitation to feature as a guest speaker for a graduate seminar in research methods. My role would be to present my research and propose an exploratory assignment to the graduate students attending the seminar[18]. As part of the course, the students would be introduced to an array of art-based research methods. Subsequently, they had the liberty to delve deeper into the Oral

[18] This assignment was also conducted as a pedagogical implementation.

History x Photography Research-Creation in their assignment or choose an alternative method.

The prospect of my presentation filled me with anticipation and eagerness. However, I was not without concerns. To begin with, I was allocated a mere two hours for my presentation, which eliminated any possibility of engaging the students in practice interviews. Despite this, given that my audience consisted of graduate students well-versed in the significance of robust research methods, I was not too worried. Furthermore, the time constraint extended to the students as well, as they were given a short span of two weeks between my presentation and their own presentations to the class. Consequently, I understood that expecting fully fledged final projects would be unrealistic. Instead, the emphasis would be placed on an exploratory assignment that would provide students with firsthand experience of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation. My final concern, albeit less significant and more personal, originated from my own ego. The opportunity to apply my research in a practical context and observe the results was indeed exhilarating. However, unlike previous instances where the assignment formed a mandatory part of the course I instructed, students here were free to choose whether to adopt Oral History x Photography Research-creation. The prospect of a scenario where none of the students opted for this methodology was daunting—their lack of interest would cast a shadow over the relevance of my entire research.

Nevertheless, despite the fleeting insecurity and the looming fear of an unfavourable outcome, the process of preparing my presentation turned out to be a decisive moment in my investigation. As I pieced together the PowerPoint slides, I noticed a distinct alignment of thoughts and ideas. Concepts that had been scattered in my mind, seemingly directionless for a long time, now began to converge harmoniously, akin to a puzzle being solved. Although my task was ostensibly to prepare a presentation as a guest speaker, I found myself simultaneously constructing a cogent and constructive outline for my dissertation. For the first time, I acknowledged my own expertise and felt a sense of confidence that my research indeed constituted a significant contribution to the realm of knowledge.

It's hard to discern whether it was my newfound confidence in the relevance of my research or the inherent curiosity of the graduate students in research methodologies

that tipped the scales in favour of the presentation's successful outcome. Regardless, the reception from the students was overwhelmingly positive. To my delight, post-presentation, out of thirteen students, eight chose to concentrate on Oral History x Photography Research-Creation for their assignment. Two weeks later, I attended project presentations at the students' invitation. Following their presentations, six students granted me written permission to use and reproduce their artwork and excerpts from their artist statements within this dissertation.

A review of the writings and images revealed a striking diversity in each student's approach to the assignment. Some opted for an autobiographical route, while others chose to focus on the influence that the narrative of the interviewee had on the artist. Moreover, a few works delved into the underlying methodology itself, emphasizing the project's multifaceted perspectives.

For instance, Kaida's work (*fig 8)* is unambiguously autobiographical. During her presentation, she deliberated on her observation of the construction of the interviewee's narrative, which involved categorizing significant life events into predefined brackets. This insight prompted her to delve into how individuals weave and narrate their life stories, as well as the methods employed to demarcate the chapters of our lives. The outcome is a depiction reminiscent of a meticulously organized bookshelf, mirroring the artist's life journey:

> How do we narrate the sequences of our lives? John Turner argued that "most of our experience, our knowledge, and our thinking is organized as stories." (Turner, 1996, pp. v) When writing our organized stories, how do we determine the markings of beginning a new "chapter"? Should we measure emotional growth and changes in the expansion of our thoughts, values, and paradigms? Do we simply see our time as a series of jobs, checkmarks on a resume that define where and what we are spending the majority of our energy on during that time? Does a city or home change your circumstance so much that it accounts for the beginning and end of a book, or are there more significant events that punctuate it that serve as stronger markers? How does our individual distinctions between chapters show our values and the way culture has settled into our minds? Our chapters and autobiographical stories are, according to Paul John Eakin, an "evolving content in an intricate process of self-discovery and

Figure 8

Kaida's project

Note. Work photographed and reproduced with permission.

self-creation." (Eakin, 1985, p.3) This means that as we grow, learn, and look back on our lives, the significance of past events may rewrite our stories and recategorize them (K. Kobylka, personal communication, January 16, 2023).

As we pivot towards Mackenzie's work (fig. 9), it's autobiographical much like the previous example, but places a marked emphasis on her interaction with the methodology employed for the assignment. In her reflection, she delves into the challenges she confronted while conducting an interview:

> I've always felt nervous talking to people in a formal setting, whether that's in a professor's office, a conference room, or even at church on occasion. Doing this interview project was no different. It was awkward at times, and I found myself realizing that I would do very poorly as a daytime television show host. That was perhaps the hardest part of the interview process, keeping awkward pauses and awkward questioning to a minimum. It was definitely a learning experience, both from the content of the interview to the process throughout (M. Hill, personal communication, January 24, 2023).

This experience impelled Mackenzie to conceive a deeply personal piece of art, centring around ADHD and its impact on not just the interview but her day-to-day life as well:

Figure 9

Mackenzie's project

Note. Work photographed and reproduced with permission.

> For my artwork, I decided to focus on my disability and how that impacted this interview process. Overall, the interview was a success and I learned a lot about this research method and through the content of the actual interview. But I did notice a struggle internally with this method because of my ADHD. Keeping on topic, time management, listening and paying attention, remembering questions. These were all some issues I noticed as an effect of my ADHD, and something I will have to keep in mind if I ever interview someone else in the

> future. Even though I live with this disability, I often forget that I need to account for it, or even that it is something that impacts my work compared to others. For my piece, I depict the different wavelengths of my brain when in a situation where focusing is key in order to receive information and learn. I tend to drift off, make connections fast and be off subject in my mind, barely hearing the person who is talking. The content can be interesting, but it still cannot keep me dead focused when I need to be (M. Hill, personal communication, January 24, 2023).

On the other hand, Nancy embraced a distinctive approach for the assignment (fig. 10). She remained cautious in her reflection and artwork to avoid unveiling personal information about herself. Instead, she focused on the various stages of her process, providing justifications based on the emotions she encountered during the interview:

> At the beginning of my interview, I asked the interviewee the question "what is something you would like to share?". From the answer, the respondent has given me I felt that I am moving into different places. I started to imagine the sunflower fields on a sunny day. This is why I choose to paint in yellow, green, and brown organic structures. Moreover, the person I am interviewing has shared his likes and dislike. There was no continuity to the stories they shared at this moment. This is the reason why I symbolize my thread of thoughts as non-continuous lines. For each memory they shared, I pictured the scene in my head and I painted with the most dominant color from what I saw in my imagination. Some of the colors I used to represent places, clothes the interviewee was wearing in their story, and other colors represent how I feel when listening to a specific story. For example, the red color represents danger which is how I felt at the beginning of the story and grey is how I felt later after the story ends. Furthermore, the two black dots symbolize how that story will be imprinted on me. In the end, I used a combination of Fauvism and Expressionistic approach where I applied paint straight from the tube making my painting abstract. Thus my colors are bright and non-naturalistic to reveal emotions. This is why the blue color is dominant in my painting because it is associated with open spaces, imagination, and sensitivity. Both of us felt something at the end of the interview. I felt hopeful for both of us and the interviewee told me that they felt a warmth (N. El-Jabi, personal communication, January 11, 2023).

Figure 10

Nancy's project

Note. Work photographed and reproduced with permission.

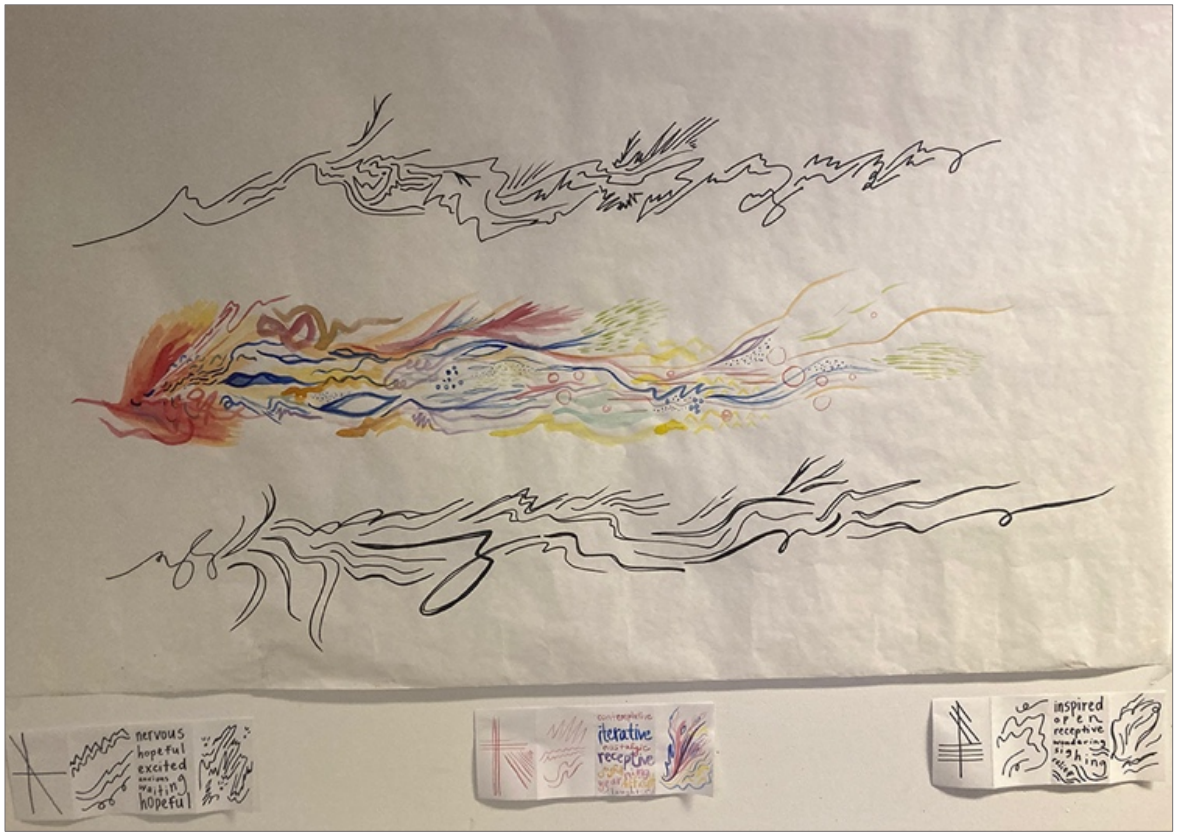
Even though Sylvie refrains from revealing personal insights in her work and focuses on the emotions experienced during the interview, her artwork draws inspiration from a childhood experience (fig. 11). At its core, Sylvie's artwork probes into the methodology by scrutinizing the interplay among emotion, data collection, and interpretation. Through this artistic exploration, the artist seeks to understand how emotions can affect the research process and reveal new insights across diverse art forms:

> Squiggle Scores is a mixed media artwork, inspired by the "Line Walk" exercise I completed as a child, that explores the emotions that arose while completing my interview for this course. In creating this work, I was interested in exploring how I felt leading up to the interview, when it was in session, and afterwards; each line represents a different part of the process. I was determined to hold space for "feeling", intuition and play in the production of my work, which are

essential in research-creation (Chapman and Sawchuck 2012). The first and last lines in the piece were completed immediately before and after the interview, while the middle line was created based off of my field notes from the session and while re-listening to the audio recording. In completing this research-creation exercise, I began to wonder… How might remixing data through visual art, music, and/or other art forms lead to new knowledge and understanding? How does my emotional state impact the data I collect and what stands out to me in analysis? How can I ground myself as a researcher before engaging in interview work and after? (S. Stojanovski, personal communication, January 24, 2023)

Figure 11

Sylvie's project



Note. Work photographed and reproduced with permission.

Transitioning to Amy and Sharmistha, both artists focused on elements of their interviewees' narratives that personally resonated with them. While they were careful

not to inadvertently disclose their interviewees' identities, they chose to depict segments of the narratives shared by their interviewees in their artwork. However, their approaches to the creative process diverged significantly.

Given Amy's prior acquaintance with her interviewee and some understanding of their life, she had determined the technique she would employ before the interview (fig. 12). Here, the interview would not dictate the visual outcome but provide content for it:

Figure 12

Amy's project

Note. Work photographed and reproduced with permission.

> Shortly before the interview, I was thinking about the interview and my interviewee and themes I thought would arise in our conversation. This premonitory reflection made me decide to do a cutout collage as media to

> visually address the themes of the interview. After the interview, I went to pick five different colours of paper; my decision to pick few colours to work with was to intentionally limit myself and work more thoroughly to depict the themes arose. For each of the four themes, I've decided to create six "pictures" to address each theme in detail. I've then grouped three pictures on a thin and wide piece of paper and did so for all of the pictures. The visuals of the project recalls to the one of a cinematographic story board, where the story—here, the narrative I've made from what I've kept from the interview—is laid out for the viewer to see. (…)
>
> I've integrated how I created my own narrative based on what I've heard from my interviewee. I then recollect this narrative and see how it applies to me as well, such as themes in childhood, interests, and traits of character. I also cherish the open narrative that can be read from the cutout collage I made, as it should be left open-ended (A. Audet-Arcand, personal communication, January 18, 2023).

Conversely, Sharmistha gleaned inspiration for her project entirely from what she observed and heard during the interview (fig. 13). In her reflection, she also elaborates on her overall perception of the assignment:

> This assignment was thought provoking when I started to formulate how to make it 'beyond an interview.' (…) I attempted to find the vehicle that could play a role in connecting the narration with the interviewees' feelings and experiences of their life story. The coyote, a significant animal in the conversation, bridges my interviewees' experiences of country and city life, resembling its sound with sirens in the city. I observed and chose to capture the changing posture of the foot as our conversation progressed. I believe our feet can express our feelings as our portrait does, albeit differently. For me, it was hidden inside the shoe. I kind of like to make an extended story of the protagonist and the shoe, as they both were part of the physical experience of travelling or moving in places, and some of my interviewees' feelings may have been reflected inside the shoe, which was not visible. This indistinctness could speak more about untold stories, which we did not speak about, yet we got a sense of some through its position on the ground.

> The exercise of identifying key elements from a conversation or interview in order to create a 'alternative portrait' was intriguing. This approach provided numerous opportunities for us to use and explore methods based on our personal interests, expertise, and new skills (S. Kar, personal communication, January 10, 2023).

Figure 13

Sharmistha's project

Note. Work photographed and reproduced with permission.

In conclusion, the pedagogical potential of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation is manifest in the various approaches adopted by the students and the wealth of their work's outcomes. As illustrated by the differing paths taken by Kaida, Mackenzie, Nancy, Sylvie, Amy, and Sharmistha, this methodology not only accommodates a broad spectrum of artistic expressions but also nurtures critical reflection and understanding of the interview process.

Interestingly, none of the students employed photography in their work, which momentarily made me question the relevance of the photography component. Could Oral History Research-Creation alone suffice? I will delve into this question later in this chapter.

From exploring autobiographical narratives and personal experiences to scrutinizing the relationship between emotions and research methodology, the students' works exhibit the versatility of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation. In essence, the diverse artistic outcomes and reflections derived from this methodology reveal its considerable pedagogical value, demonstrating the potential for Oral History x Photography Research-Creation to make a significant contribution to the field of art education, even when the photography aspect is not explicitly incorporated.
Without a doubt, the outcome of my guest visit left me greatly satisfied. This experience granted me not only the theoretical understanding gleaned from discussions with fellow practitioners but also practical evidence of my research's relevance. However, one pressing question persisted: what would be the optimal format for introducing Oral History x Photography Research-Creation in an educational setting?

The Workshop Reality Check

The assignment format demonstrated effectiveness both as a pedagogical tool in a time-based media course and as an exploratory assignment in the methods seminar. However, this format was not without its drawbacks. A key challenge of deploying an assignment lies in the unpredictability of its integration into existing courses. In the context of the time-based media, a mandatory course for Art Education students at Concordia University, the natural suitability of oral history as a time-based medium was beneficial. Likewise, this assignment could be effortlessly integrated into a light-based media course, which primarily concentrates on photography. Yet, these are both studio courses focused on artistic production, subsequently limiting the opportunities to delve into the relational competence aspects of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation.
The graduate seminar on research methods provided an ideal platform for introducing this methodology. However, given the seminar's topic, the primary focus was on the

creative outcome derived from oral history. This did not fully align with one of the main goals of applying the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology in a teaching context, which is to develop relational competence among educators.

From the inception of my research, I was of the conviction that a workshop format would be the most effective vehicle for delivering the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology. Workshops offer flexibility and adaptability; they can be run independently or within various educational environments like conferences, seminars, professional development programs, or summer institutes (Jones, 2019). Consequently, one of the crucial deliverables of this dissertation, as outlined in my proposal, was to develop a one-day professional development workshop for educators. Though I hadn't planned to conduct the workshop before the completion of this dissertation, an unforeseen opportunity emerged. Concordia's Art Education Department was on the lookout for graduate students to devise and facilitate workshops for undergraduate students as part of a newly-introduced Saturday series that aimed to promote skill sharing with and professional development for teacher candidates. Even though the workshop had not been fully fleshed out at that stage, as an educator, I've learned that trial and error often proves to be the most effective means of determining what truly works. I was eager to grasp this opportunity and experiment.

Drawing on my experience from the time-based media course and the introductory oral history workshops I facilitated at COHDS, I was confident that a four-hour span was sufficient to cover the basics of Oral History for two hours and allow approximately 45 minutes each for practice as both interviewer and interviewee. Consequently, a full-day workshop would not only provide ample time for these activities but also present participants with the chance to translate their interview experiences into artistic expressions. To underline the importance of fostering positive relationships within a group—a key aim of the workshop—I also planned to incorporate several group-oriented exercises throughout the day. Based on these considerations, I devised an ambitious schedule for my workshop.

Reflecting on the proposed schedule now, I see how overly ambitious and potentially unachievable it might have been. Theoretically, the workshop could have proceeded as planned if it was a one-sided transmission of information, with me delivering content and instructions without any interaction from the participants. As an educator, I am

proud of my critical approach to pedagogy and curriculum. But, in this case, I underestimated the need for dialogue, the opportunity to negotiate authority, and to allow participants to steer the workshop in a direction they found relevant. My eagerness to validate my research unintentionally overshadowed one of its primary objectives—to offer practical benefits to the participants. I was so engrossed in fulfilling my research goals that I neglected the importance of participant engagement and empowerment.

Fortunately, as the workshop commenced, my instincts as an educator began to override my research agenda. Despite our small group of six participants and myself, lively dialogues emerged from the outset. Participants were eager to weave their experiences into our discussions, challenging and connecting with the topics at hand. Guided by their enthusiasm, my role often paralleled that of an oral history interviewer; I gently steered the conversation back when it strayed too far from the central topic. We were co-creating the workshop's curriculum, tailoring it primarily to the participants' needs. For instance, when discussing the significance of establishing meaningful relationships with students, the participants shared the challenges they faced as substitute teachers, especially when the regular teacher left no specific lesson plan. Responding to this, we veered from the initial workshop plan and engaged in an activity that, based on my experience, was an effective and enjoyable way to build group rapport in a short period[19].

As expected, my meticulously planned workshop schedule quickly unraveled. By 3 pm, we were still immersed in discussions about best interview practices. It was clear that we wouldn't have time for art-making, and even conducting practice interviews one-on-one seemed daunting—we were all mentally drained and physically exhausted. As we pondered whether to wrap up the workshop or how best to use the remaining hour, an interesting suggestion surfaced: conducting group practice interviews. The group embraced this idea and swiftly devised an exercise where an "interviewer" participant would select one question from our pre-prepared interview guide to ask another "interviewee" participant. Based on the response, the "interviewer" would formulate a follow-up question. The rest of the group would then reflect on the interaction, offering insights and discussing alternative routes for potential follow-up questions. Despite its

[19] Six Insights is a relation-building activity I adapted from the LOVE Media Arts program.

impromptu design, this exercise turned out to be one of the workshop's most illuminating moments. Participants gained first-hand experience of the interview process while collectively reflecting on the importance of shared authority and the art of asking meaningful follow-up questions. The group consensus was that a successful oral history interview is a complex process requiring practice, commitment to shared authority, and self-awareness. Ultimately, the participants' feedback confirmed what I had begun to realize throughout the day: a single-day workshop is insufficient to properly introduce the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology. While the participants unanimously expressed their enjoyment of the day, all agreed that we had merely scratched the surface of this approach, and a comprehensive exploration and hands-on practice of this methodology would require significantly more time. Reflecting on my workshop experience, I found myself resonating with the sentiments of veteran oral historian Lu Ann Jones (2020). Despite having designed and conducted numerous oral history workshops herself, Jones questions whether short training sessions can adequately communicate the intricacies of oral history. I was aware of Jones's caution against a superficial exploration of oral history before my workshop, but I conveniently ignored it.

In searching for alternatives suitable for this methodology, I considered whether a multi-day workshop could be a feasible solution. However, I soon realized it wasn't merely about the total duration of the workshop, but also the distribution of this time. The assignment format had proven more successful than the workshop, despite technically allowing less time to delve into the methodology and its implications. The key was that participants had time to absorb the information before conducting their interviews and engaging in the creative process. As such, a multi-day workshop, to be truly effective, would need to be spaced out, with at least a week between the theory, interview, and art creation segments. However, would it be realistic to expect pre-service and in-service teachers to commit to a multi-day workshop spread over several weeks?

My reflections led me back to the follow-up interview I conducted with Tanya, a teacher and oral historian. Drawing from her experiences, which I found relatable, Tanya expressed reservations about persuading teachers to spare even a single day from their busy schedules—let alone multiple days:

> As for my thoughts on teachers, I must admit I think that teachers are jaded. The system is difficult and many are overworked. So, while [professional development] may work for some, it may not work for all.

Despite my eagerness to make the workshop format work, I had to accept that it was, in this context, simply not a viable option.

The Question of Photography

As I contemplated the most effective strategy for incorporating Oral History x Photography Research-Creation, I found myself pondering the significance of photography within this approach. Although photography played a crucial role in the methodology's inception, it appeared to have receded into the background during its subsequent practical applications. In the time-based media assignment, I substituted photography with video to conform to the course's objectives. In the graduate seminar assignment, students were instructed to capture an image of their interviewee after the interview, but no explicit purpose or application for the photo was provided. In each instance, the lack of a dedicated photography component did not seem to hinder the anticipated outcomes, whether that involved a creative output for assignments or connecting the methodology to relational competence in the workshop's context. This prompted me to question the necessity of retaining the photography element.

To address this, I revisited the follow-up interviews with practitioners who had firsthand experience with the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology. Each individual discussed the profound impact and importance of the photography process. As I reconnected with our conversations, I recognized that photography in this context transcended its role as mere data for research-creation. Instead, as a non-linguistic form of expression, it embodied and conveyed knowledge in ways that differed from text and speech. This opened up a whole different side of relational understanding and engagement that could be included within the methodology. Photography also served as an alternative pathway for experiencing relational competency, facilitated by the interpersonal dynamics between the photographer and the subject. At that moment, it became evident to me: photography must remain an integral component of this methodology.

Experiencing the Other Side

In the course of reflecting upon my dialogues with fellow practitioners, a significant understanding came to light. Throughout this journey, my focus had primarily been on the tangible outcomes and advantages of executing Oral History x Photography Research-Creation. However, I had not thoroughly explored the experiential implications from the vantage point of the participants involved.

While I did seek participants' feedback regarding their experiences of being interviewed and photographed, my main purpose was to authenticate the methodology, rather than delving into the inherent pedagogical implications from the participants' perspective. Upon a more in-depth review of the responses gathered during the follow-up interviews, I realized that I had missed an essential aspect. I was so propelled by my research objectives that I unintentionally disregarded potential outcomes that I hadn't initially contemplated.

It merits mentioning that during the interview process, I invited one of the participants, Emma, to switch roles and to interview and photograph me. Nevertheless, my motivation at that point was primarily to balance the power dynamics with the participants and to personally experience the process I was requesting them to undertake. The importance of participation and acknowledging one's own vulnerability became more evident when I revisited my own interview recording and photographs and decided to include the resulting imagetext in the conclusion of this dissertation. This introspection highlighted the essential understanding that for the complete potential of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation to be harnessed, it was vital for participants to experience the methodology from both perspectives—that of the investigator and the participant.

The Optimal Framework

Throughout the journey of integrating Oral History x Photography Research-Creation into educational practice, I have encountered a diversity of experiences and gleaned enlightening insights. Time-based media assignments, graduate seminar assignment and the workshop progressively showcased the multifaceted nature of this

methodology. Each stage highlighted its inherent complexities and strengths, illustrating the potential of this approach to foster relational competencies in preservice teachers.

The time-based media assignments and the graduate seminar offered my initial insights into the methodology's potential depth. They exposed students to the process of oral history and portrait photography, offering them an opportunity to experiment with these tools for research and artistic creation. However, the workshop—while full of potential—also highlighted the challenges present, emphasizing the need for a longer, more immersive approach. The photography component, initially underemphasized during the workshop, emerged as a vital aspect upon reflection. It became clear that the photographic process was not just data for research-creation, but an avenue for experiencing non-linguistic relational competency through the interpersonal dynamic between the photographer and the subject. Additionally, these experiences highlighted the importance of experiencing the methodology from both standpoints—as an investigator conducting the interview and photography, and as a participant being interviewed and photographed. This dual perspective offers a richer understanding of the process, allowing students to fully grasp its potential implications and applications.

Recognizing these insights, I have explored and reflected upon various approaches. In response to my final research question regarding effective strategies for implementing Oral History x Photography Research-Creation in art education, I've come to believe that a dedicated undergraduate course, tailor-made for teacher candidates, offers the most promising platform. This model would provide the time and structure necessary for teacher candidates to fully grasp and incorporate both oral history and photography into their practice and integrate them into a comprehensive pedagogical approach[20].

The course I propose, while grounded in the theoretical foundations of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation, places a heavy emphasis on experiential learning. I believe that hands-on experience with both oral history interviews and portrait photography will serve not only to instill a deeper understanding of these methodologies, but also to enhance the students' social-emotional competences. Students will be actively engaged in conducting interviews, analyzing narratives, taking

[20] Model course outline is included in Annex B of this document.

and interpreting portraits, and creating original artwork. Through these experiences, they will foster empathy, shared authority, active listening, and self-awareness, all crucial skills for future art educators.

While the students will need a basic understanding of camera operation, digital recorders, and editing software before joining the course, the focus won't be on the technical aspects. Instead, we will delve into the cultural, historical, and ethical dimensions of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation. As students conduct interviews and create portraits, they will be encouraged to reflect on the interpersonal dynamics at play, and to consider how these dynamics can shape the resulting narrative and visual representation.

The objectives of the course align with the key professional competencies outlined by the Quebec Ministry of Education (2021). The aim is to promote cultural facilitation by helping students draw meaningful connections between personal narratives, photographic representation, and broader social, cultural, and historical contexts (competence 1). Language mastery will be enhanced through the conduct and interpretation of oral history interviews, while lesson planning will also be a component of the course, reinforcing competencies 2 and 3. The practice of shared authority, active listening, empathy, and self-awareness will contribute to class management, contributing to a cooperative and inclusive classroom environment, in line with competence 6. Engagement with diverse personal narratives will foster an appreciation of diversity (competence 7), while the continuous evaluation and refinement of practice will instill a commitment to professional development (competence 11). The course will also underscore the importance of adhering to ethical principles in oral history and photography, fostering a strong sense of professional ethics and responsibility among pre-service teachers (competence 13).

The course's learning outcomes are designed to encapsulate these objectives. By the end of the course, students should demonstrate a clear understanding of the concepts and practice of oral history and portrait photography as research tools and sources of artistic inspiration. They should exhibit proficiency in conducting interviews, managing interpersonal dynamics in portrait photography, creating original artworks that integrate narrative and visual elements, and reflecting on how these skills and knowledge can be applied in their future roles as art educators. In the course outline, I suggest a tentative reading list that supports the learning objectives. However, it's

important to note that these readings could be adjusted based on the specific program of study, language of instruction, or the university where the course is to be implemented. The list should remain flexible to accommodate contextual factors and further enrich the course content.

Various assessment methods will be used to evaluate students' grasp of the content and their ability to apply knowledge. Assessments include a Reflective Journal, requiring critical introspection and connection of coursework to personal experiences. A group-designed Lesson Plan will assess the students' ability to apply oral history and photography within the guidelines of the Quebec Education Program. The Oral History x Photography: Imagetext and artist statement will evaluate students' skills in merging narrative and visual elements while reflecting on their creative process. Lastly, the Oral History Research-Creation and Artist Statement will examine students' abilities to encapsulate the experience of an oral history interview within an artwork while maintaining ethical considerations. Each assessment emphasizes not only knowledge comprehension but also ethical awareness, creativity, and personal and professional development.

The course I outlined here is a synthesis of my experiences and learnings, and it is intended to serve as a flexible guide for future curriculum development and research in this field. It's important to clarify that this is just an outline and not a final, set-in-stone course. The fluid nature of this subject area necessitates that the curriculum be viewed as a work in progress, one that will evolve with new research, readings, and understandings in the field. As I continue to stay updated with new developments, refine the existing material, and apply insights from my ongoing research, the course will naturally evolve and improve. Therefore, this outline serves as a foundation for my future research and commitment to deliver a comprehensive and current approach to Oral History x Photography Research-Creation in art education.

CONCLUSION

The Path

Reflecting on the journey of completing this dissertation, I recall a path full of unexpected turns, filled with moments of surprise, challenge, and excitement. These instances often surfaced unexpectedly, challenging my preconceived notions and pushing me to continually re-evaluate my approach and perspectives. They were, however, also sources of profound excitement, opening up new ideas and possibilities that enriched the research process and broadened my understanding of the potential intersections between education, art, and oral history.

This dissertation emerged from a consistent dialogue between my personal introspective journey and the socio-educational landscape of Quebec. The interplay of personal and contextual insights significantly shaped the research's trajectory. My introspection process led me to contemplate my roles and experiences as an educator, artist, and oral historian, interlacing with my work using the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology. In parallel, understanding the challenges of Quebec's education system, particularly the high rates of teacher attrition and disengagement, highlighted the urgent issues that educators face. This insight underlined the potential role of social-emotional skills in addressing these problems, cultivating a more resilient, engaged, and efficient teaching community.

At the onset, my research focused on the benefits and tensions of integrating oral history and photography into a research-creation methodology. Through this process, I examined the complex relationship between these two disciplines, delved into the evolving power dynamics, and grappled with ethical issues around representation. My findings underscored that merging oral history and photography requires thoughtful navigation, a deep understanding of each discipline, and a strong commitment to honouring each participant's narrative. Despite inherent tensions due to divergent power dynamics, Oral History x Photography demonstrated its effectiveness as a research-creation tool when approached with intentionality.

This initial exploration led to my second question, investigating how the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology could enhance teaching and learning processes. Here, the insights of the six participant collaborators suggested that this

methodology, by fostering self-awareness, facilitating active listening, promoting shared authority, and nurturing empathy, could significantly enhance teaching and learning processes.

Recognizing the pedagogical benefits of the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology, I began to question the best strategies for implementing this methodology in art education teacher training programs. Different stages of the research, including time-based media assignments, a graduate seminar, and a workshop, gradually unveiled the multifaceted nature of this methodology. Each stage showcased its inherent complexities and strengths, demonstrating its potential to nurture relational competencies in teacher candidates. After comprehensive exploration and reflection, I concluded that a tailored undergraduate course offers a promising framework for teacher candidates to fully grasp, integrate, and effectively utilize both oral history and photography in their practice. Such a course structure provides the necessary time and framework for teacher candidates to immerse themselves thoroughly in the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology and experience its potential in enhancing social-emotional skills.

Closing the Loop

Ultimately, this journey circles back to where it began, with the central question that guided this entire investigation: How can the practice of an Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology contribute to the development of social-emotional competence among art education teacher candidates? To offer an integrated response, I reference the diagram from the introductory chapter (fig. 1), emphasizing the multifaceted components of the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology. Each component, when adeptly employed, holds the potential to bolster social-emotional development. In this conclusion, I aim to distill my findings, illustrating how this methodology can cultivate and enrich social-emotional competencies in future art educators.

The Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology cultivates critical soft skills, namely empathy, shared authority, active listening, and self-awareness. These are

embedded within each phase of the methodology, enabling the those who practise it to develop a rich tapestry of interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies that are essential for pedagogical practice.

Active listening is a key component of the oral history interview process. Practitioners are required to fully engage with the interviewee's narrative, absorbing the subtle nuances and deeper meanings embedded within their story. They must set aside preconceived notions and give their full attention to the interviewee's words, thereby honing their active listening skills. The process enables future teachers to understand the importance of truly hearing their students, a skill that is critical for effective teaching.

Empathy, the capacity to comprehend and resonate with the feelings of others, is indispensable for educators. This methodology offers a unique opportunity for its development. As future teachers engage in oral history interviews, they are immersed in the lived experiences, perspectives, and narratives of the interviewees. This intimate exchange allows them to connect with the emotions, thoughts, and realities of the interviewee on a deeper level, fostering a greater sense of empathy.

The sharing of authority is another critical skill nurtured by this methodology. Practitioners must endeavour to redistribute their authority and create an environment where the narrator's voice is not just heard but plays a significant role in the research-creation process. Deciding which segments of the interview and which photographs to include in the final output requires negotiation and balance between the practitioner's artistic vision and a respectful representation of the interviewee's narrative. This shared authority demands teacher candidates to value the input of others and recognize the importance of inclusivity and democratic decision-making. And as they navigate this process, self-awareness is also enhanced, which I will elaborate on later.

Considered through the prism of critical pedagogy, Oral History x Photography Research-Creation acts as an empowering mechanism, enabling educators to critically engage with intricate aspects of dialogue, representation, relation, and responsibility. In this context, dialogue transcends ordinary conversation, becoming a process of co-constructing knowledge that is rooted in mutual respect, empathy, and understanding. Representation, on the other hand, takes on a dual role—it involves portraying the narrator's experiences on one hand, and the researcher-artist's creative interpretation on the other. A delicate equilibrium between these two aspects is critical in the Oral

History x Photography Research-Creation approach. The concept of relation extends beyond the traditional triadic interplay between the artist, the artwork, and the viewer. The addition of the narrator as a crucial participant introduces another layer of complexity to the relational dynamics inherent in the process. Lastly, the concept of responsibility takes on multiple facets within this methodology. It intertwines with ethical considerations, attentiveness to narrators' experiences, and the commitment to accurately representing their stories. In effect, by engaging with this critical analysis, educators are able to cultivate essential social-emotional competences like enhanced self-awareness, empathy, and emotional intelligence. This can result in more reflective teaching practices, improved interpersonal skills, better stress management, and an overall strengthening of professional resilience and satisfaction.

Ultimately, the practice of an Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology provides multiple opportunities for developing social-emotional competence among teacher candidates in art education. This approach impacts all five core competencies of social-emotional learning: self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and self-management.

The methodology inherently encourages self-awareness. As teacher candidates engage in oral history interviews, they not only listen to the interviewee's narratives but also engage in introspection, comparing their experiences and perspectives with the interviewee's. This process deepens their understanding of personal biases, emotions, and perceptions. As the candidates proceed to photograph the interviewee and select appropriate visuals and interview excerpts for the final presentation, they continue to reflect on their interpretive lens, aesthetic preferences, and creative approaches. Through these stages, teacher candidates significantly enhance their self-awareness, informing their pedagogical choices and interactions within the classroom.

Simultaneously, this approach can enhance social awareness. The diverse narratives presented in the interviews, coupled with the tangible realities captured in photographs, allow teacher candidates to understand the sociocultural context of the interviewees, thereby widening their awareness of societal complexities. By considering social contexts and implications in their selections, future teachers grapple with societal issues, norms, and power dynamics, thus developing a more profound social awareness.

As for responsible decision-making, teacher candidates are consistently faced with decisions throughout the methodology, from framing interview questions and choosing photographic subjects to selecting interview excerpts and creating an imagetext. Through these experiences, they develop an understanding of the implications of their decisions, fostering a mindset of responsible decision-making that can be transferred to their teaching practices.

This methodology also nurtures key relationship skills. Active listening, empathy, and open communication practised during the interviews, along with the negotiation of shared authority during photo selection, promote deeper connections and appreciation for others' perspectives. Trust and integrity are further emphasized in the accurate and ethical representation of the interviewee and their stories. These aspects enable teacher candidates to build and maintain healthy relationships, an essential facet of effective teaching.

Finally, self-management skills are honed throughout this methodology. Meticulous planning, time management, the navigation of nuances in representation, emotional self-control in face of emotive narratives, and the reflective nature of this methodology all contribute to developing effective self-management skills. By engaging in this process, teacher candidates are more attuned to their strengths, weaknesses, and emotional responses, enabling them to manage their personal and professional growth effectively.

The New Beginnings

In exploring the vast potential of the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology, I've come to recognize its substantial value in cultivating social-emotional competence among art education teacher candidates. However, I'm conscious that the journey is far from over, with intriguing paths that have yet to be charted.

Among these paths is the practical implementation of the course outline that has emerged from my research. I envision this course as a real-world testing ground where

the benefits of this methodology can be observed firsthand in an educational environment. Future research could explore how the teacher candidates' self-awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making, self-management, and social awareness evolve throughout the course. Additionally, this research could provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the course itself. Do certain aspects need refining? Could elements be further emphasized to maximize the benefits for the teacher candidates? These questions open up avenues for continuous improvement and optimization of the course content and structure.

Importantly, implementing the course would also allow me to assess the scalability of the methodology and how it could be adapted to fit different educational contexts or be adjusted to cater to a range of learning styles. Understanding its flexibility and adaptability would be crucial in broadening the methodology's scope of influence. Finally, long-term impacts could also be assessed. What is the lasting influence of this methodology on the teacher candidates' professional practices and their interactions with their own students? Are the lessons and skills they acquire through the course sustainable, and do they translate into tangible improvements in their teaching environments?

As with any evolving research area, I am aware that these questions represent just the tip of the iceberg. As the research progresses and this methodology is tested and applied, new questions, challenges, and opportunities will undoubtedly emerge, requiring me to continuously reflect, reassess, and refine my approach.

Looking ahead, it is my belief that undertaking this next phase of research will yield crucial insights that will not only reinforce the practical value of the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology but also lay a strong foundation for its wider application in the field of art education. This is an exciting prospect that promises to enrich our understanding of art education and contribute to the development of empathetic, self-aware, and socially conscious educators for future generations. I'm committed to this exploration, excited about the possibilities, and look forward to the next phase of my research.

I left my job because I felt like everything was done. I gave it all I had, but at this point, my vision was different from theirs. Then, in spur of the moment, I decided to travel. So, I packed up my bags and went around South America for six months. When I came back, I had this question: what do I do next, where do I go from here? And then, a friend invited me to her PhD proposal defense. When I was there, all of a sudden, it all just made sense. You know, this is the next thing, this is it. It always feels like one thing leads into another.

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Appendix A

CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Name of Applicant:	Lea Kabiljo
Department:	Faculty of Fine Arts\Art Education
Agency:	N/A
Title of Project:	Beyond the interview: Oral history and photography as pedagogy for art education
Certification Number:	30011594

Valid From: August 08, 2019 To: August 07, 2020

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Richard DeMont

Dr. Richard DeMont, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix B

Oral History X Photography Research-Creation

COURSE OUTLINE

This interdisciplinary course weaves together the practices of oral history and portrait photography, offering art education students a distinctive methodological approach for research and artistic inspiration. Students will become skilled in the principles of oral history interviewing and the art of portrait photography. This experiential course is designed to foster relational competence skills, such as empathy, shared authority, active listening, and self-awareness, all of which are vital for future art educators.

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE/PREREQUISITES

While this course emphasizes the content and context of the work produced rather than technical proficiency, it does necessitate a basic familiarity with photography and audio recording tools. Thus, a foundational understanding of camera operation, digital recorders, and editing software is a prerequisite for course enrollment. Please note that this course does not provide technical training or workshops; the focus is on applying existing technical skills within the framework of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To familiarize students with the concept and practice of oral history and portrait photography as combined tools for research and artistic inspiration.
2. To train students in the principles of conducting oral history interviews, with an emphasis on ethical considerations and responsibilities.
3. To cultivate students' skills in portrait photography, emphasizing not only the technical aspects but also the significance of the relationship between the

photographer and the subject, and how this interpersonal dynamic can influence the resulting portrait.

4. To enhance students' relational competence skills, including empathy, shared authority, active listening, and self-awareness, through the immersive experience of conducting photo-interviews and creating art.
5. To encourage students to identify and articulate meaningful connections between personal narratives, their photographic representation, and broader social, cultural, and historical contexts.
6. To guide students in creating original artworks that integrate narrative and visual elements, inspired by their photo-interviews.
7. To prepare students to apply these integrated oral history and photography skills in their future roles as art educators, enhancing their ability to foster creativity, empathy, and social awareness in their classrooms.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the concept and practice of oral history and portrait photography as combined tools for research and artistic inspiration.
2. Demonstrate proficiency in the principles and techniques of oral history interviewing, including the development of interview questions, ethical considerations, and the process of obtaining informed consent.
3. Display proficiency in portrait photography, not only through technical skills but also in managing the interpersonal dynamic between the photographer and the subject to influence the resulting portrait.
4. Exhibit enhanced relational competence skills, including empathy, shared authority, active listening, and self-awareness, as evidenced in their approach to conducting photo-interviews and creating art.
5. Analyze and articulate the connections between personal narratives, portrait photography, and broader social, cultural, and historical contexts, demonstrating critical thinking and contextual understanding.
6. Create original, visually compelling, and conceptually engaging artworks that effectively integrate the narrative and visual elements derived from the photo-interviews.

7. Reflect on the experiences and insights gained during the course and articulate how these skills and knowledge will be applied in their future roles as art educators to foster creativity, empathy, and social awareness in their classrooms.
8. Plan lesson plans or activities for future art classes that incorporate oral history and portrait photography, demonstrating an ability to adapt these methodologies to various educational contexts and student needs.
9. Present and defend their artistic and pedagogical choices in a clear and compelling manner, demonstrating strong communication skills, critical thinking, and professional readiness.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES

C1— Act as a cultural facilitator when carrying out duties	Students will gain an understanding of oral history and portrait photography as cultural practices and tools for artistic inspiration. They will learn to analyze and articulate the connections between personal narratives and broader cultural contexts and will reflect on how to apply these skills to foster cultural understanding in their future classrooms.
C2— Master the language of instruction:	Throughout the course, students are required to communicate effectively to conduct oral history interviews, interpret the narrative and visual data they collect and in their written reflections.
C3— Plan teaching and learning situations	Students will plan a lesson plan that incorporates oral history and photography, demonstrating an ability to adapt these methodologies to various educational contexts and student needs.
C6 — Manage how class operates	By practising shared authority, active listening, empathy, and self-awareness during their research-creation projects, students enhance their relational competences and develop ability to build and maintain positive relationships with students.

C7— Take into account student diversity	Reflecting on how to apply the skills and knowledge gained during the course in their future roles as art educators will require students to consider how to foster creativity, empathy, and social awareness among diverse groups of students
C11— Commit to own professional development and to the profession	Students engage in reflective practice to continuously evaluate and enhance their professional practice.
C13— Act in accordance with the ethical principles of the profession:	Students will learn about ethical considerations associated with oral history and photography, such as obtaining informed consent, respecting the narratives and images of subjects, and responsibly managing the interpersonal dynamics during the photo-interview process.

EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT

Assignment	Professional Competences	Grade Weight %	Due date(s)
Reflective Journal	PC1, PC2, PC11	40	Weeks 3, 5, 7, 10
Oral History x Photography: Imagetext and artist statement	PC1, P2, P6, PC11, PC13	15	Week 9
Lesson Plan	PC1, PC2, PC3, PC11, PC13	20	Week 12

Final project: research-creation and artist statement	PC1, PC2, PC13	25	Week 13

Reflective Journal (40%)

Your reflective journal serves as a personal testament to your ongoing learning journey. Each weekly entry, totaling four in number, should encompass 2 to 3 pages of thoughtful content. It is strongly encouraged that you engage in critical reflection regarding your learning experience throughout the week, encompassing assigned readings, presentations, class debates, and creative explorations. Furthermore, you are expected to establish connections with your past personal experiences, integrate the acquired knowledge, and explore its potential future implications.

Evaluation criteria:

1. Content—Demonstrating a critical reflection on the assigned readings, class discussions, and creative explorations.
2. Personal Growth and Development—Articulating the valuable insights and lessons derived from the learning experience.
3. Quality of Written Expression—Displaying proficiency in spelling, syntax, and coherent delivery of content.

Lesson Plan (20%)

In groups, you will collaboratively develop a project (lesson plan) that incorporates the use of oral history and/or photography. It is essential that your lesson plan is an original creation, conceived by your team, and establishes clear connections with the QEP (Quebec Education Program) guidelines. A lesson plan template will be provided to assist you, which can be modified or adapted as necessary. It is important to ensure that your plan is clear, concise, and preferably in point form. Additionally, you are required to submit all supporting documents, such as cultural references, PowerPoint

presentations, book references, prototypes, etc. Your lesson must also include an assessment component.

Evaluation criteria:

1. Authenticity of the lesson—Demonstrating originality and uniqueness in the lesson plan.
2. Implementation of QEP requirements and criteria—Incorporating the necessary elements and standards set by the ministry.
3. Logical sequence of procedures—Presenting a well-structured and coherent flow of activities within the lesson plan.
4. Pertinence and quality of accompanying documents—Providing relevant and high-quality supporting materials, such as cultural references, PowerPoint presentations, book references, prototypes, etc.
5. Quality of written expression—Exhibiting strong written communication skills, including grammar, clarity, and organization.

Oral History x Photography: Imagetext and artist statement (15%)

In a designated class, you will conduct a detailed interview and photography session with a peer. Post-session, you will analyze the interview, and select a passage that evokes a strong personal connection or insight. From your photographs, you will need to choose one that visually and conceptually aligns with your selected passage. Your task is to create an imagetext: a thoughtful integration of the chosen passage and photograph, conveying a layered message or aesthetic experience.
Your artist statement is a detailed explanation of your creative process and intentions behind your imagetext. It clarifies the conceptual framework, aesthetic choices, and thematic implications of your work. Describe the interconnectedness of the selected passage and photograph, emphasizing emotional resonance, thematic significance, and larger context. Discuss your artistic intentions, creative techniques, and their contribution to your work's impact. Write your statement clearly and concisely, effectively conveying the meaning and inviting viewers to engage with your creation.

Evaluation criteria:

- Integration of selected passage and photograph, conveying a layered message or aesthetic experience.
- Demonstrates ability to synthesize different modes of expression into a coherent, impactful piece.

- Clear, concise, insightful explanation of creative process and intentions in the artist statement.
- Demonstrates ability to discuss artistic intentions, creative techniques, and their impact.
- Effectively conveys interconnectedness of selected passage and photograph, emphasizing personal emotional resonance, thematic significance, and broader context.

Oral history research-creation and artist statement (25%)

You will conduct and record an oral history interview with a chosen subject. This interview will serve as research for creation of an artwork. Your artwork should not aim to depict the interviewee, but rather to encapsulate the experience of the interview from your perspective. Your presence in the creation is not only essential, but inevitable. Reflect on your relationship to the story shared during the interview. Consider your interpretation of the interview or a particular element of it, and manifest this through your creation. In order to respect your interviewee's privacy, you must ensure their identity is neither shown nor revealed in any way through your work.

Write an artist's statement that delves into the rationale behind your creative choices. However, be mindful that this statement should not make any reference to the specific content of the interview.

Evaluation Criteria:

1. Artwork: The work should embody the student's interpretation of the interview experience, demonstrating creativity, depth of reflection, and personal insight. It should not depict or reveal the interviewee's identity.

2. Artist's Presence: The student's presence should be palpable within the creation, emphasizing the personal connection and interpretation of the interview or its specific elements.
3. Artist Statement: The statement should provide a concise, clear, and insightful explanation of the artistic decisions made during the creation process, without making any reference that could compromise interviewee's identity.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT DUE
Week 1	Introduction, Expectations, and Relational Competence	
Week 2	Fostering Empathy in Art Education	
Week 3	Photography as a Research Method and the Art of Portraiture	Reflexive journal #1 (weeks 1 and 2)
Week 4	Fundamentals of Oral History Method	
Week 5	Techniques for Successful Interviewing	Reflexive journal #2 (weeks 3 and 4)
Week 6	Oral History x Photography Research-Creation Methodology	
Week 7	Oral History and Photography in Educational Settings	Reflexive journal #3 (weeks 5 and 6)
Week 8	Oral history and Research-Creation	

Week 9	Image-text presentations	Image-text with artist statement
Week 10	Visual Storytelling and the Narrative Power of Photography	Reflexive journal #4 (weeks 7, 8 and 9)
Week 11	Group work and studio time	
Week 12	Lesson plan: group presentations	Lesson plan
Week 13	Research-creation outcomes: class presentations, critique, vernissage	Research-creation outcome with artist statement

SESSIONS OVERVIEW

Session 1 serves as an introduction to the course, setting expectations, and laying the foundation for understanding the importance of relational competence within education. Students will engage in an ice breaker designed to facilitate interpersonal connections and emphasize active listening. We will discuss the course outline in detail to ensure that students are well-aware of expectation and prepared for upcoming classes.

Readings:

Aspelin, J., & Jonsson, A. (2017). Relational competence in teacher education: Concept analysis and report from a pilot study. Teacher Development, 21(4), 563–578.

Ljungblad, A.-L. (2019). Pedagogical Relational Teachership (PeRT)—a multi-relational perspective. International Journal of Inclusive Education, 25(7), 860–876

In Session 2, the focus is on empathy within art education. We will discuss the role and importance of empathy in education, particularly within the realm of art education. Students will participate an experiential learning exercise designed to immerse them in the practice of empathy through shared experiences and stories.

Readings:

Jeffers, C. S. (2009). Within connections: Empathy, mirror neurons, and art education. Art Education, 62(2), 18–23.

Gerdes, K., Segal, E. Jackson, K & Mulins, J. (2011). Teaching empathy: A framework rooted in social cognitive neuroscience and social justice. Journal of Social work education, 47(1), 109–131.

Session 3 examines photography as a research tool and the art of portraiture. We will discuss photography's role in research, followed by a tutorial on the technical aspects of photography Students then focus on portrait photography, learning about its key elements and creative strategies, and the relational dynamic between the photographer and their subject.

Readings:

Wells, L. & Price, D (2015). Thinking about photography. In Wells, L. (ed), Photography: A Critical Introduction. Routledge

Scher, A. (2013). Portraiture. In Clark, T., Inglis, K., Nam, I., Roberts, S. C., Scher, A., & Wilson, M. (2013). Expressive photography: The Shutter Sisters' Guide to shooting from the heart. Focal Press, chapter 2, n.p.

Langmann, S., & Pick, D. (2018). Photography as a Social Research Method. Springer Singapore.

Session 4 delves into the practice of the oral history method, focusing on its history, shared authority, active listening, ethics, and subjectivity. Through two hands-on

activities, students will experience firsthand the subjectivity and interpretative nature of oral history.

Readings:

> High, S. (2015). Introduction. In Oral History at the Crossroads: Sharing Life Stories of Survival and Displacement. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press
>
> Thompson, P. (2015). The Voice of the Past: Oral History. In Perks, R. and Thomson, A. (eds.) The Oral History Reader, 3rd Edition. London: Routledge, 33–40.
>
> Ritchie, D. A. (2014). An Oral history of our time. Doing oral history. Oxford University Press, Incorporated.

Session 5 focuses on successful interviewing techniques, such as opening and closing questions, open-ended questions, and the importance of follow-up questions. Students participate in a hands-on group interview activity, practising the art of formulating and asking follow-up questions based on their interviewee's responses.

Readings:

> Thompson, P. (2017). The interview. In Voice of the past: Oral History (4th edition). Oxford University Press

In Session 6, students are introduced to the Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology. The session involves practical application where students engage in interviews and photo sessions, experiencing the process from both sides.

Readings:

> Kabiljo, L. (2019) Twinkle's (other) story. Quebec Heritage News 13 (4)

In Session 7, we explore the pedagogical potential of Oral History x Photography Research-Creation methodology by other examining successful oral history and photography projects that have been implemented in schools. Students participate in a brainstorming session to create possible lesson plans that incorporate the methodology.

Readings:

> Vaughan, K., Dufour, E., & Hammond, C. (2016). The "art" of the Right to the City: Interdisciplinary teaching and learning in Pointe-St-Charles. LEARNing Landscapes, 10(1), 387–418.
>
> Ritchie, D. A. (2014). Teaching oral history. Doing oral history. Oxford University Press, Incorporated. 193–233
>
> Sutton-Brown, C. A. (2014). Photovoice: A methodological guide. Photography and Culture, 7(2), 169–185.

Session 8 delves deeper into the intersection of oral history and research-creation. Students will participate in a hands-on activity where they create a piece of research-creation based on a pre-recorded oral history interview.

Readings:

> Sandino, L. (2013). Introduction. In Sandino, L., & Partington, M. (Eds.), Oral history in the visual arts. A&C Black.

In Session 9, students showcase their image-text creations, which were developed from oral history interviews and photographs of their peers. The session provides a platform for students to present their work, discuss their process, and reflect on their experience as investigator and as participant in the project.

In Session 10, we delve into the narrative power of photography and its role in visual storytelling. They explore key elements that contribute to a photo's narrative and engage in an activity to represent emotions through photography.

Session 11 is dedicated to collaborative group work, focusing on developing their lesson plans for incorporating oral history and photography research-creation methodology into school settings.

Session 12 is an opportunity for students to present the lesson plans they've developed, incorporating elements of oral history, photography, and research-creation methodologies. This session offers a platform for peer feedback, with each group given the chance to present their plan and receive constructive insights from their classmates.

Session 13 culminates in the presentation of students' final research-creation projects, followed by a critique session for constructive feedback. Celebrating the students' achievements and progress throughout the course, the session concludes with a mock-vernissage, creating an environment of acknowledgment and appreciation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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