

Out of the margins:
Opening spaces for creative communities in mainstream education - Integrating community
based arts projects

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Abstract

This paper examines the feasibility of Community-Based Arts (CBA) projects and Community Cultural Development (CCD) projects as a legitimate pedagogical alternative to traditional classroom education.

The first chapter explains the theoretical underpinnings of CBA and CCD, and explains the reasoning and theoretical background behind the current study. The second section reviews a variety of policy documents published within the Québec education system and addresses these types of projects in the context of the Québec curriculum. The third chapter presents five case CCD studies: three with the principal investigator as facilitator, and two additional projects conducted by others. The fourth chapter extends the discussion toward concepts arising from the current study: participatory democracy, identity, and other educational spaces. This section concludes with a discussion of the limitations of this study, and offers future directions for research projects of this nature.

Keywords: Community-Based Arts projects, Community Cultural Development projects, non-traditional education

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the following people:

My mother Penelope, who is not here today to see the end result of my Masters' journey.

My son Louis, who keeps it real.

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All artists and members of the CCD community who understand the power of art to give voice to the voiceless, in offering alternative learning spaces and to make a positive difference to this world.

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Chapter One: Introduction

In today's society there is a maxim: individual excellence describes a successful person, who independent of community, succeeds in life, alone and autonomous. Education too, is geared towards teaching to the goal of individual excellence which is based on individual capacity to succeed. In this educational context, the individual is decontextualized and isolated from a community of practice, one that can collaboratively learn together. I wondered what the reasons were in doing education this way.

Schools are significant for their function to socialize the individual, simply because schools have the authority to designate what is certifiable, legitimate and important knowledge as opposed to what subjects have less importance in the so-called real world. As Weiler (2009), states "Hierarchies are the quintessential manifestation of power. They signify higher and lower ranks in a given order, domination and subordination, greater and lesser value, prestige and influence" (p.2). This arrangement of core and periphery has legitimized the inequality between these fields of knowledge (Gultang, 1971, p.81). In the context of the education system, it seems to have explicitly geared itself towards giving greater attention to certain knowledge areas and by doing so, established a hidden curriculum where there are "domains of knowledge that are endowed with unequal status validating a hierarchy of knowledge?" (Weiler, 2009, p.2). So how can educators address the onslaught in the standardization of knowledge, one that inevitably contains hidden messages of privileging certain types of knowledge as being more important than other types of knowledge? Why can there not be a learning space where the lives of young people are free of external evaluations and instead focused on learning collaboratively, as a process of conscientization and praxis? I hope that this thesis will be another voice that can

constructively contribute to the discourse on pedagogy, with regard to how we can both model and validate a different way of doing education (i.e., one that has at its centre community-based arts learning in secondary schools) and by doing so, address the singularity of the way pedagogy is currently disseminated in schools. I suggest that there is an antidote to this manner of learning: that of community cultural development.

What is Community Cultural Development? (CCD)

Central to CCD practice is the use of art in its multiple forms, to give voice to a community with regard to issues that are important for them to make public. CCD consists of community-based arts projects where a community of people working with an artist, or artists, comes together in a participatory and collaborative art-making project on issues that are meaningful to their community. CCD projects are done in informal spaces that are open to all cultures, languages, values, interests. CCD is the “art of respectful curiosity, a capacity to express, and the synthesis between diverse cultures as they rub against the other” (Hawkes, 2011, p.7). In relationship with community, CCD facilitates the active construction and narration of self and identity. Instead of being a passive spectator of art practices, CCD projects embody the principle that we are all creative and that we all have the capacity, need, right, responsibility and desire to be actively involved in making our own culture (Hawkes, 2011, p.2).

Implicit in this process is the “complexity and ambiguity of emerging voices, - the voices yet to be heard and sub- voices exploring identity” and that the space can readily support the “multiplicity of meanings and the role of the creative practitioner as co-creator of meanings that leads to a real process of collaboration and dialogue” (Batsleer, 2011, p.432). Instead, community cultural development arts-based projects are radical pedagogy because “it is through the creation of spaces for participation in the processes of meaning making, where cultural

beliefs, ideology and shared understandings can be made visible, deconstructed and reconstructed, (i.e., spaces for conscientization), transformative change is always possible” (Sonn & Quayle, 2014, p. 19). Therefore, CCD inspires dialogical relationships and resists the process of internalizing socially constructed meta-narratives which have been imposed upon the individual as a truth (Andreotti, 2011b, p. 308). As Joseph (2008) states, we must be open to “destabilizing one’s own way of being and knowing and to interrogate the power dimensions and notions of difference in the contexts that we work and live in” (pg.34). This also creates spaces to rethink questions of learning and authority but also questions of pedagogically constructed centers and margins.

CCD facilitates multiple standpoints as individuals are able to work together in relational stance with each other, and in this context, we come to know that we are not isolated individuals. Collaborating is key to working with a community of people because there is awareness among participants that as humans’ we are all interdependent social beings. This acknowledgement facilitates a space which recognizes multiple co-existing realities, intersectionality of lives and rejects stereotyping or objectification. CCD projects are open to diverse cultural ecosystems, and allow for individuals to get together and express their creative energy collaboratively via the many arts platforms. Participants do not have to have any arts experience but the community, with an artist-facilitator, work together towards an arts-based product. Although questions have been asked about the need for an aesthetic ‘arts-based’ product, the purpose of any community arts-based work is in its liberatory experience -that of a (non-linear) process - leading to an outcome. When a community works together, it is understood that the final all arts-based product is one of collective authorship.

The role of CCD is to facilitate another approach to learning and engagement, which is radically different from the current educational system that is in place and can act as a circuit breaker from the type of governmentality that Foucault (as cited in Sokhi-Bulley, 2014), speaks about, where the education system is no more than an arm of the government, a site where political power operates. In schools, individuals are socialized into a system of self-regulation of procedures which conform to the status quo, which is far removed from an interdependent community of practice.

Furthering the idea of governmentality, and using Bourdieu's (2004), concept of 'fields' that of institutions, with rules, roles and relationships and which then determines the authority, autonomy, rewards, and status and how these elements are distributed amongst individuals and within the field, understand the way people become tied into their roles as normal functions, and thereby there is an internalization of roles, procedures of operation also known as *habitus*. As Bourdieu states "social order is progressively inscribed in people's minds. Social divisions become principles of divisions, organizing the image of the social world [...] thereby leading to a sense of one's place" (as cited in Blunden, 2004, p.5).

For the arts, the *habitus* of cultural capital, is to understand the procedures of operation in this field, the idea of approving this art or disapproving of another, or to be seen in the 'right' artistic circles. CCD directly addresses the issue of culture capital and its associated hierarchy and status, by naming it and rejecting this outright. CCD is a disrupter of this and creates a forum to question those relations of who has the power to produce governor/governed identities (Sokhi-Bulley, 2014, p.3).

Principles of social justice and participatory citizenship are also central to CCD practice and this means that there is more of a “holistic process of adapting to the world and knowledge generation trajectories, which involves interaction among the person, the arts and the environment” (Mabingo 2015, p.5). The arts in the context of CCD, are transgressive and show political resistance as opposed to becoming institutionalized and mundane. This is why CCD should be included into the education system, as it radically changes the dynamics of governmentality and habitus that is born out of Bourdieu’s (as cited in Blunden, 2004) human capital theory.

Background

I am an Australian secondary school teacher who has been teaching in Montréal, Québec for the last fourteen years. I have also worked as a facilitator for a number of Community Cultural Development (CCD) arts-based projects inside of formal school spaces and outside of them. CCD arts-based projects put community in the centre, so I have transferred my knowledge and skills of this work into secondary school and in the subject-based classes that I have taught such as English, Ethics and Drama.

In this thesis I will be addressing how my teaching practice which is drawn from my CCD experiences is not considered to be mainstream in the delivery of curriculum as would be normally done in secondary school. Instead I have considered my approach to teaching as an unofficial almost informal pedagogy compared to that currently practiced in a regular educational setting. My approach to teaching and learning have made me question whether there is a space for CCD in the school curriculum. Although I am qualified to work in a secondary school setting, I see myself as a CCD practitioner, having worked in this area over the last 25

years and having done several CCD projects – both outside of the school settings (informal settings) and inside of school (formal educational settings) and with multiple age groups.

Praxis, as described by Freire (1973), is the guiding principle that I have used when working in communities of arts practice: the cycles of action and reflection. Praxis is about co-creating knowledge which is contingent and emergent, and that cannot be neatly defined because of the “multiple discourses of the everyday” (Greene, 1995, p. 12). Collectively individuals are both co-authors and co-directors where each person contributes to a thread in the collective tapestry. This happens, as Hawkes recommends, with soft hands, because CCD is “the art of service as opposed to control; in how to let go, how to trust in the capacities of communities” (Hawkes, 2011, p.7). Participatory inclusion of learners in communal structures is pursued as a process, not in terms of outcome, but as a holistic process of adapting to the world and knowledge generation trajectories, which involves interaction among the person, the arts and the environment (Mabingo, 2015, p.5). Through this process, collaborating with artists, educators and students, these arts-based community projects can inspire discussions on issues that are pertinent to the community and create transformative moments of connection and learning. CCD makes learning more relevant to all those who partake in it as it “embodies the principle that we are all creative and that we all have the capacity, need, right, responsibility and desire to be actively involved in making our own culture” (Hawkes, 2011, p.2; Woywod & Deal, 2016, p. 44). You cannot be passive or be isolated from a community-arts based project.

How I Became Interested in CCD Projects

Many years ago, I was a facilitator for an oral history project about the history of the local railway and I worked with 15 young people. I found that I really liked working

collaboratively with the participants because I was more a guide and a facilitator than a regular teacher. The space that I worked in lent itself to working outside of the formal structures of the classroom because we were housed at the railway station. Unlike a strict and prescribed curriculum as set up by the State, the project was initiated by a local group of railway enthusiasts who wanted to preserve the local history of the railways because of their significant role in the shaping of the local community.

I liked the informal learning space that had opened to us. We were not constrained by assessment or classroom rules. Working full-time on the project over a four-month period, the group happily worked on interviewing railway workers, transcribing interviews and using their primary source, the interviews, in deciding on what material would be used in creating the radio tapes. These very same tapes were then featured at the local radio station. I can say that the whole process was extremely rewarding for all of us involved and we successfully delivered.

We had our own autonomy to decide how we wanted to approach the railway project, and this worked far better for us than following a prescribed routine. You could say that learning in this way is more hands-on and exploratory as we had had the freedom to develop an approach to our work in the context of what worked best for us. Having the flexibility to move as we needed to, helped us in establishing trusting relationships and open communication between ourselves.

Unlike the classroom participants who ordinarily are mandated to sit in predetermined rows of seating, looking to the front of the class, I wasn't configured to be at the front speaking back to the students. In short, I was not in a learning environment that was contained and where the teacher was the one who controlled the content of the lesson, or how the lesson would be

delivered. Instead, I worked with the participants in deciding what needed to be done, what worked and what did not, all for the betterment of the project. In community-arts based projects, it is the participants in the context of the project, who have greater control and autonomy in what they see as relevant to do for their project.

I remember during the railway project the way the participants felt at home, in an informal setting, managing their time and working to meet deadlines. Actively involving learners in Freire's (1973) cycle of action and reflection is a far better approach than pursuing time on tasks, evaluations, exams, tests and other accountability measures. Although the process in doing the radio tapes had a structure, there was something far more organic and intuitive than the timetabled regime that is found in a school setting.

Problem Statement

This work has led me to question why our education system is the only space for young people to be educated and to seek homogeneous outcomes. I do see some positive reasons to have an education system this way, but I question as to why there cannot also be alternative learning spaces that embrace arts and the community as opposed to solely focusing on core subjects. The issue I intend to explore in this thesis is: young learners need a space for them that moves against the standardization and formalization of knowledge, a space that embraces creativity and community, and it appears that community-based arts projects provide the possibility of forming that space.

This is the reason why I wanted to do a research project that would raise awareness about arts-based CCD projects and to offer this as a legitimate pedagogical alternative in secondary schools within a Québec context. I hoped that this thesis will be another voice that can

constructively contribute to the many educational discourses on pedagogy and on how we can both model and validate a different way of doing education - one that has at its centre community-based arts learning in secondary schools and by doing so, address the singularity of pedagogical dissemination in schools.

Research Question:

Based on the research and issues discussed in this chapter, the following questions arise:

1. Can community arts-based collaborations fit into current models of mainstream education?
2. Moreover, can mainstream education take seriously arts-based community cultural development (CCD), as an educational tool in the form of Community Based Arts projects (CBA projects) in High Schools, if economic rationalism is what drives the current educational system?

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Design of the Study

There is a growing body of research within the learning sciences that views learning models that enhance learning, as opposed to following prescribed curriculum, as valuable pedagogy. Sawyer (2015), a researcher within this field, proposes that learning is not isolated but comes from a collaborative emergence, one that taps into a dynamic group process and where outcomes cannot be predicted. This emergence is “one of an unfolding flow of the encounter” with those who participate (i.e., teacher, student) all being part of this process. He questions whether this process, which is more emergent than prescriptive, would be a better approach to learning than in merely seeking to meet educational benchmarks (Batsleer, 2011, p. 430; Sawyer, 2015, p. 24).

Creative emergent learning is the antithesis to current educational practices because it is the impulse of the unknown and discovery, and emergent systems are difficult to quantify by using scientific methods based on reductionism. Reductionist approaches in education, compartmentalize knowledge via its various parts which are controlled and controllable. In creative emergence there is equal participation in an activity, a collaboration of ideas and

knowledge which is not constrained and flows – a moment to moment dynamic which can have infinite outcomes and none necessarily predictable. Essential to the creative emergent is reflection of what is said, and the impetus to make meaning from this. The interactional meaning of a specific statement can morph into another idea, something that was different from the source and unexpected (Sawyer, 2015, p.15).

Harris (2013) speaks about having a learning space that uses the arts as a vehicle for “multidirectional knowledge transfer and action research as pedagogy” (p. 421). Like the emergent collaboration that Sawyer talks about, Harris too talks about a peered and tiered model of learning that incorporates multiple knowledges, be it cultural, generational, and artistic contribution (p. 421). The data that were collected for the project were “gathered and co-interpreted by co-participants” as a deliberate process for the democratization of knowledge production. In engaging in art, this becomes a “catalyst of possibilities [...] that permits rhizomatic thinking” (Harris, 2013, p. 422-23).

The results of this project came about because the participants “sought to value the cultural and other knowledges brought by the youth participants but acknowledged the discipline and industry knowledge brought by the artists and teacher- researchers” (Harris, 2013, p. 419). This echoes what Sawyer had said about the working dynamics of creativity which comes from the loosening up of these roles between teachers who traditionally have the power and control to teach over their students and the students who are in subordinate positions. Another aspect of working in this way, is finding places outside of institutions so that this lessens the sense of inaccessibility by those who do not feel comfortable in those settings. It was also a means to blend the artistic and educational space (Harris, 2013, p. 419).

Butterwick and Roy (2018) explore the way in which the many facets of art-making practices (e.g., poetry, theatre, dance, etc.) have attracted people on the margins, and that art projects facilitate a platform for people to speak their truth (p. 4). In discussing creativity via arts making, the focus is the process of creative expression that tries to make shareable knowledge that cannot be explained otherwise. The point of creativity is to “point us to new paths, new ways of seeing and solving and offers us inspiration from both the inside and the outside [...] It wakes us up, challenges us and enriches all of life” (p. 4). This experience is likened by them, to disrupting the normal societal roles and the distribution of power. Central to making this happen, is the collaboration between participants, be they community activists, artists and educators who in a range of different settings, promote the arts as a means of exchanging ideas that are multicultural and pluralistic.

Batsleer (2011), in her work on the Blue Room, believes that creativity via the arts-based practice and one that could be incorporated as pedagogic engagement, can open the possibilities for a range of dialogues, which are in her opinion, a series of translations, with all their complexity, that links to the imagination of possible futures (p. 426). By discarding the rational and the fixed, these creative expressions are emergent as they are ambiguous. Batsleer (2011), is interested in a process of creative loosening up, one that moves away from “the codes of school or the discourses of pathology” (p. 423), which helps the individual to explore what identity means outside of the constraints of the classroom. Like the other authors mention, she talks about the dissolution of the teacher/student dynamic as is prescribed by the institution, which frees her to become a *creative practitioner*. That is, one who co-creates with the participants as a real process of collaboration and dialogue. In this dynamic there is a recognition and acceptance in the potentiality of the multiplicity of meaning making.

Batsleer, (2011) challenges institutions as they neglect to call out the way systems of classification that rank and value symbolic power, impose the dichotomy of core and periphery by ignoring those who lack symbolic power thus contributing to their marginalization (Batsleer, 2011, p. 432). By echoing Bourdieu's (as cited in Blunden, 2004), theory of capital, she reiterates the need for educational practices to democratize education away from status and hierarchies, and to bring out from the margins, those who live on the edge and who are associated with abjection. The naming of these classification codes brings to consciousness the dynamic of core and periphery and with this comes the hope of social justice with the weakening exclusionary practices, thereby affecting social transformation. If we are not vigilant to these oppressive codes and symbols that are found (both inside and outside of schools), then we fall prey to these codes, simply because they become accepted practice (Bastleer, 2011, p. 433). Interested in how to bridge the gap of who gets to be accepted to participate when there are those who live in the margins, Bastleer (2011), states that

participation can be said to work for the already-positioned in the mainstream but for those whose lives are lived on the edge, by accepting the positionings on offer as 'engaging the disaffected', 'reaching the hard to reach and chaotic', they work for the already mainstream. Arts-based methods may offer new ways of participating in knowledge creation by virtue of shifting identities, opening up rather than solidifying them (p.430).

This is the case with students and teachers, where arts-based projects do loosen up fixed identities so that teachers and students take on a variety of new roles, such as artist, learner, knower, known, and other such disruptions of the traditional teacher-student relationship. By doing so, this practice implicitly challenges fixed notions of identity, so that there are shifts in

the framing and shaping of knowledge, found outside of delineated rationalist spaces which become less routinized and more fluid, exploratory and open. As Batsleer (2011), states, this difference is about emotional relationality of people and environments – that of emotional geographies and this breaks down hierarchies of social and symbolic power that is innate, for instance, in schools (Batsleer, 2011, p.430).

The School without Walls, (Harris, 2013), is a space where both teachers and students are encouraged to blur the line between formal and informal learning and to collaborate together. Harris suggests that this configuration elicits the well-being of all by validating the positionality of each participant – be it from cultural knowledge, generational knowledge or artistic contribution (Harris, 2013, p.421). The participants become active, directive, self-determining through the idea of possibility and in being able to create one's own social and cultural environment. Using potentiality, this has permitted the opportunity for those in the group to take on different roles, to help make rules and to have the confidence to push oneself into unfamiliar territory. This approach to learning emphasizes multiliteracies whereby it is not only the linguistic literacy that is singled out as normative, but also visual and performative trajectories of communication. In a CCD context, participants were free to “explore, create or reconfigure combinations of materials, ideas and people into different combinations and outcomes” (Theile & Marsden, 2003, p. 93).

Well-established CCD practitioners Theile and Marsden (2003), set up the Artful Dodgers Studio, to better service highly marginalized young people by working with artists. What made this program unique is that the participants had access to both welfare and health agencies as they did art-based projects. By having a multidisciplinary approach, Theile and

Marsden (2003), were better able to serve the young people because it was recognized that they were on the margins due to substance use and having mental health issues. For the youth participants, the working space provided a safe and secure environment in order to do artwork and to express their experience of marginalization through artistic projects. The space was also multifunctional too, as it offered a kitchen, an open access studio which could support both individual and group projects. The purpose of doing CCD work was to deliver broad social change outcomes for marginalized people (Theile & Marsden, 2003, pg.23).

As a result, the Artful Dodgers Studio highlighted how flexible CCD projects are because projects can be done in multifunctioning contexts which contribute to the many different ways artists can be engaged with communities in doing CCD. This flexibility is what is endearing to CCD projects because each project finds its own path, its own identity, depending on the community that is involved. Many of the artists/facilitators have been motivated by issues that directly affect the community, be it environmental, humanitarian, social issues and causes (Theile & Marsden, 2003, p.19). This point is still relevant today.

The UNESCO Road Map to Arts Education

The UNESCO Road Map to Arts Education global summit was attended by 1200 participants from 97 UNESCO Member States, with the outcome of producing a Roadmap that was to advocate and guide “best practices in arts education” around the globe (UNESCO, 2006, p.4). The aim of the meeting was to promote arts education in a more holistic manner, from promoting multiple levels of partnerships, to having greater flexibility in education for the arts, and to the recognition of the value of artists and to address those barriers to the arts. The primary mandate for the Roadmap was to highlight that the arts should be taught

“(1) as individual study subjects, through the teaching of the various arts disciplines, thereby developing students’ artistic skills, sensitivity, and appreciation of the arts, (2) seen as a method of teaching and learning in which artistic and cultural dimensions are included in all curriculum subjects” (UNESCO, 2006, p.8).

Despite the good intentions for this meeting and the UNESCO’s (2006) Roadmap, there has been criticism of it. Schürch et al. (2010) have argued that the document wields the term “culture” in a confusing way that does not help further education policy, making it unclear as to whether the document is reference to cultural diversity or universal values. The authors also found that there was “a lack of substantial, nuanced research on art education practices in varying socio-political contexts’ and that the Roadmap “lacked sufficient or critical engagement with the history and the persistent hegemony of the western conceptions of arts and education within the field” (Schürch et al., 2010, p.1). Andreotti (2015) further argued that the Roadmap was adopting a global citizenships education platform and by doing so “reinforced ethnocentric, paternalistic and depoliticized practices based on a single epistemological hegemony [...] foreclosing analysis of uneven power relationships” (p.105).

The Roadmap (UNESCO, 2006), proposed that the arts would be required to meet the needs of an ‘increasingly demanding workforces that are creative, flexible, adaptable and innovative and education systems need to evolve with these shifting conditions’ (UNESCO, 2006, p.5). In this context, creative practices in education had deferred to neoliberal policies by proposing that the arts are to serve the global market and to enhance an economic system. If the arts were to be used in this way, then this is very much about the ‘taming of the shrew’ where radical or transgressive arts that confronts neoliberal market agendas would be marginalized or

subjugated to serve the expansion of business and market -determined notions of creativity (Adams, 2013, p. 244; Schürch et al, 2010). Not once does the document speak of CCD projects.

Whilst the widespread structure of Western style schools globally dominate as the preeminent model for the way education is delivered, I cannot see how the status of the arts will change, if the system never changes. Without questioning the structure of schools, the Roadmap ignores the geopolitics and biopolitics of knowledge production on the one hand but creates a prescriptive globalised blueprint for the arts on the other. How much did the many elements of creativity, or emergence collaborations was to be reflected in the Quebec Educational Policy (QEP), documents on arts education? Did the local policy document of the QEP share the same language, concepts, ideas for the arts as the globalised UNESCO document on the arts? Language such as knowledge societies, adaptable workforce or modern societies, for example? Where do the arts fit into the Quebec system of education?

Design of the Study

My intention with this study is to investigate the status of the arts in school and if they are valued in the same way as the core subjects such as Maths and Science are. Coupled with this enquiry is the question as to why schools only deliver education in one dominant way. Can there not be alternatives? If we are to have an education system, how can we re-envision it by including other ways of knowing and doing? Within this thesis, I will review documents issued by the Quebec Ministère de l'Éducation de l'enseignement supérieur (MELS), to see where art is placed and whether there is any acknowledgement or space for Community-Based Art projects. I will use the information within these documents to properly contextualize arts in schools, including Community-Based Arts (CBA) projects, and then draw conclusions from these documents as to the state of the arts in the Québec education system.

Theoretical Framework

In my analysis I will be employing the following theories: structural imperialism, post-colonial theory, Freire's theory of praxis, and human capital theory. What all these theories have in common is the analytical deconstruction of the normalcy of Eurocentric dominance as the totalizing reality, therefore giving itself the legitimacy to create official hierarchies of knowledge and methodologies.

Gultang's (1971), theory of *structural imperialism* will assist me in identifying central and peripheral dynamics and the hierarchies that are produced from these. I want to identify what is considered important, that of central dynamics, and where the arts fit into this dynamic. Using the theory, I see very clearly how in a school-based setting the curriculum privileges a hierarchy of knowledge, where subjects such as science and mathematics that are in the centre and with the arts at the periphery. This positioning of inner and outer legitimizes the inequality between these fields of knowledge (Gultang, 1971, p.81).

Post-colonial theories highlight the issues of epistemological positioning of knowledge and again what counts as important or what is made invisible. I am interested to analyze the education policies to see whether there is an unequal epistemological configuration which is oppressive and what bearing this might have on how the arts are valued or not. Like Gultang's (1971) theory, post-colonial theory also takes aim at which knowledge counts and which knowledge is made invisible. An example of the othering of knowledge is amply demonstrated in the case of indigenous knowledge that has been marginalized as it does not fit into the dominant metanarrative and its subsequent regime of truth. It is outside and made to feel shameful that it

has not made grade. The same could be said for the arts as it is not a serious subject like Maths or Science.

In community-based arts setting, Freire's concept of *conscientization*, is critical because the individuals find themselves liberated from biased or restrictive social structures.

Conscientization therefore brings about agency to the individual who with others wants to actively resist imposed regimes of truth that they may find themselves being coerced into or are oppressed by. As Gultang states,

Rationality is unevenly distributed, because some (i.e the expert, teachers, parents), may dominate the minds of others (i.e students), and that this may lead to 'false consciousness.' Thus, learning to suppress one's own true interests may be a major part of socialization in general and education in particular (Gultang, 1971, p.81).

Bourdieu's (as cited in Blunden, 2004), *human capital theory* and the role of status, class and culture where there are unequal distributions of capital, be economic, social or cultural are standardized in the delivery of education. Social signifiers of high status for instance, and how this idea fits into the narrative of best academic institutions, best qualifications, or the best subjects in school, for example. These factors tell us what worth means. For instance, in art, there are categories of high or low art each with its associated economic value. In short, Bourdieu's (as cited in Blunden, 2004) theory sheds light on what has greater or lesser social currency. What is the social capital of the arts in education from this perspective?

Methodology

I am interested in examining the rationale for doing arts education in mainstream education as defined by the Quebec policy documents. As I analyze, I will deconstruct the

underlying ideas, assumptions or ideologies around the arts. For instance, are the arts contingent on the prevailing demands of the workplace, and therefore vocationalist? The other key point in my examination of these policy documents is to see whether community-based arts projects (CCD) are mentioned at all. In the following chapter, I will include an auto-ethnographical portrait of my own community-based art projects that I have done in and out of schools, as examples of what an adapted CCD project can be like in schools. I will use this information as part of my qualitative research into arts education and compare this to the current educational policies in education, arts and culture.

Québec Education Policy Documents

Before commencing the document analysis, I would like to explain how these policy documents work. The Government of Québec has released information dictating curriculum, core competencies, and other benchmarks for the education system in Québec. These documents are updated periodically, and where possible I have chosen to focus on the most recent publication of each document, unless an earlier one provided insights not found in its revisions. I chose to examine these documents in this thesis to highlight the ideologies espoused by the Québec education system. Of the available documents, I chose only to focus on those which explicitly relate to the arts in education. The first document I chose to examine in this literature review is a consultation document from 2016, regarding the changing needs of education in the twenty-first century. I will then extend my analysis to Québec Education Policy (QEP) documents that specifically deal with the arts in education.

The 2016 Consultation Document

The consultation document espouses that the purpose of education is to “provide instruction, socialize and provide qualifications” and that “academic performance, diplomas, certificates and attestations of studies are indicators of student success” (Government of Québec, 2016, pg.6). The focus of education is on the individual: from teaching the right values, being a responsible citizen or worker and to live to one’s full capacity, having completed an educational program with its relevant competencies. One of the significant reasons for education is to ensure that the person is both competent in “cognitive development and mastery of knowledge” leading to both emotional and financial autonomy (Government of Québec, 2016, p.6). This educational positioning has its roots in the more traditional idea of the functionality of education as a place of “transmission and acquisition” (Sawyer, 2015, p.11). The question I have here is what is being transmitted and what is being acquired? And how do the arts fit into that?

Education is currently dominated by the collection of facts, procedures and in the standardization of learning outcomes so that students will be equipped to enter the world of work. The consultation document echoes this sentiment:

Schooling has a direct impact on workforce integration, as demonstrated by the increase in the employment rate as the level of schooling rises. It therefore has a significant impact on the standard of living and quality of life a person can hope to attain (Government of Québec, 2016, p.4).

Coupled with the rationalist worldview, educational policies have ensured that education would be delivered in a manner where the learner would be instructed according to established

benchmarks, as it is the responsibility for educators to “recall the need to consolidate basic education by establishing a common core of learning” (Government of Québec, 2016, p.2).

The main reason for this “common core of learning” has been that of the functionalist need to prepare students to enter the workforce, to the benefit of both the individual and society and the proper social functioning and civil regulation because school is a place where “business expects schools to provide workers who are knowledgeable, skilled and are able to learn new things” (Government of Québec, 2016, p.1). Education and success have been bound to work competencies, literacy and digital technology. (Government of Québec, 2016, p. 3). However, human capital theory is also at work within this system, as this document also reinforces the idea that a stratified workplace is normal. Individuals find themselves in an educational system that measures their ability via external evaluations and the results of these evaluations determines the relevant categories that a person belongs to according to their abilities and competencies.

The policy document describes what the ideal situation would be for a student to succeed and has been identified as coming from an intellectually stimulating and stable home environment as a core place so that a student is best able to fit into the current educational system. If someone is identified as being from either an Indigenous or immigrant background the document acknowledges that there will be barriers to learning and uneven motivations for studies and that providing guidance and support from teachers is becoming increasingly difficult (Government of Québec, 2016, p. 3) According to the policy document it is these differences that can impact student performance and this has a domino effect on being able to achieve good grades or not. It is the individual’s capacity, and the personal obstacles that they may encounter,

that contribute to the difference of school success or failure, and later, to the choices of their work and career options and performance (Government of Québec, 2016, p.4).

It is apparent that in the policy documents the world of work is heavily featured because students will be educated to meet the demands of the marketplace. Education's role therefore, must continually adapt its teaching content, to meet the needs of these future workplaces by ensuring that students will gain fundamental competencies (Government of Québec, 2016, p.1). School's central role is to ensure workplace integration as this is considered a 'powerful lever of social equity' (Government of Québec, 2016, p.4). Without this, the individual would be more vulnerable to a range of problems from mental health issues, isolation and relationship and cultural deficits.

The 2004 Quebec Educational Policy Document

Historically, schools are social sites that reproduce patterns of behaviors called habitus (Davies & Guppy, 2010, p.45) and has been reproduced from generation to generation, in a seemingly consensual manner because "all members of an organization or society have a stake in the system" (Wotherspoon, 2009, p.23). In this process of socialization, cultural symbols are embedded in the system, whereby certain behaviors, knowledge, values and possessions are considered to represent greater success (Blunden, 2004, p.4). Credentialing, a symbol of success, proves that students are a functioning economic unit with "work ethics, discipline, reliability, and a willingness to follow orders" (Davies & Guppy, 2010, p.73) Unfortunately, there is a lack of praxis in the policy document in questioning the reproduction of a system of education that privileges class inequalities via labor force (Wotherspoon, 2009, pg. 38).

School's major function therefore is to ensure that students achieve competencies and acquire enough knowledge for them to be qualified because "as a modern society changes, the concept of competency remains at the heart of the school mission" (Government of Québec, 2004, pg. 15). Drawn from structural functionalism, the education system plays a significant role in the process of identity-making by proposing that schooling is the right and legitimate avenue in life's development. Certification authorizes the individual to accept the role that best suits them in order to be successful, and this has flow-on benefit to the collective (Government of Québec, 2004, pg. 4). There is very much the hidden curriculum at work because students are unable to reflect on how the system creates a system of meritocracy. *Meritocracy* places the emphasis of success or failure back on to the individual based on "self-determination, personal management, social responsibility, and cultural, global and environmental awareness" (Government of Québec, 2004, pg. 15). The structural inequality of this system (i.e., between people who have its associated privileges and those who do not), is not addressed in this document. The QEP document speaks neither to our positions in society nor to the individual fields of power that we may have (Garber, 2010, p. 125).

This document offers no sources for alternative learning. Education is administered only through classroom models, and no attention is given to opening the learning space for engaging in interdisciplinary, cross-cultural or in other collaborative approaches to education that do not allow for predictable outcomes (Harris, 2013, p. 413, Sawyer, 2015, p. 24). The focus is instead on fitting students into the system as it exists by "learning of values, attitudes and responsibilities that will make student a responsible citizen, prepared to play an active role in the workforce, the community and society" (Government of Québec, 2016, pg.6).

The role of literacy. As espoused in the consultation document, the Quebec Minister of Education has come out strongly in support “in strengthening early interventions in literacy amongst young people and adults as this is considered a ticket to graduation and qualifications (Government of Quebec, 2016, pg. ii). This statement clearly places literacy as a core competency within the education system, and this is typical of current educational policy. Andreotti (2011 a) argues that here has always been a connection made between the production of knowledge (i.e., literacy) and *cultural capital*, with its promises of increased social mobility, wealth and moral development (p. 58; Government of Québec, 2016, pg. ii). The dominance of literacy instruction in education has informed which subjects have more prestige (e.g., science, mathematics and technology). Classifying these subjects as more prestigious ensures that the arts remain marginalized (Gee, 2008, p.33; Smith, 2012, p.30).

Literacy transmits information that has come from a particular point of view, normally one that comes from Western thought (David-Cree, 2005, p.324; Gee, 2009, p.64). As Carrington and Luke (1997) suggest, literacy has always been about “institutional discourses of schooling (which) acts to construct particular cognitive predispositions and value systems which have been misinterpreted as the result of literacy” (p. 97). I question why there is the belief that literacy underpins the acquisition of knowledge and hence creates the idea of a more educated student? Why are multi-literacies ignored, including the Arts? I am concerned that the rationale for literacy is

unevenly distributed, because some (i.e the expert, teachers, parents), may dominate the minds of others (i.e students), and that this may lead to 'false consciousness.' Thus,

learning to suppress one's own true interests may be a major part of socialization in general and education in particular (Gultang, 1971, p.81).

This statement makes clear to me that this approach to education, that of the “false consciousness” that Gultang (1971) discusses, has become a totalizing force in the construction of what it means to be educated and how this informs social identity.

The QEP and arts education. This policy document gives an overview of the place of arts in education. The QEP's arts education framework is modeled on the fine arts (i.e., visual arts, drama and music), whereby the intellectual content is based on the individual's knowledge and skills in conjunction with the teacher as expert. This is particularly the case when the role of the teacher is to regulate actions that will refine the student's process which is bound by rules and expectations (Government of Québec, 2004, p. 12). As art is part of the curriculum, where learning outcomes are based on competencies, the student must “demonstrate adequate performance of a task in a specific context” (Government of Québec, 2004, p.12). Despite the implied rigor of this statement, the educational context is fixated on the individual's performance and a “linear teleological progress” (Andreotti, 2016, p. 5).

The framework for arts in education established in the QEP aims not only to enhance cultural experiences but to preserve and safeguard cultural values and identity against the backdrop of rapid influence of globalization (Government of Québec, 2004, p. 67). This document also espouses that the power of art is about the transposing the ordinary into another way of understanding the world around us, thus to “contribute to the evolution of these values and to show us a reflection of history, societies and by extension humanity” (Government of Québec, 2004, p. 67) Through exposure to the arts there is an expectation that students will

become aware of the creative dynamic, and that expression and communication that will be part of an “ongoing discovery of culture and cultural enrichment, in general” (p.67). What is learnt through the arts can then be transferred to the individual by contributing to the student’s personal development in the context of “moral or ethical issues, social problems, beliefs or values and helps them to adopt balanced attitude and habits” (Government of Québec, 2004, p. 68). The QEP also speaks of the arts as forging connections between the other subjects which assists in transfer of learning and the consolidation of knowledge, but this is an idea only and is not guaranteed that this can truly be an outcome for arts education (Government of Québec, 2004).

The QEP document currently being discussed offers an option to add four artistic disciplines to the school curriculum: dramatic arts, visual arts, dance and music (Government of Québec, 2004). According to the QEP, there are opportunities for “dynamic dialogue” of exposure to the arts inviting “constant renewal between theory and practice, action and reflection experience and cultural enrichment” (Government of Québec, 2004, p. 67). Yet there is the danger that exposure to the arts is limited to replicating canonical works or to “visit[ing] cultural spaces, contact with artists and active participation in the artistic life within the educational institution.” Arts are used as leverage for students to become “familiar with all forms of artistic expression, learn to enjoy cultural life, and become more appreciative and critical regarding what is offered. Students are, therefore, better prepared to make informed choices, now and as adults.” (Government of Québec, 2004, p.67).

What is lacking in this policy document is the idea that CCD projects challenge fixed identities (e.g., teacher or student can become artist or learner). Challenging these constructions allows for shifts in the framing and shaping of knowledge, found outside of delineated rationalist

spaces (i.e., traditional classrooms). These spaces then become less routine-based and more exploratory. As Batsleer (2011) states, this difference between CCD projects and traditional classrooms is that CCD projects allow for the emotional relationality that breaks down the innate hierarchies found in traditional schooling (pg.430). Harris' (2013) adds support to this argument, in asserting that quality arts instruction should also include the idea that art creation can be used to voice political dissent, or as a tool for subversion, and that "art-making is fundamental to collaboration and social cohesion" (Hawkes, 2011, p. 3)

The focus in Secondary Cycle Two is for students are to become increasingly autonomous in developing their artistic competencies. As students' progress in their competencies, they have the option to follow the practices of professional artists and may, in some cases, embark on a path that could lead them to the postsecondary training offered for various careers related to multimedia. As an individual pursuit in the arts this continues a trajectory where autonomy is treated as a desirable core (Government of Québec, 2004). I am concerned that this approach leaves no room for other alternative learning spaces (e.g., community-arts based learning) and becomes devoid of being a process of artistic discovery with a community of learners.

Although this is not made explicit, the QEP document (Government of Québec, 2004) portrays arts as an individual pursuit, with the outcome being improved employment and financial status. This ideology includes that idea of how much art is worth in all aspects of consideration: monetarily, popularity, the skills or technical expertise shown, how the arts contribute to aesthetics, the manifestation of symbolism, expression, innovation of art, the expert in arts, the jobs, and the arts contribution to the economy (Hawkes, 2011, p.6). However, if art is

about either an individual pursuit or passive consumerism, then it is not about challenging the status quo. Art is instead justified as a means of economic viability. Community cultural development projects offer a means of resistance of this model, in that it is not constrained by market forces. In this way, CCD provides a useful antidote to the current system because, as Adams (2013) argues, it may indeed be impossible to extricate market forces from mainstream curriculum models (p.242).

Special pedagogical projects in arts education. Within Québec, MELS has designated special arts status for certain schools at both the Primary and Secondary level. I work at one of these arts-designated schools, École FACE. The purpose of these schools is to offer special pedagogical projects in arts education that are based on enriched arts education projects in four arts areas: drama, visual arts, dance or music (Government of Québec, 2019d). A school is to offer either a monodisciplinary program of one arts program or the interdisciplinary project that focuses on more than one art subject. There are two stipulations from MELS regarding who may teach a specialized arts program: a qualified teacher, an outside specialist or organization, but the school board or private school must be the authority in charge when it comes to those specialists who do not hold teaching qualifications (Government of Québec, 2019d). There is no specific category of artist-teacher and without this category, any teacher can step into an arts subject and teach.

All of the arts subjects offered have been identified and listed in the previously discussed Québec Education Program (Government of Québec, 2004), yet the learning of the arts is still focused in the more traditional sense of individualized competencies and evaluation. The QEP speaks of the arts as forging connections between the other subjects which assists in transfer of

learning and the consolidation of knowledge. As a theatre teacher at the school, I have noted that there is little transferability of knowledge between the subjects as all subjects are taught separately and are completely decontextualized from other subjects, including the arts. This document prescribes a curriculum and its expectation – that of individual identities to conform to competency-based outcomes and not about the emancipation from the stronghold of individualized learning pathways. One of the major hurdles to implementation of this policy is being able to coordinate curriculum demands of each subject area as well as the scheduling in the school. Ideally, this idea of interdisciplinary programs works better if teachers and students can share the same time and space together. It is by doing so that both teachers and students come to understand what these common elements may be and in the context of what is being learnt.

For the QEP, the arts are taught as their own discipline, one that separates the arts into its previously mentioned categories: art, drama, dance, music. This aspect of the curriculum justifies the arts for its creativity, for the freedom to explore, to express and to use the arts to “demand different forms of intelligence [...] and in opening a door to sensitivity, subjectivity and creativity” (Government of Québec, 2004, p. 67). Of course, teaching the arts in their own right as (e.g., learning an instrument, rehearsing a play, etc.) is crucial to learning a specific arts discipline. Yet the arts, as subjects, remain individualized projects that are embedded in “a curriculum that represent the structures that are designed to ensure the learners reach those learning outcomes – whether textbooks, lists of learning objectives or lessons plans” (Sawyer, 2015, p.24). In other words, the pedagogy is still about individual competencies that must be measurable and comparable (Government of Québec, 2016, p.6). Success for a student in the arts

is about excellence, that of moving within hierarchies of artistic competence in order to secure employment within the field.

If there is an economic imperative for doing the arts, it is bound to “academic performance and diplomas, certificates and attestations of studies are indicators of students success” (Government of Québec, 2016, p.6). In short, in having arts education, this will contribute to a productive and integrated citizen, a citizen who is separated from a community. Yet with this educational configuration, doing the arts will “help narrow the gap between academic learning and the working world because in today’s globalised world, industrial economies, are rapidly transforming and demand a creative, innovative and flexible workforce” (Government of Québec, 2006, p. 67; Sawyer, 2015, p.3). Moreover, with the QEP, the arts are directly linked to culture because “culture is one of the issues involved in today’s trend toward globalization” (Government of Québec, 2006, p. 67). Another point in favor of having the arts in the school curriculum is to enhance culture, which is very much a contested idea as has been argued earlier in the thesis, personal development and citizenship. Community-based development projects run counter to this ideology. Within CCD, art is presented as an end unto itself, and thus dissolves the traditional hierarchies found in arts education. This dissolution offers a new alternative based on the strength of interpersonal relationships and contributions to the community (Theile & Marsden, 2003, p.85).

The Culture in the Schools Program

As a means of promoting the arts, the Quebec government has a program that is known as the Culture in the Schools program. This initiative is an arts program that invites artists to come to a school and work with students and teachers in order to share the area of arts expertise

(Government of Québec, 2019c). It is important to mention that this program is not a core curriculum component but is an add-on to the regular classroom. The rationale behind the program is to use the arts as a means of bringing a cultural dimension to education. The QEP places a high value on culture as it is perceived that this will enhance the student's educational experience for the purpose in "the development of students' creativity, their cultural identity, and their inter-cultural understanding as well as to democratize access to culture" (Côté & Simard, 2006, p.328). Within the scope of this program, schools via an individual teacher can select from a repertoire of 2000 artists listed and make a formal request for an artist to come into the school and do arts and cultural projects with students. One of the criterion as to which arts projects will be selected depends on how culture via the arts is "integrated into classroom and school activities in accordance with the Quebec Education Program" (Government of Québec, 2019b, para. 5).

Of the four programs that the Culture in School Program offers, three are specifically arts-focused. One is the opportunity to offer cultural workshops at school, which makes artist workshops accessible to schools for shorter periods of time (i.e., 1-3 sessions). Another option is for the school to host an artist. This is designed to be a longer-term project, allowing both the artist and the students to spend time on artistic exploration. The other opportunity is partnerships with two designation organizations, *Culture pour tous* and *Visions Diversité*. These organizations are formed by people who come from various ethnic backgrounds and help students participate in artistic and cultural workshops that promote exploration and creativity (Government of Québec, 2019b, para. 2).

For an artist or writer to come to school for the arts experience, the visit must "offer students a range of cultural experiences that has a positive impact on their learning and allow

them to develop open-mindedness, curiosity, critical judgment and aesthetic appreciation” (Government of Québec, 2019b, para.5). Within this context, the arts have a function to teach student the production, distribution, development and innovation processes’ and with a plethora of access to the various artistic disciplines that students will enhance their sense of aesthetic awareness, self - reflection, and become more competent (Government of Québec, 2019a, para. 5). Further underscoring a hierarchical approach, the documents also mandate that teachers to oversee the projects, and that all projects must adhere to the QEP guidelines. These workshops are very clearly not the collaborative partnerships that would be found within CCD projects.

Although there is an abundance of artists who are listed and are categorized under specific domains of arts expertise, such as writers, visual, dramatic, dance and music, until recently access to this information on the webpage was very difficult to navigate but has been updated from being totally cumbersome and not user-friendly to a new format that has improved the accessibility of artists. Where the old site was sparse in its content, the new site has incorporated photos of the artist and has a more comprehensive listing of the work that these artists do. Prior to this recent update, there was little information about the artist and their work in schools. The art’s directory still reinforces the idea that the arts are to be done separately, which only re-emphasizes categorization. This is because artists have been listed under their specific artistic practice. Another new addition is that Culture in Schools webpage has expanded the art categories from the basic four artistic streams - plus a writer, to include more artistic disciplines - cinema and video, media and multimedia, craft and design. For the category of writer, the following genres are required: comic books, storytelling, youth literature, non-fiction, poetry, theatre, stories, essays and novels.

To be on the list of artists, the artist must make a formal application to MELS with the prerequisite criteria for eligibility and the application for artists ensures that each artist is professional and working. A government panel which is made up of cultural and educational experts as designated by the MELS decides which artist will be selected to be listed in the repertoire. This year there is a category that acknowledges CCD practice, but not by name. It is framed in the following way:

New artistic practices bring together organizations working in interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary or carrying a practice that does not correspond to any of the traditional disciplines. They are generally characterized by their desire to go beyond the experiences and innovations that currently define these disciplines, as well as their ability to upset established ideas about what art is and to open up new ground for the arts, artists and their relationships with audiences, communities and the general public. New artistic practices explore aspects other than those that traditionally govern the production of works of art (form, technique, aesthetics), and include politically engaged art, collaborations between science and art” (Government of Québec, 2019g, para.1).

Another new category from the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec that appears as though it could allow for CCD projects is the idea of multidisciplinary arts, which can include: “forms of expression that exploit several disciplinary languages, knowledge and techniques in the same work, and whose practice, the creative process and the artistic discourse are autonomous and disciplinary fields from which they draw” (Government of Québec, 2019f, para.1).

To help teachers who may not be familiar with incorporating the arts or culture into their curriculum there is a booklet to guide teachers in doing arts-based cultural activities. For this thesis, I have focused on an example included in this booklet, a dance unit entitled “The Sky’s the Limit” (Government of Québec, 2018, p. 5). Despite the content given and the ideas that are

written there, what struck me was that the pedagogy was still grounded in facts and procedures, which means that the educational space has already been filled with external ideas, which closes the student's head space, and restricts them from engaging in this learning experience as a real exploration via art. This unit of work makes collaboration with community invisible and limits the student's ability to drive their own learning by asking questions.

Racial issues. It is the Quebec Education Department that vets which artists are registered on the directory that is to be used by schools. While most of the artists in the directory are white Québécois, with scant representation from other ethnicities, the directory has now added an aboriginal artist category and with one indigenous artist (Government of Québec, 2019e). Other than the one artist who is listed in this category, it currently appears as though there are very few artists in the directory who come from other cultural backgrounds. The directory lacks diversity related to ethnicity, culture, race, or indigeneity (Varma, 2017, p.8).

In response to documents such as the documentation surrounding the Artist in Schools and the Culture in Schools programs, I want to see a deliberate movement in policy toward including indigenous perspectives. Ideally, this would take the shape of an indigenous faculty with indigenous artists who can be called upon to talk about their perspectives to non-indigenous students. I would also argue for an indigenous consultative service on-hand that teachers can access, otherwise the consequence of aboriginal peoples' knowledge and understandings will be marginalized, even with the best of intentions.

But acknowledging the need for representation is only a small step. One particular lack within these policy documents was the glaring lack of opportunities for an indigenous authority to speak for their own culture, or for indigenous people to play a central role in the dissemination

of their culture. Having one representative from one of the First Nations of Quebec is not a broad representation of all indigenous peoples.

Despite the change in repertoire in making some headway into becoming more diversified in the cultural backgrounds of the artists listed, it makes no sense that, as of 2016, one in eight or thirteen percent of people residing in Quebec are immigrants, and when this percentage figure is higher in Montreal, of 23.4 percent (Varma, 2017, p.7). MELS must seriously think about the way the policy document permits the dissemination of diverse cultures via the arts or even the “inexhaustibility of culture” when there is an absence of those artists who come from different cultural groups and who may not be represented in the directory.

This issue is reflected also in the way funding is given by the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Quebec (CALQ), to the arts. As Varma states, there is a glaring inequity in funding, with francophone companies taking the lion’s share of funding and leaving literally crumbs to those who are perceived by the funders not to be from a francophone background. Varma (2017) quite rightly suggests that “hierarchy leads to cultural hegemony, in which the processes of art production and excellence are mediated by race and culture” (p. 9). The current Quebec policy documents on arts and culture does not gear itself to the idea of interrelationships and to the process of making of culture collaboratively via an arts-based project. There is an element of objectification rather than subjectivity which is based on hierarchical relationships that are more or less based on explicit agreements on what constitutes an appropriate basis for status and authority in the world of knowledge. This can again be seen in the “Integrating the Cultural Dimension into School” document, which forms the basis of the Culture in Schools program.

The Integrating Cultural and Art Dimensions into School Document

This document is the blueprint for teachers to use regarding the dissemination of culture via the arts. According to the document, culture is defined as being the “sum of artistic, religious and intellectual customs and works that define a group or a society” (Government of Québec, 2003, pg.6). Teachers must facilitate a classroom where students can broaden their world-view by exposing them to culture via the arts. The pedagogical value, according to MELS, is to enhance citizenship and to contribute to the student’s personal development by “enriching their ways at looking at themselves and others and their environment” (Government of Québec, 2003, p. 9). Some of the suggestions that this policy document puts forth for cultural exploration via the arts are to:

- [explore] various aspects of the cultures of different peoples, communities, etc. (e.g. devote one month of the year to exploring a country’s music, recreational activities, food, social organization, stories and legends, etc.),
- [examine] the differences between the cultural manifestations of different peoples (customs, houses, costumes, history, etc.)
- create a press review of cultural material on various subjects for limited or broad distribution’
- make a radio or television program on some aspect of culture (anthropological, historical, sociological, literary, linguistic, artistic, geographic, scientific, technological, media-related, etc.) for limited or broad distribution (intercom, school radio station, community radio or television station, etc.)

- visit a business that sells products from other cultures (Government of Québec, 2003, pg. 23).

As can be seen by the above-mentioned recommendations, this policy gives examples of what can be done in a classroom, but these ideas are limited to foods, festivals, or the study of cultures via various texts. One criticism of this document is that this approach of food-and-festivals creates a potential for fragmentation, superficiality, or misappropriation. My concern is that it is not clear how culture can be taught if it is taken out of its local context (e.g., community, history, stories). This kind of “celebration” or partial door-opening can reinforce paternal feelings and cultivate false empathy toward “the other” (Andreotti, 2011a, p. 80). Teaching culture in this way only reinforces the Western Eurocentric ways of thinking and transmitting information (Mabingo, 2015, p.131).

Another serious critique regarding the Culture in Schools program, is that there is a “blurred representation of culture when considering the integration of the cultural dimension” (Côté & Simard, 2008, p.345) because this points to the lack of a critical discourse around issues of misrepresentation, ignorance and ethnocentrism (Andreotti, 2016, p.12). At this point, any engagement in culture should be reflected upon by “teachers and artists interested in this integration with and for their students and to have them ponder the implications of the official discourse: are they fostering the development of students’ cultural awareness or promoting cultural reproduction” (Côté & Simard, 2008, p. 329).

Significantly this document does not deal with the issue of the teachers’ own cultural background or biases or how they are able to teach other cultural experiences via the arts. Therefore “teachers and artists concerned with the integration of the cultural dimension are to

ponder its signification and to define culture by themselves, as the official discourse does not provide them with an articulate meaning” (Côté, & Simard, 2008, p. 345).

If the policy document promotes that “education is the primary way to transmit culture and foster its growth” and to permit the teacher to ‘use their own cultural resources” (Government of Québec, 2003, p.3), I ask the question of how culture is being introduced into an educational setting, when there could be a high risk of transmitting culture from the standpoint that is non-contextualized and disconnected from community? So how are teachers, who have no lived experience of the other culture expected to teach culture, when they do not have any real understanding of it? If the learning of culture is outside the lived realm of the teacher, student or artist, it could be strongly argued that this examination of culture is more about legitimizing the acquisition of the Other, rather than providing any true cultural education. I would argue that this legitimizes culture-picking for the sake of being cultured and reinforces the proliferation of the colonizer mentality (Smith, 2012, p. 47). Is exploring various aspects of cultures via food, music, stories legends or costumes, truly a viable and authentic understanding of the other cultures? (Government of Québec, 2003, p.23).

As an example of how misguided cultural policy can lead to misguided cultural pedagogy, Mabingo (2015), critiques how American universities offer to ‘teach’ Ugandan dance in a formal Western educational setting. What is deeply problematic about this credentialing of a cultural ‘artifact’ such as dance is that it is taken out of its local context and is then taught from a western pedagogic ethnocentrism (Mabingo, 2015, p.131). Mabingo (2015) explains that when Ugandan dance is taught from a Western epistemological standpoint, the class turns to mirrors to observe themselves as individual dancers whereas when dance is done in its own backyard, there

is communal random mirroring amongst the participants and a greater emphasis on “interpersonal physical interaction and a synergetic interface between learners to cultivate participatory unanimity” (Mabingo, 2015, p. 136). Foregrounded in this way of learning is the centrality of relational reciprocity as individuals open themselves to a process of collective engagement. Another major problem with entering into a culture in this way, is that it is done in a way that it continues the Western tradition of cultural archiving, by storehousing the “histories, cultural objects, ideas, texts/images, which are then classified, preserved, arranged and represented back to the West” (Smith, 2012, p. 46). This process will then have the serious effect of reformulating culture when strangers who are far outside of the original locus believe that they have the right to take, and this has serious consequences for the original community.

Ultimately, my major concern with this document can be summarized in the following question: can teachers having artists in schools and who are interested in this integration of culture that comes from outside their cultural norms truly foster the development of students’ cultural awareness or is this just promoting Eurocentric cultural reproduction? I would argue that the prescribed Québec curriculum is based on the acquisition of knowledge and most of it is taught from a context-free perspective (Advisory Board on English Education, 2017, pg.8). This can easily lead to a situation where stereotypes are reinforced about visible minorities from other cultures or in the danger of eliciting occidental nostalgia of the Other (Varma, 2017, p.8).

Another major issue with this initiative is that it is still tethered to the QEP standards. I argue that programs such as Culture in School would be more effective and less prone to the flaws previously discussed if they embraced a CCD model. CCD arts-based projects support the devolution of state-based control of education, and look toward opening pathways for multi-

directional knowledge transfer and action research. An additional benefit of not being held to the QEP is that the projects would also then not be held to standardized evaluation methods. Within CCD, the focus of evaluation stems from personal reflection/action cycle and having works displayed for the appraisal of an outside audience. Therefore, art becomes the encounter simply because art that is placed in a public domain elicits more from being in the social sphere and where the “aesthetics of the piece is determined by the coherence and value of the reflection of human relations that the artwork makes” (Adams, 2013, p. 244).

English School Boards of Quebec Arts-Smart Pilot Research Project Final Report (2010 - 2013)

From 2010-2013, ten Québec English School Boards (i.e., seventeen primary schools and nine high-schools from K-12) participated in an ArtSmarts pilot project. The primary focus for these arts-based programs was for teachers to work with artists in the classroom to work with disengaged students. In total there were 26 projects that were done during the course of the projects.

The ArtsSmarts project was conceived as a behavioral intervention. The major goal of the project was that introducing an artist into the classroom would cause a reduction in behavioral issues and increase student engagement. Another aspect was to help increase the capacity for teachers to work with artists, a teaching pedagogy that was based on a collaborative model of learning (ArtsSmarts, 2012, p. 5) and where “creative enquiry was to be self-generated by teachers and artists working together with students to meet their learning needs and interests, rather than a packaged curriculum lesson” (ArtsSmarts, 2012, p. 2). It was hoped that this would address the issues around heterogeneous classrooms, students with learning disabilities, and therefore identify effective teaching methods and learning approaches that would meet the

different needs of all students. The project was bound to meet QEP requirements and aligned itself to meet the “competency requirements for 21st century learning” (ArtsSmarts, 2012, p. 4).

Despite being aligned with the QEP, this project has a similar approach to CCD, and that the final report acknowledges the difficulty of assessing art-based projects because of the variabilities in creativity and in recognizing that art making is a result of a “complex combination of skills, techniques and knowledge” (p.6). In addition to accepting these complexities, ArtsSmarts also dissipated the format learning space and its associated hierarchies. The project researchers found that doing so increased student engagement, and yielded comments about “working as a community and throwing our ideas together to change negatives into positives” or in “gaining experience by working with people and discussing ideas” (ArtsSmarts, 2012, p.15). Individual performance being measured via testing was not a primary factor for success in learning and instead students were encouraged to explore ideas with others.

Notwithstanding the bureaucratic requirements of measuring the efficacy of the arts, it was observed that what made this project successful was a greater sense of collective autonomy in decision-making. “It is less about the teachers explaining to you what it is all about and telling you to do it. Everybody is treated the same way. We are all equal” (ArtsSmarts, 2012, p. 17). As part of the evaluation of the effectiveness of the project, many teachers identified a shift in their views of traditional pedagogy, to one where learning was “more fluid and flexible and that learning can take place outside of the classroom” (ArtsSmarts, 2012, p. 24). The classes incorporated horizontal relationships between art teacher, artists and students which would have facilitated both an equity and openness of the transmission of ideas, values and aspirations – an arts project that concerned itself in enabling different points of view to be communicated -the

expression and transmission of authentic (or hybridised) expressions - the ability to acknowledge complexity, intersectionality, uncertainty (Andreotti, 2012, p. 25).

I believe that this pilot project demonstrated that the positivity of the arts when it is central to community and learning. As stated by the researchers that 'innovative arts-based approaches to student engagement and achievement' has proven to be successful (ArtsSmarts, 2012, p. 31). The arts done in this way takes us out of our straight jacket, and to heal from imposed regimes of truth as can be seen by the comment that:

students who previously had serious behavior difficulties became leaders in teaching other students how to sew the deerskin, and other hands-on activities. It empowered one boy, who previously did not have a good reputation with the other students, to show them things he could do that others could not. He had value in the group. For this boy, it was the first time in nine years that he had a positive experience in the school (ArtsSmarts, 2012 p. 14).

Summary

In summation, one of the overall criticisms I have of the previously-discussed policy documents and their resulting projects is that they are limited by their application requirements. The fact that school budget money is not automatically allotted for this application process, added to the requirement that the teacher must justify why they require an artist at their school, puts this program out of reach for many schools. Even when schools can afford to go through this process, there is also the issue of having to make the art project work within the context of a classroom schedule. Speaking as an artist, this imposition can really break the continuity of a project. Ultimately, the Culture in Schools program does help teachers access artists from various

disciplines, but it is still a singular practice. The school structure has simply not moved to accommodate a more open-ended, CCD-style approach, especially the time and space that such an approach would need. The ArtsSmarts program is a start, but it remains to be seen if such a project would have been sustainable within that system in the long-term.

Chapter Three: Case Studies

This chapter will present five examples of CCD projects for analysis. The first three projects (i.e., The Mosaic Project (Ecole FACE Montreal 2015-2018), the Whale Project (Seaford 7-12 Secondary School 2003), and the Tree Project (Ecole FACE 2016), will be discussed from my role as facilitator. The other two projects (i.e., Community and Culture project, Mexican Refugee/Worker Project) are examples of other projects in which I was not involved, and will be analyzed according to the general principles of CCD projects for their application within the Québec education system.

The Four Seasons Mosaic Community-Arts Project

Community arts-based arts projects, such the Four Seasons Mosaic Art Project, demonstrate how art projects bring communities together. They are about possibilities, emergent

ideas, collaboration. They are about having a sense of place and belonging in community. The theme of the Four Seasons was selected as it allowed the students to think about the world around them and the world in which they wanted to not only live in but to celebrate and to give thanks. Therefore, on the theme of the Four Seasons, the students were asked to reflect on the seasons of life and to design a mosaic panel based on this.

The Four Seasons CCD arts project offered the school community a major opportunity to highlight the school's many talents to the general public by installing public art in a well-known and iconic Montreal park in Plateau Mt Royal's Saint-Louis Square / Carré St Louis. Not only was it the largest art project that the school had done in twenty-five years, but it was the first visual arts project that brought together the French and English sectors of the school as well as partnering with the municipality of Ville Plateau Mt Royal. This project was not a curriculum project but was born from a vision of having public art at the base of a beautiful fountain in a beautiful park. This project was a labor of love with a desire to have a unique art project experience with the possibility of building a project from the grassroots and in collaboration with many key stakeholders.

Before the project could commence, I had to consult with the school's artist in residence and all three senior art teachers, to see if they would like to work on the project. The art teachers agreed that four Secondary Five art classes could participate which entailed in total hundred and twenty students. That meant that each student would prepare their own design. The artist in residence would oversee the making of the ceramics based on the winning designs. Having the artist's support was key because he is a master ceramist and he would be able to offer his expertise in assisting the students to transpose A3 designs into 3x4 feet mosaic panels. I was

deeply appreciative of the generous support of the artist in residence and his guidance to both teachers and students in the process of this project.

Once the teachers and the artist in residence agreed to the project and an outline as to how it would be executed, I was involved in a one-year long negotiation process with the local arrondissement to secure the fountain for this public art event. The site was important to have, as I believe that public spaces should be used to feature art done by the public and, in this case, by young people. The fountain's location was prestigious because it was a historical fountain in a well-maintained Victorian park. After discussion with the City, in order to prove that we could meet the requirements of installation and to keep the panels safe from doing harm to the fountain, the City allowed us to place mosaic panels at the base of the fountain. It was agreed that the artwork would remain at the park as a temporary public art installment from mid-May, for the duration of summer and until the 1st of November 2018.

With the consent of the teachers and the Arrondissement (City), I prepared a proposal and a budget which I presented to the principal of the school. I worked with the artist in residence on the budget for the project, as he would be doing extra work over and above the schedule agreement that he had with the school. I requested permission from the principal of the school to continue with the project, which our principal agreed to, but also to help secure funding to pay for the extra time invested by the artist in residence and for the materials. The principal did find some funding through private partners of the school, but it was not enough. Despite my requests for the school boards to pitch in, neither school board offered anything towards this project, and it was left to me to find further funding.

Financing a project like this was not easy, and this despite me working in an arts-designated school. For instance, the project was not eligible to be funded by the previously-discussed Arts in Schools program because of the following reasons: it was multi-disciplinary; I was not the art teacher making the request; the artist-in-residence had to be selected from the list provided by the ministry, and could not be the one we already had at the school. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, my analysis of the Arts in Schools program is that it is idealistic but inflexible if their rules for eligibility are not followed. While it is possible that it could now have been included under the new label of “multi-disciplinary” projects discussed in the previous chapter, this project was executed in 2016 and thus would have been before that category was added.

Since the project did not qualify for funding under the Arts in Schools program, other sources of funding had to be secured. I ultimately had to provide some of the funding myself, to pay the artist-in-residence for the time he spent on this project, until donors were found. Eventually, Arrondissement le Plateau-Mont-Royal (City), Division de la culture et des bibliothèques, Manon Massé - Députée De Sainte-Marie–Saint-Jacques, Multi-Cultural Fund (Govt Québec), and Foundation FACE all contributed money. However, the fact that securing funds was such an obstacle adds support to the argument that the arts in education are marginalized.

Project timeline. Despite the challenges regarding funding, work continued and from October to December 2017, and designs were produced by the students. At the same time, I had organized an invitation for the Mayor to come to be a judge for the selection of the four winning panel designs, which he had accepted to do. In January 2018, the three art teachers, selected the

best fifteen designs from their classes, totaling sixty designs from the original one-hundred and twenty. With the finalists, I organized an official arts opening exhibit, where the best four designs were selected by three judges: the mayor of Plateau Mt Royal, the principal of École FACE, and the school's artist-in-residence. With their iPads, the judges snapped pictures of their favorite designs and then at a prescribed time, retired to the Principal's office to make the final decisions. The criteria for winning was based on the appeal of the design to the judges and in consultation with the artist in residence to ensure that it was achievable to make within the timeline that we had to make the panels. Once the four finalists were selected by the judges, the making of the mosaic panels started. By mid-May the panels were ready to be installed and a special opening for this was organized. Three music teachers from the strings department organized 40 students, in two formations (i.e., junior and senior orchestras) to perform excerpts of Vivaldi's Four Seasons. Another teacher wanted to participate and offered his Grade 5 class to read out poetry in French at the opening. The selection was Paul Valéry's *Liberté*.

Summary

This community arts-based project is an example of how CCD can be adapted into a school setting. What is important to note is the importance of developing horizontal partnerships, from within the school community as well as with key partners outside of the immediate school. Coupled with this, there needs to be a fine balance between coordination and spontaneity from within the project via the needs of the people who are in it. There is a necessity for a high degree of organization to both coordinate and liaise between the various key stakeholders, in order to move the project forward, yet to keep the authenticity of it by being open to those essential elements of spontaneity for a project like this to manifest itself. One particular factor of this project that I would like to see replicated in other educational

environments is its demonstration of how public spaces can be democratized and used to challenge bureaucracy through public art done by local people, in this case students.

The Whale Project

This project involved the making of 8 x 6' papier-mâché whales, with twelve-year old students who organized to have their whales exhibited at the local whale centre. For the whale project, the students wanted to talk about the impact of oil exploration on the blue whale population that came to feed on krill, so that the art-work linked to an issue, but it was through artwork that the issues could be highlighted to a broader audience. This work was linked both to English and Social Studies classes. I did not go to the Arts in Schools list to find an artist, as I was able to coordinate with another teacher to work on the project and work collaboratively with his students too. In the process, we not only discovered the important issues concerning blue whales, but we learnt how to make very large papier-mâché objects. As with the Mosaic project, and with most of my arts-based projects, funding was difficult to secure.

This project is another example of how CCD makes explicit that some groups in society have greater access to resources, education and political processes than do others. Although this project arguably had a valued scientific element (i.e., marine biology), it was ultimately critical of the oil industry, which may have decreased its perceived value in the eyes of potential donors. However, this incidence only underscores the importance of these projects to education. As Freire states, “knowledge emerges only through invention and reinvention, through the restless, impatient, continuing hopeful inquiry” (Freire, 1973, p.58). At its core, CCD offers a learning environment that is far more holistic which nurtures collaborative artistic, cultural, social and personal developmental outcomes.

The Tree Project

Although it was designed to work within the constraints of an English class, the tree project helped me to work outside of the constraints of traditional pedagogy and to clear the traditional space and to make it empty, for it to be recalibrated for new possibilities. I had not worked on the construction of trees before, but part of my teaching practice is to step outside my comfort zones because I like taking risks in my teaching, in order to keep it fresh and authentic. Part of that process is to place myself in a more vulnerable position.

I elicited the support of the school's artist in residence in helping us make seven to eight feet trees using papier-mâché, wood and chicken wire. The rationale behind doing the tree/declaration project this way was based on the idea that literacy had a broader concept than just reading and writing of the written text. With twenty-five secondary 3 students/participants, working in teams of four they went through an extensive process in devising their own declaration of their responsibility to future generations. These declarations were what the students felt were important to them and what they would safeguard for future generations. It was made clear to the students that their declaration was a living document and that they could review it at any time and to make changes, as required, during the course of the project.

I wanted to show the potential of using arts-based practice in a mainstream educational context and in a traditional non-art subject such as English because art can be used to demonstrate a number of principles. Through this project, we can accept that literacy is multimodal, and open to many different viewpoints and methods of communication. To do this, one must be able to be free of the constraints of the classroom and its associated standardized assessment process and instead create a learning space that engages in community creation via action/reflection cycles. The design of this project is emergent, and thus students were free to

explore, negotiate, challenge, all in the process of collaborative discovery. It takes the form of a collective dynamic, which prioritizes community collaboration and autonomous engagement over formal evaluation. There is more time and space to take in ideas or to think about concepts as we are not beholden to deadlines in the usual curriculum sense.

In this process, the role of “teacher” must be free to be redefined to become more of a facilitator, listener, guide.

Finally, one feature of this project is the audience. Audiences who experience the final product of the trees cannot remain passive. They, too, are engaged in the process of active meaning making. They ask questions, reflect on known or unknown concepts, ideas, symbols, and anything else that emerges within the art space. An example of this comes directly from a group of students in a reflection that

Our team really enjoyed doing this project. We loved bringing our ideas to life by building, painting and decorating our tree to our desire. However, our favorite part was to be able to talk about the declarations we believed were important and why. Our discussions were fluid and passionate and everyone agreed. We are grateful to be a part of such a lovely project (personal communication, 2016).

My particular hope as the facilitator of this project was that those who came to see the trees would engage in a discussion of what they saw or understood or did not understand. In this process I reflected on Andreotti’s (2015) idea if we can be rid of “the delusion of individualized reasoning” and that we instead are able to enable access to “a collective unbounded creative potential that provide clarity and answers if approached respectfully” (p.6). Texts, such as the trees in this project, have the function of being liberatory or otherwise, but we the reader can

question to what extent certain knowledges are socially constructed and persist in privileging certain groups over other groups of people. How can educators address the standardization of knowledge, one that inevitably contains hidden messages of privileging certain knowledge as being more important than others? There is an imperative to reflect on our teaching practices in order to embrace diverse realities, be it cultures, contexts or standpoints and the border-crossings that ensue from these reflections. The tree project became part of an official opening of the Forêt Frédéric Back – at École FACE and was also invited to be part of the 20th anniversary celebrations of the Frederick Back Tree Pavillion at the Botanical Gardens in Montreal in 2016.

Other Projects Using CCD Principles

Can an educational system be flexible enough to change the traditional roles of teachers and learners as participants in education, and where the “complexity and democratization of knowledge production is supported and nurtured?” (Harris, 2013, p.422). Naturally, this idea is contrary to the current top-down approach because the position of teacher as expert would need to be redefined as teacher- learner (Beckett, 2018, p. 388). In addition to the examples in which I was directly involved, there are many other examples in CCD arts-based projects where teachers, students and artists are part of a collaborative learning community. The following CCD projects will show examples of CCD communities that have arts at the centre of the learning process.

The Community and Culture as Foundations for Resilience Project

Completed in 2006, this project was a participatory action research project that had an arts-based focus because participants were able to make videos for the purpose of researching the local health and wellness issues for their communities. In this project, student- participants from three First Nation education programs collaborate with their teachers, health professionals and

researchers and researched what health issues needed to be addressed in their communities. Central to this project was the strengthening of culture and fostering relationships between aboriginal artists and elders. The students had full agency to plan, research and develop a video regarding the health and wellbeing rooted from their cultural perspective and then present what they had learnt from their community back to their community.

In three years, this research project elicited twenty-eight student videos, covering a wide range of health and wellness related issues that were specific to the communities and in which the participants themselves had consulted with. This project was innovative because the usual approach in research methodology is for outside organizations to come into communities and to research the needs of community, whereas in this project, it was the participants who sought out information from their own communities. The projects objective was to elicit ‘another vision for education, health and research while recognizing that the persistence of social inequality and systemic oppression undermines students’ full learning potential’ (Riecken, Scott, & Tanaka, 2006, p.13).

The Mexican Refugee/Worker Project

This 2013 project represents an exemplary case of the use of CCD for education. It involved 600 multi-aged and predominately Mexican students from the third to eighth grade and who worked collaboratively with their teachers, artists, family and community. This project was an example of a community making cultural statements about their lived experiences as immigrants. There were a number of different arts-based outcomes, including multiple interviews, exhibitions and art installations. The community in its entirety embraced the arts as a tool to express what it means to leave a country of origin, the issues around immigration, as well

as living in two different cultures. Issues raised were the uneven power dynamics of race, social status, distribution of wealth, and other historical inequities which usually ignored in mainstream schools. In the context of a CCD, this project gave leverage for the teachers and artists to discuss with the students and their families the realities of immigration, racism and cultural suppression and invisibility (Woywod & Deal, 2016, p. 46).

The arts-based process was transformative for all the students as they had greater agency in how they were able to learn, explore content, and disseminate information. As well, the project addressed important cultural milestones celebrated via a public arts-based exhibition and helped the students to think about issues that their own families had as immigrants and possible future actions. The CCD project could be done because the school was a safe environment for sharing sensitive stories of migration. A project such as this was the antithesis of the usual heroes-and-holidays approach in schools, one that depoliticizes multicultural America, back to food and festivals.

Conclusion

The projects discussed in this chapter demonstrate what the antidote should be to the current education system, one that mired in its methodologies, curricula, success and status. Instead these very small examples of arts-based community learning, demonstrate how it is necessary to be open to new encounters, ideas and moments. However, the question remains: can education “learn from below and to work without guarantees (through mutuality and reciprocity and the crises and cross-fertilizations that these entail) towards genuinely co-determined outcomes” (Andreotti, 2011b, p.308) or are we destined to stay on the course that is made up of “brutally individualistic fantasies of the neoliberal imaginary?” (Adams, 2013, p.249).

Chapter Four: Future Directions

As I have delved further into my research on the arts in the policy documents and to see whether there is a place for CCD as a valid educational pedagogy, I have arrived at several recommendations for future research, policy, and CCD projects within the scope of formal education.

Participatory Democracy

The Quebec Education system recognizes the heterogeneity of the school population so that the role of education is to ensure that “students to perceive their membership in a community based on shared values, to enrich their culture and to play an active role in democratic society” to

produce “active citizens” for a functional democracy (Government of Québec, 2016, p. 64). If MELS wants to promote shared values around that which is associated with democracy, then how is democracy constructed? This is because throughout the policy document, democracy is promoted frequently but it has not been made explicit as to what kind of democracy the document refers to. This is a particular flaw of the QEP, and it is possible that this lack of clarity is one of the reasons why some of its policies seem to run counter to this purpose.

In light of the policy documents and case studies examined, I propose that *participatory democracy* underlines the workings of CCD projects, whereas the hierarchical democracy defined by the QEP is antithetical to participatory democracy. Although it is outside the scope of this paper to discuss this concept in detail, participatory democracy is defined as individuals in community building consensus, building social intelligence, solving problems and sharing experiences (Stitzlein, 2014, p. 62). As can be seen by the projects profiled above, CCD projects already embrace this democratic model.

Woywod and Deal (2016), artists in the Mexican Refugee/Worker Project, made pertinent comments on CCD’s process in its use of the underlying principle of participatory democracy:

As part of a team of educators equipping students for life in our democracy [...] we plan with the intention of preparing children to be community members who value the arts because they understand their potential to transform our thinking, and by extension, how we interact with the world [...] that well crafted collaborations with socially minded artists can not only transform a K–12 program, but also help make communities strong

[...] increase relevance of planned curriculum, and to create a sense of access and agency for students, parents, and teachers (Woywod & Deal, 2016, p.1).

Dewey (as cited in Stitzlein, 2014) believed that democracy needed to be “constantly discovered, and rediscovered, remade and reorganized” (p. 62). He also argued that there is nothing democratic in an institution that adheres to classroom practices that are totalitarian (p.62). But when the internal and inevitable operations of an institution such as a school normalizes itself without its own ability to look outside of itself or to name or to critique itself (Ferguson-Patrick, 2012, p.3), does this not ensure that the system as it currently exists is unable to examine its own exclusionary practice – that of creating core or periphery, and in this process, shape habits and therefore identity? I argue that extending beyond its own biases in order to critically examine its own systemic issue should be a focus of future iterations of the QEP and all other Québec educational policy documents. The cost for leaving these flaws unexamined is too high, and we risk portioning the system off, at the expense of the disadvantaged Other. It is as De Sousa Santos (2007) warns, in discussing the concept of *abyssal thinking*. Without critical examination, we accept

the impossibility of the co-presence of the two sides of the line and that one side of the line only prevails by exhausting the field of relevant reality. Beyond it, there is only nonexistence, invisibility, non-dialectical absence (De Sousa Santos, 2007, p.45-46).

The QEP and Identity

The QEP signals that education has a role in the “fostering the construction of their (students) identities by providing guidelines that allow students to perceive their membership in

a community based on shared values, particularly those associated with democracy” (Government of Québec, 2004, p. 64). Inevitably, education is a socializing force in the construction of identity and this is a stated aim of the QEP policy document that has been discussed in this thesis. I would like to think that the arts also play a role in shaping identity, but in the context of the policy document, the arts seem to have been tamed to fit into a specific educational hegemony, discourse or culture.

The current educational system, although presenting itself as a benevolent impartial force, is one that is limited in contesting its own reproduction of inequalities and this can be found both within the walls of school and outside of it. Andreotti (2012) argues that education has an overreaching hegemony, one that is an agent and has the capacity to over-socialize a community of people into the modes of being that speak directly to modernity. It is an educational hegemony that valorizes the “autonomous, individuated and self-sufficient beings,” where the external world is both knowable and controllable. Students are placed in a situation where they find themselves in a “re-arrangement of desires,” to be placed on the right educational pathway and to be taught the right competencies, which is deemed as a process of individualized development leading to individualized success (Andreotti, 2012, p. 21).

In this process of being educated, there is the possibility of reconstructing the self to fit into mainstream society, but in the process abandoning the true self. With the grand narrative that the QEP is promoting within its documents (Government of Québec, 2004), it is almost impossible for the student not to succumb in adopting this educational hegemony both as legitimate and as being primary to one’s own future survival. Hence the system has as its primary role is to construct the identity of the person to fit in order to be successful. The point

though is that it could be argued that we have all been coerced into this educational hegemony, a sphere that has been defined for us, a construct of a hierarchical top-down approach, because the experts (i.e., government experts, teachers, etc.) claim to know the best pathway forward. The independent yet collective forward in the context of education as a unifying truth, will still create a sense of difference for those who do not fit in and therefore legitimizes the ideas of individual success and deficit.

Andreotti's (2012) work on this topic leads into the question: how does this picture fit into alternative narrative of seeing ourselves differently, one of co-dependence in relation to each other, one that is complex and ambiguous and in a world that is textured and made up of "transnational spaces, multimodal literacies, identity construction, time-space trajectories, multi-sited, multimethod, participatory and long-term" (Hornberger, 2007, p.9). Yet identity construction that is central to education objectives becomes inescapable because education is mandatory and has been designed for students to enter into and to fit into the formal educational setting.

For MELS and its education policy documents, there is the imperative to construct individual identity in the context of an economic framework, for having career pathway and to prepare the student for a labor market (Government of Québec, 2016, p.16). Any other knowledge as discovered via the informal learning process is not validated in the same way as the formal learning structure such as school, simply because it is not associated in preparing to enter the so-called real world; that is, the world of work. This would then mean that students must defer to school as the dominant identity making agent and that anything outside of this parameter does not count. Deference to "economic and social development" (Government of

Québec, 2016 p.1), is rewarded with the promise of economic wholeness, so that signs of integration into the institution are what count the most (i.e., grades, passing, failing, etc.). Education therefore will be responsive to the economic aspirations of the student by diversifying the educational pathways that meet “their development, their interest and their career path” (Government of Quebec, 2017, pg. 3). Identity is forged in individualism, and dependent on independent choices for work-study programs, vocational training or businesses.

Despite the positioning of current educational policies that include the arts, and speak of entering into the twenty-first century job market via obtaining the right skills and knowledge in education, these educational practices do not border-cross from the formal classroom spaces to the informal spaces of individual lives of students. I would stress that an education system that cannot find space for the life of a student outside school automatically creates a divide between serious learning and official knowledge acquisition, and that which is outside of the classroom. This division gives the hidden message that any space outside of these core knowledge parameters is to be de-legitimized as being irrelevant or not important.

Yet if we consider the lives of young people, they are far more complex in terms of access to knowledge and exposure to cultures than at any other time because of the Internet. This technology allows borders to disintegrate and the autonomous student can draw from multiple sources of cultural information. Because of this reality, there are more and more emergent cultures and hybridization of cultures and greater intersectionality of identities. This concerns art and art education in that it allows young people to draw from a variety of cultural sources (e.g., hip-hop, soccer, religion, feminism, politics) to create a transcultural repositioning of these diverse elements (Hornberger, 2007, p 328). Traversing these multiple informal spaces, these

types of configurations are robust and fluid because identities are in a continuum of “transformation or are being transformed as they move across space and time” (Hornberger, 2007, p.6). Students are not passive or empty vessels, nor are they misguided needing to be shaped into prescribed identities as the QEP documents infer because young people are already rich in ideas, interests and insights.

But how does the construction of identity speak to the agency of the person and in the context of place that is as structured as a school site? How much of an individual’s identity is still shaped by repetitive and “explicit rules of conduct, concepts that permit relatively little scope for the exercise of situationally based judgment,” thereby diminishing the authentic self despite the rhetoric that school is neutral and impartial? (Boyte & Flinders, 2016, p.130). Why should the school policy base itself by projecting the views of one group as being universal, and that students are told that they belong to “our culture” (Government of Québec, 2004, p.72).

How can educational spaces as these currently exist, ensure that there is flexibility in the system to embrace the complexity of identity that students bring with them into their formal learning spaces? Or should students defer to the knowledge that is taught to them as the correct knowledge and by doing so diminish their own worldviews that have informed them? Is there not a danger that official narratives may either silence or marginalize students whose views or experiences may be different and instead feel coerced into pathways of learning and knowledge acquisition that are simply standardizing life courses? (Davies & Guppy, 2010, p.75). Can schools be open to the unofficial lives of the students or must these students remain on the periphery?

In the context of CCD, the informal lives, identities and spaces that young people inhabit are welcomed and that there is no subjugation of the authentic person (i.e., interests, beliefs, etc.). Diversity in this context is more open to authenticity because it is not governed by external policy documents, nor is there an attempt at conformity or molding identities to fit into official educational doctrines. Why is this information important in relation to community-arts based learning environments? I see this ignoring of the informal lives of students by education systems as antithetical to having a truly meaningful relationship with the student. The student brings to the table other ways of knowing, doing and seeing the world. Certainly, knowledge, be it artistic, philosophical or scientific, can be drawn more broadly rather than taking “precedence over presenting a specific cultural universe” (Government of Québec, 2016, p.8).

Other Spaces

The term space, as used within this thesis, not only speaks of physical space, but the psychological and emotional spaces and the kinds of relationship that are made within those spaces. However, the classroom space is one that is typically not as rich as this definition. There is little to invest in when your life experience of being educated begins and ends inside a classroom. Most classrooms are essentially the same, from the day a learner enters school to the day they leave. Students are always in a classroom, with little exception. However, informal learning spaces offer an antidote to this disconnected and hierarchical notion of a learning space.

As can be seen in the case studies discussed in the previous chapter, non-formal environment CCD projects open horizons to engender a sense of possibility. It is as Thiele and Marsden (2003) observe: “the space and opportunity to consider differently what life offers, as well as introducing participants to foundations upon which they can build alternative paths if

they wish” (p.96). Not only does the space realign the person in relationship to what they are doing in a relevant physical space, but it can equally nurture the head-heart space too because an informal space better

cultivates a culture of critical reflection, where rules, values and ideas are proffered and discussed in a context of debate that is designed to reflect upon and objectively analyse social and cultural processes and that imagination is central to both innovation and creativity (Thiele & Marsden, 2003 p. 96).

Imagine then, having an informal learning space where the development of the individual is in relation to the community, a community of practice and one that is situated in its own social or cultural spaces, one that is contextualized (Sonn & Quayle, 2014, p18). Imagine too, that individual power is one that is shared amongst others in a process of transformational praxis, one that brings awareness that there is an alternative place to learn and is not dependent on an educational system as it currently exists.

The canoe project. An additional example of other spaces comes from a canoe project, and despite only knowing about the project, has struck a deep cord with me. I would like to share this by adding the voice of a participant who spoke about their experience:

Being out on the land for this project and working with a team of artists, provided an opportunity to reconnect with nature, our culture and each other. Free from everything that complicates the world many of us did not want to leave the island, myself included. No one wanted the feeling to end. It is a feeling that will be everlasting; a feeling of

revitalization, a feeling of strength, of culture but most important it is a feeling of unity (Hopkins, 2018, para.15).

The 19 participants of the canoe project worked with a Tlingit master carver, and under his guidance he led these young people on a journey of discovery by learning how to carve using traditional techniques. This 30-foot canoe was the first one built this way in one hundred years, and it was one that had been done not in a formal school setting (Yukon Canoe Project 2009, 2009). A project like this demonstrates how opening-up spaces gives the freedom for a person in community to have “the unmediated visceral experience of connection with all things” (Andreotti, 2015, pg.6).

Community apprenticeship projects such as the canoe project offer an antithesis to current education models of learning, which tend to be top-down and more transactional in nature. CCD projects have no place for this top-down style of instruction, and the results can be seen throughout this thesis (Cleveland, 2002, p.12; Gee, 2009, p.65). Mabingo (2015) foresees the value in the continued use of such projects in stating that, rather than the standard transactional model for education, “under this arrangement, pedagogical knowledge would be developed, through collaborative interaction in problem solving, modeling, observation, feedback, critical reflection and goal setting” (p.136) Offering another way of learning will help learners to decolonize themselves from the identities into which education as it is structured (i.e., hierarchical and decontextualized from community) have been forced on all of us.

The caveat to this argument is that space is truly a factor. It is not realistic to expect that the homogeneous classroom model will be able to accommodate such projects without serious modification. In light of that reality, I contend that there are multiple other spaces/sites that an

individual can learn from and this has a liberatory effect as consciousness is shifted from the formal expectations in the ways in which learning can be facilitated: that of different spaces.

However, as a teacher, I understand the struggle to look to other spaces. I only have a classroom to work in, which forces the students to sit at desks. Both the students and I are limited by this reality. Ideally, I would need a workshop environment that allows for hands-on projects. For example, for my latest project, I am ready to make vertical green walls where my students can think about the wooden pallets that can be used to construct the vertical frame, and to have the various green plants for designing the wall's tapestry. There is a literacy regarding these plants (e.g., which can be grown as a food source, types of soil needed, light required, amount of water, etc.), and as plants are alive and need tending this is an ongoing project.

Directions for Future Research and Practice

This thesis presented a variety of viable alternatives to the standard classroom-based model for education, along with various policy documents containing curriculum guidelines espoused by MELS and the QEP. My goal has been to extend the dialogue regarding these alternative structures for learning environments, and to consider how they might best be applied adjacent to existing structures, but more research is needed on this topic.

Although I have analyzed a number of examples of CCD projects in this thesis, the reality, as I have stated above, is that funding and space continue to be issues at every level in the execution of these projects. In the public sector there is little money set aside to train specialist teachers in the arts or in the promotion of the arts in teaching and learning (UNESCO, 2006. p.16). Often this is because so few teachers, including the administration of the school, understand or value the arts, and focus mainly on ensuring that students get good grades in Maths and Science.

This thesis has focused on a Québec context, but one pertinent example of challenges to execute arts-based education is found in Ontario. People for Education (2013) published a document on the status of teachers who taught one of the four streams of art subjects. This document revealed that twenty-six percent of secondary schools had to charge for the visual arts courses or had to fundraise to have arts enrichment in the school. A third of students had never had the opportunity to work directly with an artist and there was no money to offer students the opportunity to see an artistic performance. Forty percent of music teachers were working part-time and thirty-two percent of schools did not have a specialist music teacher (People for Education, 2013, p.2). Some of the schools were being given money by charitable organizations to keep their arts programs going, or relying on parent fundraising efforts (People for Education, 2013).

The Ontario example reiterates the question that this thesis has explored: how can the arts compete, if they have no currency in the real world, simply because the arts do not have a place in those more acceptable jobs

Limitations

It should be considered that this study is limited in a number of ways. There were few case studies, so it is difficult to extrapolate any conclusions about CCD projects in general. In addition, the observations made by these CCD case studies were conducted in the past- the Whale Project, 2003, Community and Culture as Foundations for Resilience: Participatory Health Research with First Nations Student Filmmakers (2006), ‘Arts that Makes Communities Strong: Transformative Partnerships with Community Artists in K-12 Settings’ (2013), The Tree Project, 2015, The Mosaic Project 2015-2018, so it is possible that any observations made may

not apply to CCD projects being conducted presently. In addition, the policy documents were considered to be the most current at the time that this thesis work was approved and being written, but some of those may have been updated since then. Finally, the researcher has also chosen to employ herself as a subject of the research, in using her own experiences, and thus any observations would also be embedded within that context and may not always be applicable outside it.

Conclusion

One of my goals with this thesis is to open dialogue about the way education is structured by incorporating community arts-based projects into formal education. However, through my analysis of the actual structure of formal education through the Québec education policy documents, I have come to the conclusion that education is fundamentally undemocratic, because of the singular and homogenous way in which education is approached as well as its acceptance as normal. This is the totalizing reality that has given itself the legitimacy to create official hierarchies of knowledge and methodologies as core and margin.

In mainstream education it is well documented that the individual pursuit for success is measurable and made accountable, as it is based on *sense-making* as opposed to *sense-sensing* (Andreotti, 2016, p.4). As discussed above, the QEP aims at providing a democratic learning environment, but this democracy is centered on hierarchical structures and not on participatory democracy. This function exists because there is a need for education which is coupled with becoming a so-called competent worker. It could be argued that the democracy in the educational system prioritizes a capitalist hegemony where economic relations are given greater priority over social relations (Grosfoguel, 2011, pg.8). Drawing from the principles of CCD, going forward it is critical to begin to reframe the arts and arts education as being about

“processes rather than products, meaning that cultural value becomes manifest through making and doing, rather than through the resulting artifacts. Therefore, the importance of cultural action, as part of sustainable development, occurs through creative approaches and within communities” (Culture 21, 2013, p.3). Throughout this thesis, it has been demonstrated that the formal education system and its policies will continue to marginalize the arts, as its products are not as easily quantified as those within the natural sciences. It is up to arts educators, and those facilitating CCD projects, to counteract this and begin to redefine the arts, no more as a “less ‘exact’ form of knowledge and is relegated to lower ranks of prestige” (Weiler, 2006, p.2), but as a viable other space, where students are free to explore and be part of an arts-based community.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Photos of the Mosaic Project



Photo 1: Getting ready for the opening with the school orchestra





Photo 2 & 3: The base of the fountain with two of the four mosaic panels

Appendix B

Photos of the Tree Project



Photos 1 & 2: Snapshots of tree making. Notice that this is not done in a classroom



Photo 3: Group working together on their tree design, snapshots of moments in a process of discovery and connection.



Photo 4: Photo of the six trees that were made as part of being in an English class

Appendix C

Canoe Project



Photo 1: Master carver and students



Photos 2&3: Canoe Tree Project 2009 East side of the Yukon River was home for two months

