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Intuition and Curriculum: From Precognition to Agency

Sandra Martinaitis

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INTUITION AND CURRICULUM: FROM PRECOGNITION TO AGENCY

by

SANDRA MARTINAITIS

(Under the Direction of Delores D. Liston)

ABSTRACT

The dissertation is a speculative essay using the framework of Joseph Schwab's (1969) commonplaces of: subject matter, student, teacher and milieu to examine how intuition can and should form part of curriculum. The overarching theme is that intuition and intuitive teaching and learning is an iterative path which leads to self-knowledge, reflection, cognition and acceptance of 'other' -- the Freirian (2010) notion of *tolérance*-- resulting in critical thinking and agency to ameliorate lives -- particularly of the oppressed. It embraces the clichéd notion of education leading to informed citizens who will make the right choices for society as a whole from the perspective of allowing teaching and learning to evolve from a less data-driven, teacher and standard imposed process to a more interest-driven evolution with an eye to critical thinking and authenticity. Intuition exists whether we choose to acknowledge or ignore it. It cannot be forced, but is rather something teachers and students can make room for -- pay attention to -- honor and consider in a framework of *bounded anarchy* (Macdonald, 1995). It is a framework that recognizes chaos as a part of life, and anarchy as a means to avoid autocratic control. Subject matter is explored via boredom, improvisation, currere, phenomenological and aesthetic inquiry. The role and relationships of the teacher are tied to self-discovery, co-creation, authenticity and love. Students within this framework are encouraged to explore, listen to, and use their voice to connect with the Joy (Liston,

2001) of learning. And, place is the physical and psychological world of the individual within which subject matter, teachers and students interact.

INDEX WORDS: Intuition, Education, Agency, Curriculum

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by

SANDRA MARTINAITIS

B.A., Concordia University, Canada, 1985

M.B.A., Concordia University, Canada, 1987

Ed.S Brenau University, 2011

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in

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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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SANDRA MARTINAITIS

Major Professor: Delores D. Liston
Committee: Ming Fang He
Jonathan Hilpert
William Schubert

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DEDICATION

For my father Jurgis (1930 – 2006) whose lessons continue to define who I am,

and

my brother Albert (1960 – 1990) whose lessons continue to challenge me.

I also want to dedicate this work to three women who sweeten my life:

my daughters Viveka and Devon, and my mother Denise.

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Chapter 1

Measure for Measure: Receptivity and Resonance

And whoever says feeling says intuition, that is, direct knowledge,
communication turned inside out to its source to be clarified interiorly.

~ Artaud, 1965, p. 59

When people find out I'm in a doctoral program in education, one of the first questions they ask me is the topic of my dissertation. When I reply "intuition" I get a variety of responses – the most common being bafflement. Some responses have been an uncertain "Oh, interesting . . .". More often it is an incredulous "What about intuition?!", and, also very common and most telling to myself is "Are you allowed to do that?" Allowed. The field of education is replete with mandates, protocols, and guidelines to keep students in check (Burden, 2012). Teachers are advised to review rules and classroom procedures with students early on to maintain order and desired behaviors in the classroom (Evertson, 2016; Wong, Wong, Rogers & Brooks, 2012). Many staff meetings, particularly at the beginning of the school year, focus on school procedures, expectations, and norms. While I am not against guidelines, I think it is important in learning environments to guard against the complacency of routines and to question norms. I am constantly on guard against hegemony and oppression. McLaren (2003), in looking at major concepts in critical pedagogy, explains hegemony as "a struggle in which the powerful win the consent of those who are oppressed, with the oppressed unknowingly participating in their own oppression" (p. 76). While oppression is easy to identify because it is more overt, hegemony is an insidious handmaiden which

operates through conformity, maintaining the status quo. As a student and a teacher, it is my experience that the most profound and lasting moments of insight occur outside of routines and norms, when freedom to explore and curiosity take precedence over standards, and when we participate in what Hillman (1975) calls *soul-making*: following and exploring what we are drawn to thereby creating personal and individual meaning.

The experience of school is what this dissertation is attempting to look at. From the set hours of attendance, transport to and from the building, the confines of schedules, routines, discipline, and mandated standards and the *hell that is other people* (Sartre, 1955, p. 47) this essay explores ways in which we can participate in *soul-making* in the hours and years that constitute formal education. Young children naturally participate in following their curiosity and interests through play. School begins to interrupt this process when it molds the experience, sets time limits, and, judges the utility of what is being accomplished. However, children need boundaries—both for themselves and understanding how they operate with others and within society. School, along with other components in society such as community and culture, prepare the ego for the struggle of survival and the participation in governance. The ‘hell’ of other people referenced above is not so much the individual players in our lives as the expectations and judgements which interfere with self-actualization. The premise this essay is hoping to support is that the tension between *soul-making* (variously called *the care of the soul* by Thomas Moore, *individuation* by Carl Jung) and ‘going to school’ can be aided through allowing intuition a role in education. Clandinin and Connelly (1996) conceptualized curriculum as experience – of teachers and students in all their diversity via narrative authority, and Schwab (1954) describes the teacher rather than subject matter as an “agent of education”

(p. 68). I believe intuition in curriculum provides the setting for teachers to be flexible, receptive, and perceptive, allowing them at times to step outside standards and norms and forego the usual tools of measurement to connect with students and to help students connect with themselves, others, and the world around them. In 1959 C.P. Snow delivered his famous essay *Two Cultures* lamenting the divide between the scientific community and the arts. He argued that intellectual activity should not be compartmentalized as the two could support and benefit each other. In the same vein, education is divided into two strains of learning – in school and out of school experiences – with each camp criticizing the other. Post schooling years are often referred to as ‘joining the real world’ implying education is make-believe or less relevant. Intuition here can be a tool to pursue what is individually relevant to each student and teacher. All too often students make time for their interests outside of school. Allowing intuition to bridge in school and out of school experiences and interests I surmise can enrich learning while doing the important work of *soul-making*.

In philosophical circles the term ‘allow’ indicates conceding a point or truth. The field of curriculum studies is broad and allows for a plethora of subjects/topics. Although curriculum studies itself is a rather philosophical field, curriculum, in contradistinction, in the day to day world is often portrayed as the narrowing down of subjects and topics in the school setting to be taught over a specific time period. The joy (Liston, 2001) of discovery is not bound by time and place. Liston describes Joy as a ‘metaphor of convergence’ – the creative, enriching, inspiring state of being that comes about when things (often diverse and unrelated topics) come together and we “gain a greater understanding of human consciousness” (p. 2). Intuition, as part of the experience

of school, I suspect, can help bring about an accumulation of wonder, new perspectives, compassion and acceptance for what is different and new, versus the current notion of school as a conduit to the accumulation of wealth and the quest for physical security and intellectual certainty.

School has over the course of history been a path to success for many (Lipset & Bendix, 1991). What I surmise is being lost sight of in our current political system, and consequently our educational system, is the notion of cooperative, participatory networks where all stakeholders participate – not just the few, and not just the successful. Representation from diverse groups guards against oppression and injustice. Women’s and minorities’ rights were only granted after these groups became a part of the political system which allowed them voice and voting rights. Diversity in governance allows for many views and opinions as to what is best for many different people. Intuition here is the joining of many people, with varying interests determining what is just. Ethics hint at universalist notions of what is right, as exemplified in Kohlberg’s highest stage of ethical development (1978). Simply put, one attempts to feel and intuit what another would given their parameters of understanding and perceived affect. Increased participation, rich and meaningful experiences, cocreation of learning (Freire, 2010) can lead to agency.

As Pinar (2012) explains

I thread my subjective experience through academic knowledge, thereby reconstructing both and inviting you to do the same. . . . Through self-reflexive academic study subjectivity becomes reconstructed as social democracy. Private passion becomes public service. (p.2)

Intuition is useful to discover private passion, and it needs a broad and ambiguous field in which to operate. Private passions are those sudden, often inexplicable interests and concerns, the desire to know more and experience more about something. We see these crop up often in children and condescendingly refer to them as phases. Every year I teach a few girls who are consumed with horses and horseback riding. There is often a small clique that becomes passionate about comic books, or science fiction. A few years back, before adult coloring books became popular, I had a student who hid her passion for coloring because it was viewed as immature to still be coloring at the age of twelve. If curriculum studies is about knowledge, there is no room for invalidation. Rendón (2012) asserts “Invalidation can be a form of oppression, a way that people in power exert dominance over others” (p. 94). In the case of the student who colored, her passion was invalidated. It was invalidated by her peers and other adults. Because there is now a market for her passion it is seen as an activity which helps with focus and alleviates stress (Dovey, 2015). What else is being hidden? And why? Along with living in various communities (home, school, neighborhood), we build our own communities by finding like-minded people who share our views and interests. Fear of judgement and invalidation prevent these communities from being assembled.

I chose the topic of intuition because it is the antithesis of routine – it is individual, personal, difficult to define and justify. It does not fall into step with the given scientific method of: observe, question, hypothesize, test, and evaluate the validity of data produced. This dissertation is also a product of intuition. I contend that something is missing in curriculum and it is not something that can be measured and summarized in a table as proof. Education proceeds in an ambiance of white noise:

busyness, the drone of the lecture, the anxiety of the test or paper, the pervasive aura of competition. I believe we need to turn that sound off and listen to what other noises draw our attention – and ultimately what they mean. This mindfulness is a prefatory of intuition. It is not the sudden flash of insight commonly associated with intuition, but the conscious effort to be open to our subconscious – to be receptive and to seek resonance. Current efforts to bring mindfulness into the classroom focus on behavioral outcomes and emotional regulation (Broderick & Metz, 2009; Flook, Goldberg, Pinger, & Davidson, 2015). Mindfulness in this essay is concerned with our paying attention to both sudden insights and paradigm shifts. Insights such as sudden flashes of awareness, niggling apprehensions, an unexplained fascination with a person, place, thing, or event. The culture of the West has developed the habit of ‘shelving’ these feelings (Hillman, 2013) whereas in the East this focus on mindfulness toward intuitiveness is termed *Vipassana* – an awareness of what is happening as it happens. In this form of meditation – noticing actually – is dispassionate observation in order to come to an awareness and understanding of what is (Gunaratana, 2011). Unlike many other forms of meditation where one focuses on a single object, here the goal is to become aware of your true self developing intuition by observing your mind, actions, emotions, and behavior. It is a form of education that is self-directed and focuses on the first two steps of the scientific method: observe and question. This system remains open and cyclical versus the more linear and conclusive modes associated with science. In essence, it is another way to approach knowledge and its value lies in reiterating for the student that knowledge and education are not closed systems.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge that I don't fully understand what intuition is or how it can be processed or fostered in the school setting. As part of one's unconscious, it may not be possible to have a full understanding of how it operates. However, like the unconscious, I believe it can teach us and guide us; it can teach us about ourselves and guide our interests. And, although it falls short of being fully understood and defined, I am nevertheless gripped by a hunger to use it with myself and my students. I believe education is easier and more enjoyable when combined with intuition. The etymology of education means to draw out. Likewise, with intuition, we are seeking to tap into and draw out ideas, likes, interests, and curiosities. All too often education is about 'putting in' – providing facts, explaining concepts, testing if what has been put into the powerpoint, notebook, brain has been retained. I am not against traditional methods of teaching and realize there is value to what has been described above as 'putting in' notions of education, but allowing for intuition and attending to 'drawing out' I believe complements more traditional methods of instruction.

In subsequent chapters I will explore ways in which intuition might be made part of the teacher experience, student experience, and how it might be integrated in both the school setting and form part of subject matter, grappling with how to define some of these terms for myself and the reader. Chapter two considers subject matter; it particularly looks at how interests arise from within, how compelling they can be for the individual, and how they touch on one's creativity. Chapter three looks at the role of the teacher, not so much as the leader and instructor, but as a fellow sojourner of truth and discovery. Chapter four hones in on the student and the importance of fostering the

joyful encounter of ideas and others. And finally Chapter five considers space and how to create openness and allow for a concatenation of ideas, people, and agency.

Words on pages suggest closure, and intuition lives in a world of images, stories, and metaphor which don't conform to a single view point. Throughout the dissertation, rather than grouped in one section which suggests declamation, I offer various definitions that seem to approach most closely my current understanding of intuition, mindfulness, curriculum and other frequently used terms. This hesitancy to define for the reader is summed up by Hillman's (1975) aversion to literalism which he explains "prevents mystery by narrowing the multiple ambiguity of meanings into one definition" (p. 149). Intuition and its application in education needs mystery, suggestion, and metaphor; it can not be offered to the student in a workbook, through manipulatives, or via lecture because it is both individual and needs the each individual's attunement and participation to come to life.

Intuition, like curriculum, is a broad topic. It almost seems an oxymoronic juxtaposition of concepts as the nascent definition of curriculum was a determined sequence of courses for a student (Bobbitt, 1924; Tyler, 1949) and a commonly understood definition of intuition is an immediate understanding without the use of reasoning. The notion of curriculum has evolved to include the metaphorical course or path we take in life and in school, which makes us who we are (Pinar & Grumet, 2006; Schubert & Ayers, 1999). Pinar (2012) explains, "Curriculum theory is, in effect, a form of autobiographically informed truth-telling that articulates the educational experience of teachers and students as lived" (p. 35). The chapters in this dissertation, speculative essays, look at how intuition could, often does, and I believe should, work in the school

setting. The framework used to consider intuition in curriculum is that proposed by Joseph J. Schwab (1969) who identified four interacting commonplaces of: subject matter, teachers, learners, and milieu. With each of these commonplaces – one per chapter – I start off by exploring my own relationship and experiences with them. Intuition cannot really operate within confines and set rules, I therefore consider how it might possibly flourish in each of these given basics which forms what is commonly understood as schooling.

With subject matter, the first of the commonplaces, the greatest tension lies in the struggle between a student's (and a teacher's) desire to pursue their own intuitive longings as they relate to knowledge versus prescribed – and proscribed -- content and standards. This chapter considers the questions of what intuitive subject matter might look like and when it can become a part of the curriculum. It moves on to how to elicit intuitive content by considering boredom, improvisation, currere, phenomenology and aesthetic inquiry while recognizing that these do not constitute a definitive list. The question of 'why' intuition should form part of a school's curriculum links individual interests to tolerance, empathy, community and agency.

With the teacher, our second commonplace, the tension lies in relationships. Here a teacher must learn to both listen to his or her inner voice when it comes to guidance as well as foster independent, critical thinking. Growth, individuation, and learning are seen as an ongoing process for both the teacher and student. Curriculum becomes learning choices extended beyond the confines of physical buildings and continues beyond enrollment in educational establishments. The goal as we grow and better understand

ourselves, others, and our political environments is to develop the skills to bring about change and equity.

Students, the third commonplace, must find a way to tap into their own intuition within a framework of power in which they have no voice. Themes explored in this chapter are stories, myths, cultures, and capturing those moments of intellectual joy and aesthetic experience that touch us and change us. These moments, these paradigm shifts, in which we see our world in new and profound ways remind us that learning is a journey with no end. It reminds us that everyone is on a similar journey on different paths and at different times.

And place, the fourth commonplace, is often the physical space which is given but which we must mentally escape to really learn and grow. Schwab (1969) originally used the term *milieu* for this last commonplace. The French definition, from which this word was derived, refers to the middle of where one is. This chapter looks at both the physical and psychological aspects of 'where one is'.

Within this framework I will explore intuition as it concentrically expands from the self, to others, and the collective. The questions will consider: Who am I? Who are you? And, who are we? Although the structure of these essays and the answers to these questions seem compartmentalized, I believe they lead to Macdonald's (1995) notions of radical and transcendental developmental ideologies of education. Briefly, Macdonald summarizes educational development to date as a combination of romantic, developmental and cultural transmissions (p. 69). Romantic transmissions relate to inner experiences and self-knowledge, cultural transmissions to our encounters with the sensate world and shared experiences, while developmental transmissions reflect how we resolve

for ourselves (determine values, choices, and philosophic outlooks) the flow of these transmissions. Macdonald elaborates that there is a radical position which must be taken into account-- the way in which people live together (p.72) which is determined by political and economic structures. He then goes on to argue for a *transcendent ideology* where “the aim of education should be a centering of the person in the world” (p.86). Centering here is the process of using the individual’s inner awareness, cultural situations, spiritual manifestations, accumulation of knowledge to develop, as much as possible, the potential of each given person. An intuitive curriculum, looks at many of the activities enumerated in Macdonald’s essay: playing, meditative thinking, imagining, the aesthetic principle, various forms of perception, and the uses and limitations of our biological understandings. An intuitive curriculum not only asks ‘What does this mean?’, but ‘What does this mean to me?’, ‘To others?’, ‘Is this what it should mean?’, and ‘Is it time to change the meaning of this?.’ Transcendental developmental ideology and intuition may begin as inner work, but lead to agency. Individuation is often mistakenly understood as solitary practice. Jung reminds us that “one can only individuate with or against something or somebody” (1953, para 102), and Derrida (1999) takes this one step further when he states “The Other individuates me in my responsibility for him” (p. 7).

As each essay explores how we can use curriculum to answer these questions, the fundamental curricular question posed by Spencer in 1861 of “what knowledge is of most worth?”, remains relevant to curricular theorists today – though frequently ignored in the quest for mandates and efficiency -- and will drive this inquiry. The ultimate goal of this dissertation is, at a minimum, to encourage acceptance of intuition as a part of the teaching and learning process. More ambitiously, it is an attempt to instill trust in

intuition in its various forms of exploration, to reinvigorate ‘wide-awakeness’ (Greene, 1978), to consider Macdonald’s (1995) culminating curricular question of “how shall we live together?”, and intervene against injustices.

Why Bother? For the Individual

With the barrage of standards that students are required to master and the numerous tests they are expected to take it seems that a curriculum inclusive of intuition would be more work for both teachers and students to take on, with no clear purpose. A curriculum which allows for spontaneity and divergence from the planned itinerary can instead lessen this burden, and, has many rewards. Kourilsky (1990, 2007) compares teaching in the classroom to a command economy, which rewards compliance and conformity. She argues for rewarding the entrepreneurial thinker who actually stimulates growth and wealth, if we keep with the metaphor of the economy, for everyone’s benefit. Many theorists and studies correlate high student interest (Berlyne, 1949; Dewey, 1913; Renninger, Hidi, & Krapp, 2014) with learning and knowledge retention. Professional development for teachers has responded by encouraging teachers to make their curriculum interesting, dynamic, contemporary, and connected to technology – whatever it takes to get students involved and paying attention. What Kourilsky (1990, 2007) suggests, and what I believe side-steps a lot of one-sided effort on the part of the teacher, is to tap into what the student is already interested in. This is supported by the notion of choice (Montessori, 1909/1972; Smith, 1776/1976; West & Roberts, 2016) leading to increased learning. Once again, teachers tend to be trained in colleges of education and via professional development to offer students several ways to tackle a given project or several vehicles through which to present findings. Here, choice is often limited and is

designed by the instructor rather than the learner. When the student is truly invested in their learning and allowed control of their choices – as in an out of school curriculum – there is heightened learning (Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider & Shernoff, 2014), critical thinking (Kim, Sharma, Land, & Furlong, 2013), and subsequently, test scores (Freeman, Eddy, McDonough, Smith, Okoroafor, Jordt, & Wenderoth, 2014).

The idea is not to add separate or additional units to the syllabus – but to find ways for intuition to work in tandem with teacher and student goals. Students who are motivated and take charge of their learning actually lessen the teaching load and their ‘time on task’ becomes a pleasure versus a duty. Liston (2001) explains, “We do not need better ways of doing what we do. Instead, we need better metaphors for interpreting who we are and how we could be” (p. 6). Further, she contends that people, not just students, have an epistemic hunger – the idea that we all want to know things. Intuition can feed this hunger if we listen attentively, mindfully, to it. Further, it can whet our appetite for more of what is out there.

As a corollary intuition may help address the powerlessness and alienation students feel in school. Disengagement is correlated to low achievement (Defoe, Farrington, & Loebner, 2013; Stephenson, 2006), classroom disruption (Hanushek, 2015), and truancy (Mac Iver, 2007) – all factors which increase the workload of teachers and administrators. If interest and choice create engaged, happy students, who feel validated in the school setting, time is spent learning versus the interplay of defiance and withdrawal on the part of the student and control on the part of the teacher (Giannakos, 2013; Wang & Degol, 2014; Zhang, 2016).

Another benefit of intuitive teaching and learning is that it would direct student thinking away from the correct multiple choice answer and help students reflect on the complexity of life. While multiple choice tests help a teacher gauge what basic content and facts a student has learned (or memorized for the test), forays into new learning territories do not follow the ‘backward by design’ model (Tyler, 1949; Wiggins & McTighe, 2011) where what needs to be learned drives instruction. Assessment is not predetermined and the focus here is on individual growth “which is not a measurable entity” (Illich, 1970/2012, p. 40). Problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, and cooperation are what children need to be schooled in according to the Glossary of Educational Reform (21st Century Skills, 2015). Students need to be prepared for complexity and change. This flexibility is not found in scripted teaching or the high stakes tests which “establish strong, high insulated boundaries between valued knowledge and unvalued knowledge. Tested knowledge is valued; untested knowledge is not” (Au, 2009, p. 112). This valuation is contrary to the scale of hierarchy of knowledge since higher order thinking skills cannot be measured by standardized single-answer tests.

Education and schooling are two different things. If students do not like school, they often choose to stop active learning. Active learning, coined by Bonwell & Eison, (1991), is participatory learning where the student experientially does things and thinks about them beyond the state of passive receptivity or listening. A review of the research on active learning indicates there is a positive correlation to learning and achievement (Prince, 2004; Tandogan & Orhan, 2007). Non-participatory, disengaged behavior is exhibited in silence. Silence, I believe, is not necessarily good behavior as much as it is withdrawal from the learning situation and a product of fear (Palmer, 1998). Students

withdraw when they are bored and do not relate to subject matter. They withdraw when they cannot follow or do not understand. They withdraw when they are afraid they will look foolish if they participate or open up. They withdraw when they dislike the teacher. And, they withdraw when being silent means that at least they are not in trouble (Finn, 2009; Rose, 2009). Students are pretty much at the mercy of teachers and at the mercy of what those in power have decided they ought to learn (Apple, 2013; Jackson, 1990). The history of schooling is a record of trying to maintain the status quo (Guttek, 1987; Spring, 2013). Today's educational environment seems to mirror that of the social efficiency theorists of the early twentieth century who operated from a place of fear. Kliebard (1995) explains,

It was a science of exact measurement and precise standards in the interest of maintaining a predictable and orderly world. In a period when the influence of certain social institutions such as family and church was believed to be in a state of dangerous decline, the functions of schooling had to be restructured radically in order to take up the slack. (p. 77)

It is depressing, to me, to think that we have not advanced from this type of early twentieth century thinking when it comes to educating children. We have talked about school reform pretty much since the inception of public schools. We have politicians, many with no background in education (other than attending school), that believe they can 'fix' education by running it in a more business-like fashion. Our neo-liberal climate, in sync with our global climate, is on a steady path of destruction with a huge populace of deniers paving the way for the alt right to have a voice. The democratic foundation of

public school is threatened by our government because it is a government of exclusion.

Watkins (2012) details this as

The politics of exclusion has replaced the protection of the public and the individual. Examples of exclusion are everywhere, as over 2 million people are now incarcerated; pending new legislation, 50 to 80 million people exist without health insurance; pension plan abandonment has thrust the elderly into a state of uncertainty; and Congress actually *debated* an extension of the voting rights bill. Laws and plans to expel and exclude “undocumented” people have reached the level of hysteria. Perhaps the greatest assault is that no one is policing the police.

(p. 17)

Exclusion, restriction, fear, mandates, competition – now more than ever we need to create citizens over consumers, autonomous thinkers over subservient disciples, and an inclusive mindset over a privileged and fearful one.

The social efficiency theorists, mentioned earlier, operated from a very controlled environment to produce tangible skills that would be useful in the working world. It was one strain of thought in education where during the same period, in contradistinction, we had Dewey (1916; 2004) and Montessori (1917), promoting the idea that children’s innate interests should be fostered versus enforcing rigid curricula. Schooling does not have to be an either/or proposition. I believe curriculum can be adapted to serve individual students while covering determined skill sets. A child has an intuitive affinity for certain things and ways of being which Hillman (2013) terms “impulsions of destiny” (p. 13). He provides a metaphorical foundation for this impulse with what he terms ‘the acorn theory’ – the belief that “the soul of each of us is given a unique daimon before we

are born, and it has selected an image or pattern that we live on earth” (p. 8). I believe school should be a place where students can explore individual interests and explore their individuality. Current inroads in education that reflect this thinking can be found in the ‘genius hour,’ an idea originating with Google that encouraged its employees to spend 20% of their time at work on their own passions and interests, resulting in innovations such as Gmail and Google News (Kesler, 2013). Using video gaming (Clark, Tanner-Smith, & Killingsworth 2015) and virtual experiences (Beetham & Sharpe, 2013) are other ways educators are tapping into and inspiring student interest. Experiential and self-directed learning is recommended by innovative teachers and leaders (Guglielmino Toffler 2013; Young, Baek, Thompson, Shah, Spencer, & Zowmi, 2016) to ensure students flourish beyond the educational environment.

Why Bother? Beyond the Individual

Schoolchildren are one of the most oppressed groups of people that I can identify in my everyday life. Like Hall (2013), I believe school is a place where children should be made aware of their rights. Palmer (1998) explains, “Students are marginalized people in our society. The silence that we face in the classroom is the silence that has always been adopted by people on the margin – people who have reason to fear those in power and have learned that there is safety in not speaking” (p. 45). Silence is a form of power and reacting to power (Fine, 1987; Foster, 2012). It is hard to rebel and articulate without an education, therefore the rebellion from students that we do see is evidenced in high dropout rates (Fine, 1991; McLaren, 2015). Education leaders continue look to the business world to solve what is perceived as a crisis in education (Apple 2014; Eurich & Wade, 1986). And, as the business world tries to influence education we are feeling the

effects of their hubris which has resulted in a sewage-like trickle-down effect of control, fear, and an ‘every-man-for-himself’ mentality. Like Nussbaum (2010), Pinar (2012) and Schubert (2009), I think it is imperative that we stop looking to the business community for advice and turn instead to those who have the most vested interests, students.

Historically, the educational system has been built around a fortress of values held by privileged, white, males over the course of history (Bell, 1992; Kozol, 1991; Watkins, 2012). The physical constructs of school, the monitoring of behavior, and the processes by which we judge students are mirrored in other oppressive institutions (Deleuze, 1992).

The workshop, the school, the army were subject to a whole micro-penalty of time (lateness, absences, interruptions of tasks), of activity (inattention, negligence, lack of zeal), of behavior (impoliteness, disobedience), of speech (idle chatter, insolence), of the body (‘incorrect’ attitudes, irregular gestures, lack of cleanliness), of sexuality (impurity, indecency). (Foucault, 1979, p.178)

Students, until about the age of sixteen, have no choice but to attend school. Is this oppression or liberation? As a student, I always believed this was oppression. I had to physically be in a certain building and classroom at designated times and was told how to spend my time as well as quite often told how to think and what to produce as evidence of my learning. As a teacher, I tend to ascribe to the belief that education is a vehicle which can bring about liberation. It is the notion that education can help discern what is wrong and that logical thinking can produce avenues of amelioration and escape. In the more extreme example and setting of Brazil, Paulo Freire (2014) used what he termed ‘culture circles’ to teach illiterate farmers to read and write so that they could participate in government (one had to be literate to vote) and challenge oppression. Perhaps

involving students in their education in this way can help alleviate the feeling of oppression in a school setting. Beyond involving students in making basic choices in terms of their environment, activities, and course of study is the notion of inclusion and advocacy. We return to Liston's (2001) notion of joy which is creative energy and the capacity that true learning can achieve. It is not learning to get through school, but is as Freire explains a

democratization of culture, a program with men as its subjects rather than patient recipients, a program which itself would be an act of creation, capable of releasing other creative acts, one in which students would develop the impatience and vivacity which characterize search and invention. (p. 280)

The exclusion of students is based on the idea that they do not know what is best for themselves. However, I concur with Serres who states "I consider exclusion as history and mankind's worst action. No, let us not eliminate; on the contrary, let us include" (Serres/Latour, 1966, p. 132). The superlative of 'worst' action seems an exaggeration when considering other actions such as war, violence, and abuse – but these all stem from exclusion. Wars are often started when one group believes another is not as worthy of life, land, and resources as the other. Violence and abuse is a more individual manifestation – it is the message that the abused is not worthy of love, care, respect, and safety. When everyone is included and given voice in a community we have agency, which is the abstract principle that individuals can make independent choices and judgments for themselves. It is also the idea of representing or acting on behalf of others who are less able or not able to advocate for themselves.

Not only is it difficult to learn about something you are not really interested in, it is painful, tedious, and frustrating. The type of education that Freire (2010) refers to as ‘banking education’ describes imparting and then extracting short term knowledge acquisition from students so they can pass tests. This type of education results in bored and alienated students (Finn, 2009; Illich, 2012; Rose, 2009) and though you may have students who are able to perform well in class, they are unable to transfer this knowledge and make connections to the world in which they live (Liston, 2001). Intuition aligns well to the notion of student as co-creator of knowledge. I argue that a student who learns to trust their intuition and uses it to direct their knowledge will likewise develop what Freire (2010) describes as *conscientização*, an understanding of society’s need to overcome various forms of oppression.

I see intuition as a tool for students to empower themselves and advocate for their learning. Once you can advocate for yourself, you are more likely to be able to see the need for and have the ability to advocate for others -- especially the powerless and oppressed. I believe intuition can build a respect for others through empathy. And, although as Nussbaum (2010) states “Empathy is not morality, . . . it can supply crucial ingredients of morality” (p. 37). Culture, both historically and currently in the United States, pays homage to individualism and the notion of meritocracy (Amico, 2016). In effect we are taught that anyone can succeed if they work hard enough, and it is therefore implied that when we don’t succeed it is our own fault. Not true. I am not alone in knowing people who hold down two jobs who struggle to make ends meet alongside others whose success was easily won. This is not an intuitive feeling, but an observation. The leap from self-empowerment to helping others comes from the habit of doing what

‘seems’ right. Intuition can start as a slight misgiving, a feeling that something is not quite right; and, although it is easier to observe when it relates to oneself, I suspect that the habit of identifying these disconnects – whether overt or covert – and attending to them becomes more obvious the more frequently we ‘listen’ to ourselves. In the example of the myth of meritocracy above, an illustration would be claiming a student with little access to regular meals has the same opportunity to succeed as a student who doesn’t have to worry about eating. The intuitive fellow student, teacher, or administrator here hopefully takes a moment to take action on what feels right to address the situation.

Morality has been hovering about as an idea in this section of the essay. Ethical intuitionism is a branch of moral philosophy that is beyond the scope of this essay. Briefly, it holds that moral truths are self-evident and immediately apprehended (Stratton-Lake, 2016). The point that I am trying to emphasize is that intuition can become a reflex with more frequent use. It is the moment where you pause and reflect whether something seems right, feels wrong, or needs more attention. It begs the question: ‘is this a good thing?’ Perhaps it is not a question that can always be answered, but it can attune people to consideration.

Why a Speculative Essay?

My dissertation will be a speculative essay on intuition, how we can recognize and encourage it in schools, and why it is important. Speculation raises questions from the simple ‘what if’ possibilities to stewing on the ultimate nature of a concept and its conjectural utility. I chose this form of inquiry because I am not an expert in intuition; in fact, I do not believe anyone is – but I do think it is important to explore its meaning and utility in the educational setting. Because intuition is, I believe, largely unrecognized in

the school setting I feel there is a need to speculate on how it can impact curriculum and the lives of students, teachers, and the community at large.

I have always bridled against being told what to do and how to do it. This non-conformism is not just reactive or rebellious, though it often appeared so to my parents, teachers and authority figures growing up. I have to reach an understanding for myself and have a certain comfort level before I embrace anything. In elementary school this was not so difficult. Reaction on my part was not so much against learning basic facts as it was adhering to my own timeline. For example I was fine with learning addition, but was not willing to cooperatively sit through a multiplication lesson until I was comfortable with addition. My comfort level here was more attached to timing rather than content. In high school and college however, the reaction was to ideas. One can be taught ideas, but cannot have others' truths forced upon them. Nietzsche proclaimed, "Behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, there is a mighty lord, an unknown sage-it is called Self; it dwells in your body, it is your body" (1883/2001, p. 40). What Nietzsche calls Self, what I call intuition in this essay, is a combination of logic, knowledge, feeling, and a part of the journey of individuation. This topic, for me, is about helping the 'othered' in a school setting be understood. I didn't like school because I felt it was asking me to not be myself. I chose the topic of intuition because it addresses peripherally notions I have already alluded to: oppression, choice, comfort, self, others, reflection, action. Attending school I didn't realize that intuition played such a large role in how I learned and how I reacted. In fact, I don't think I was even able to make the link between my obstinacy and 'intuition.'

An essay does not have to make pronouncements, or come to conclusions. The essay, (from the French *essayer*) means ‘to attempt.’ Essays attempt to understand, and it is the reader’s task to reflect upon, agree with, or disagree with parts or all of the essay. I think a speculative essay is appropriate here because it mirrors an intuitive way of teaching. It offers up to the reader ideas versus answers. As the focus on knowledge increased during the Renaissance, the essay genre became popular in order to teach and inform others (Lewalski, 1986). And many essays, such as those written by Francis Bacon (1597/1985) and Michel de Montaigne (1580/1958), created a call to action for people to form their own beliefs and act upon them. The essay by nature implies that the point of view expressed depends on a particular person's experiences or pertinent research on a topic. The speculative essay, in addition, glances to the future and considers ‘what if’ scenarios. It departs from the more traditional dissertation or research based dissertation as it is interpretive, imaginative, and personal.

I have found that my students are often reluctant to write because they are uncertain if they are ‘right.’ They are too used to the textbook, to listening to pronouncements. The dissertation, in this case an expanded essay, attempts to consider intuition as a part of teaching and learning. The etymology of the word dissertation is to examine and discuss. Serres (2000) explains what he terms ‘the philosopher writer’ as someone who attempts to express via writing (p. 79) and Musil’s main character Ulrich, in his novel *The Man Without Qualities*, points to the rather personal and interpretive form of the essay when he elaborates that it “is rather the unique and unalterable form assumed by a man’s inner life in a decisive thought” (1995, p. 273).

The topic of intuition is particularly salient at this time in the history of schooling as it is somewhat antithetical to the current focus on standards and data-proven results. Although I have always enjoyed school, and teaching, I have been frustrated by the time constraints in the classroom to cover defined standards and the notion that there is one right answer to the majority of questions. I share concern with Ohanian (1999) that nonstandard students have “no place to go” (p. 2). And, that with teaching to the test – to prove you have covered standards – you have little content control, pedagogic control, and discursive control (Au, 2010). Further, in terms of assessment, “personal growth is not a measurable entity” (Illich, 2012, p. 40). This essay will be somewhat cathartic for myself as I explore ways that I would have liked to experience school as both a student and teacher, and how it could be a more enriching and fulfilling venture for others. The essay does not offer proofs so much as suggestions. That is not to say the essay is the meandering reverie of the lazy thinker – although a poorly written, poorly thought out essay could result in such. Great essays, like great speeches, have the capacity to change the way we think and live. My own philosophy on education has been greatly influenced by Maxine Greene’s *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change*. Since having read her essays, there is not a week I teach where I am not considering how to bring art into the lives of students and ultimately trying to instill the idea that they can affect change in the world. In the same way, my dissertation will explore how embracing intuition can lead to acceptance of others, empathy, and bring about social change as each student begins to reject the limited and anti-intellectual standards imposed on learning today as well as disagree with the present theme of education as a pathway to producing successful consumers. The notion of embracing

intuition is two fold: accepting and exploring intuitive moments as they happen to oneself, and realizing that others have their own paths directed by their intuition. At this point I am wary about giving a definition of intuition and boxing it in semantically. Instead, I will list instances of intuition claiming our attention. These include, but are not limited to doubts and resistance against logic or rational presentations, the belief there might be more to what is presented or implied, an inexplicable new interest, feelings of synchronicity or *déjà vu*, gut feelings, instincts (fight or flight) on sudden alert, a desideratum, sudden rapport with strangers, at times feelings of foreboding, and even dreams. Intuition seems to be a form of communication from an untraceable origin.

The speculative essay is also a reflection of who I am, as both a teacher and student. I don't have a theory I am trying to prove; I don't always operate within the same frameworks; and I try very hard to be open to multiple paradigms and possibilities. Schubert (1991) lauds the philosophical essay's ability to

provide integrative, imaginative, and speculative leaps of interpretation that are still soundly grounded in a variety of other research traditions. Metaphorically, it is a kind of meta-analysis or research synthesis that uses the informed and insightful scholar (rather than a set of statistical rules) as the instrument for synthesis and illumination. (p. 64)

The purpose of these essays is to honor non-traditional ways, in our current education system, of teaching and learning. As an educator, I think it is important to teach beyond prescribed curricula and standards and help students attune to their inner nature, maintain sensitivity and openness to what they have trouble understanding, be wary of what they are told, engage in recursive reflection, and act upon their personal

inspiration. The aim of this dissertation is to encourage instructors and their students to use intuition as a tool in education, critical thinking, and becoming ‘wide awake’ (Greene, 1978), and motivated to improve the world they live in.

Just as there is no one formula to elicit intuition, there is no formula for writing a speculative essay (Schubert, 1991, p. 68). Schubert does however provide five guidelines for the speculative essayist. First he suggests immersing oneself in a body of work; in my case curriculum, intuition, and more specifically intuition as it relates to education. Second he focuses on the basic curricular question of knowledge and its worth (Spencer, 1861). This essay is particularly interested in focusing on the question of “How can someone be helped to learn and experience that which is worthwhile?” (Schubert, 1991, p. 68). This question is one that I believe is answered individually. A curriculum which is imposed, with no room for exploration and individual fulfillment is oppressive. Third, the writer is encouraged to explore, imagine and create beyond what is already given and written. In this vein I will be including personal vignettes and experiences in the dissertation. Metaphor has a way of saving prose from the ordinary and, I think, from sounding preachy. In speaking of Plato’s methods of teaching, Serres (1966) says

(e)very time he has something somewhat difficult to say, he abandons technical vocabulary and goes to myth, telling a story that globalizes his point even more. He is always in the process of moving obliquely, as you said. Where neither mathematics nor logic can go, let myth go! (p. 72).

Fourth, immerse oneself in curricular theorists – particularly those using the essay form. And, finally, write a great deal.

The task of this dissertation seems rather iterative. I am proposing to think about a certain form of understanding. From the *Online Etymology Dictionary*, the Late Latin roots of speculation and intuition are *speculationem* meaning contemplation or observation, and *intuitionem*, indicating looking at or considering. The essay will reflect on the many definitions of intuition against our current backdrop of educational conformity (Anyon, 2014; Apple, 2013; Au, 2009) within a highly commodified society. Like the many thinkers with whom I identify, I see intuition as individual and personal (Artaud, 1965; Greene, 1995, 2001; Jung, 2009; Noddings & Shore, 1984; Serres, 1966), therefore my dissertation will maintain a fairly broad definition of intuition as an intangible and unidentifiable summons to notice or consider something. As individuals attempt to learn, they assimilate dozens of forms of knowing and are only able to recognize what they have assimilated to date. Schubert explains, in the *Encyclopedia of Educational Theory and Philosophy* that “the structure of knowledge invokes multiple ways of knowing such as experimentation, empiricism, revelation, authority, rationality, intuition, meditation, and embodied knowing” (2014, p. 447). Through this sieve, individuals grapple with what resonates as true until further forms of knowing alter perceptions. At this point a caveat is necessary. Intuition should not be an excuse for personal comfort or used as a bolster for political, religious, or ethical convictions. It is a form of consideration to be used as a part of an individual’s arsenal for understanding. In an interview with *TIME* Magazine (Meacham, July 2016) Donald Trump claims to be an intuitive person who is able to operate off the cuff and successfully make policy decisions without reading up on them. This is not a form of intuition that this dissertation recommends. Intuition is one of many facets to explore something. It can be a

prompting or nudge in a certain direction to be followed by reflection, discovery, conversation, and certainly reading up on a subject. Sometimes intuition looks for comfort in filling in gestalts – and is wrong – but closure appeals to our need for comfort and security. Intuition has its faults and should not be approached monostylistically. It should neither be discounted as an avenue to discovery. Dewey, in *The Way Out of Educational Confusion* (1931), demonstrates that imposed structures of learning fail to meet the learner's interests and experiences to create the ideal learning experience. There is no utopian curriculum that can address the needs of all learners. There is no one way to go about understanding something thoroughly or discovering a truth – which is another topic beyond the scope of this dissertation. As regards intuition, I feel it is a tool that can help show respect toward learners' interests and lead to individual curriculums that continuously expand and restructure knowledge.

Joseph Schwab's Framework of Commonplaces

A speculative essay has the potential to wander off on dozens of paths, but for the purposes of this dissertation, and for the benefit of the reader, there has to be some boundary within which the goals of the essay are attainable. The goal, to repeat, is to encourage acceptance of intuition as a valid aspect of the teaching and learning process and a viable avenue for exploration. The educational world has, over time, with the imposition of standards and tests become less concerned with exploration and increasingly concerned, as it copies the capitalist business model (Nussbaum, 2010; Ohanian, 1999), of reducing errors and uncertainty. Klein, in *Seeing What Others Don't*, (2013, p. 159) summarizes this commitment to minimizing errors as imposing tighter standards, increasing controls, documenting sources, increasing the number of reviews

and evaluations, and relying on checklists and procedures. It has been my experience, and is confirmed by various scholars (Nuñez, 2015; Shapiro, 2015) that this form of control in the learning milieu is antithetical to intuition, creativity, risk-taking, and instead creates an atmosphere of competition, fear, isolation, and as Heller (2014) points out ‘the end of innovation.’ In addition, the pressures of time (in education this is covering curriculum maps and achieving standards) lead to ‘bounded rationality’ which Herbert Simon (1991) describes as satisficing (settling on the first option that works) versus exploring, developing, and maximizing.

Schwab’s four commonplaces have been used to examine curriculum extensively, most notably in the *Sage Guide to Curriculum in Education* (eds. He, Schultz, Schubert, 2015). The second chapter in this dissertation will look at how subject matter can be approached intuitively; the third how teachers can operate from intuition; the fourth intuition and the student (phenomenology and choice); and finally the fifth will explore where, ‘*milieu*’, intuition can operate. These four chapters will also examine how intuition impacts the individual, others, and communities. Although the goal of this dissertation is to encourage the acceptance of intuition as a valid avenue – among others – to learning, it is the hope that this will lead to agency, to a motivation which recognizes oppression and injustices and is willing to step in and serve humanity.

Intuition as Agency

Agency is associated with ‘acting for’, intentionality, choice, and will. Emirbayer and Mische (1998) developed an all-encompassing definition of agency as a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its ‘iterational’ or habitual aspect) but also oriented toward the future (as a

‘projective’ capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a ‘practical-evaluative’ capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment). (p. 962)

This dissertation is looking at intuition via the four commonplaces of subject matter, teacher, student, and place with the purpose of developing agency in students. The ability to understand, or at least reflect on oneself and the past, the understanding that there are many paradigms and ways of knowing, the development of empathy toward others and the ability to think critically about social and political situations serves to bring about agency to work against oppression. It is the individual *conscientização* of Paulo Freire (2010) and the collective action theory of Hegel (1807/1998) and Marx (1848/2002). Within each of the following four chapters, I will not only look at how intuition operates as a way of knowing, but how it does so concentrically from the individual to the collective and how it can serve as an agent for change.

A Working Definition of Intuition

A Brief History of the Definition. There are many definitions of intuition throughout history and in various branches of study. At one extreme there is the phenomenological principle of a pre-suppositionless starting point (Husserl, 2012; Moran, 2000). At the other extreme, we have contemporary researchers explaining how subconscious knowledge surfaces to aid in our decision making and functioning in the world (Gladwell, 2005; Kahneman, 2011; Klein, 1998, 2013). These divergent views have a long history with many tributaries of interpretations from poets, mystics, and the general public.

Plato's notion of learning, as described in his allegory of the cave (Jowett's translation), is the recognition of what our soul already knows – we simply have to become aware of it. This type of intuitive knowledge corresponds to the view that intuition preexists our thinking or participation. Sophie Haroutunian-Gordon (1991) explains this as the soul turning to focus upon what can draw out our understanding. In the teaching milieu, Palmer (1998) touches upon this when he distinguishes between the *inner* and *outer* landscapes of teaching and learning. The outer landscapes comprise the four commonplaces, and the inner is the quest for transformative and liberating educational opportunities and experiences.

Aristotle falls into the second camp of trying to align intuition with the functioning of the mind. For Aristotle (Mure's translation), it is the grasping of first principles or immediate insight that provides concepts, universal propositions, the laws of logic and even moral concepts – which is why he explains intuition as infallible. These first principles exist, but are not given without the process of thought and recognition. From sense perception and experiences people develop memories that clarify universal knowledge, which exists in the soul but must go through a process to be recognized. Aristotle (Posterior Analytics 100a) cites the craftsman whose repeated exposure to experience build an intuitive knowledge. A thousand years later Klein (1998) sees the same intuitive intelligence and creativity in the scientist. He explains that repeated exposure and familiarity means that an expert can “see patterns that novices do not notice – are faster to find anomalies—and get a ‘big picture’” (p. 148).

Noddings and Shore (1984) spend the first three chapters of *Awakening the Inner Eye: Intuition in Education* tracing the many definitions of intuition throughout history

and within the branches of philosophy, psychology, and theology. Up until the 20th century, and beyond, we see the understanding of intuition as mimicking the schism between science and religion. Like religion, it “is associated historically with the preconditions of knowledge: of the world, of one’s ideas, of God” (Osbeck & Held, 2014, p. 5). And as such, like faith, it is not arguable and searchable through what have become the preferred methods of systematic observation, measurement, and experimentation.

“Intuition is a jump—it is not something that comes to you in steps . . . If it were not sudden, nor completely discontinuous with what went before, then reason would discover the path” (Osho, 2001, p. ix – x). Simply because we cannot use the scientific method to explain intuition does not mean it is not a valid path to understanding. Perhaps there is a key to explaining intuition that we simply haven’t discovered yet – the earth was the center of the universe until Copernicus proved it was not. Newton’s laws worked until Einstein’s theories of relativity (motion and gravity) replaced them. Quantum mechanics (a description of our atomic and nuclear universe) explains our universe, as does Einstein’s theory, but they are incompatible – do they have missing parts or is there a third option we will eventually discover? Another huge gap in our current understanding is dark matter which accounts for 27% of what we currently understand as our universe (from the CERN website 2016). Like dark matter, there is the conundrum of dark energy. Tyson (2007) explains, “We’ve known since Edwin Hubble’s seminal work during the 1920s that the universe is expanding, but we’ve only just learned that the universe is also accelerating, by some antigravity pressure dubbed ‘dark energy’ for which we have no working hypothesis to understand” (p. 20). We will never completely arrive at knowing. I argue we need to include intuition as one among many forms of knowing – even if we

are uncertain of how it operates. We must continue building and considering different theories of intuition. A theory is a possible step to understanding; Bertrand Russell (2001) explains that as prior theories have proven false, many current theories are also likely false. This, I suppose is the iterative nature of knowledge.

As a non-rational means to understanding, intuition has largely been rejected by science and embraced by mystics. As Noddings and Shore (1984) point out, Jung is the first to build a bridge between these two extremes when he links intuition to the subconscious. In effect Jung (1971) takes the mystical out of intuition by creating a science of psychology around it. Jung listed four ‘mental functions’ of how we acquire knowledge: sensing, feeling, thinking, and intuiting. The intuiting function reserves judgment and perceives possibilities and implications before the other three functions get involved. It taps into both the individual’s unconscious and the collective unconscious, what Osbeck & Held (2014) describes as the “deepest layer of the unconscious that is shared universally, an endless reservoir of instinctual and cultural representation” (p. 9). Intuition for Jung is “perception by way of the unconscious, or perception of unconscious events” (1971, p. 518).

Intuition: From the Individual to the Collective. For the purposes of this essay, a working definition of intuition will be an inner sense of correctness developed individually from within, without a clear or immediate rational explanation. It is the notion of consonance. Clearly this definition poses dangers. It paints the picture of a madman justifying beliefs and actions because ‘they feel right.’ I argue for considering these insights that seem to appear from nowhere – considering them as first possible steps to knowledge, thinking about why they demand our attention. Although intuition appears

suddenly, this does not mean our actions should likewise follow suit. Further, intuition is not a closed concept. It hints at ideas and is often a precursor to scientific discoveries and creative endeavors (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2010). Generally, when we speak of intuition we mean that “something you instinctively feel inside yourself” (Jagla, p. 34), the “aha” moment recently popularized by Oprah Winfrey. Intuition, I believe, can work to supplement the intellect. Further, I believe being right, correct, or appropriate are all words which indicate a specific way to be or to do things. This correctness however is not adhering to the formulas given by others or dictates from society, nor is it final. The arguments against a curriculum incorporating intuition are that there is an aspect of that ‘anything goes’ element that makes people uncomfortable, and the question of erroneous conviction. Just because a person feels or believes something is right does not necessarily make it so. Intuition is not a ‘yes’ to everything. It is its more encompassing opposite; not a ‘no’ to anything – yet, or a ‘maybe’ to everything. It realizes other’s may have a ‘yes’ to which they do not agree. As well, there is a respect for where others are in their understanding of themselves and the world around them. Although we live in the here and now, go about a daily routine, and interact with the world in ways that resonate most comfortably with what we know and accept, an intuitive curriculum – one which recognizes each individual has an inner life and individual interests and understandings – develops tolerance for ambiguity and difference. This curriculum is not focused on what is right but on possibilities, change, growth, and acceptance. With it, we have an awareness that “the roads to understanding are many and that a narrow view of method is likely to lead to limited understanding” (Eisner, 1993, p. 11).

A curriculum which includes intuition is one where students learn to attune to their own selves so they can better understand and interact with the world in the manner of the I – Thou relationships as described by Buber (1958). This development, from the self, to the thou of Buber, and finally the collective of Jung is a curricular process. This path is similar to Henri Bergson’s understanding of intuition as “not a single act but an indefinite series of acts” (2010, p. 155) beginning with the self but continuing on to whatever it encounters.

Being told (even if the concept is correct) is not the same thing as learning. The focus of contented knowledge is intuition’s gift. I suspect we all know that feeling of deep understanding and the corollary of satisfaction which accompanies it. Noddings & Shore (1984) ask the following: “Why should the intuitive conclusion come to us with the surprise, clarity, and beauty of perception if it is merely a rapid version of reasoning? Why should we so often find ourselves inarticulate when the intuition comes to us?” (p. 48). There is not only this beauty we feel when struck intuitively, but also a practicality or certainty that accompanies it. I agree with Moustakas who explains in his own life,

The most significant understandings that I have come to I have not achieved from books or from others, but initially, at least, from my own direct perceptions, observations, and intuitions. This has been true in my teaching, my therapy, intimate relationships in my life, my involvement as a parent and my presence as a person in the everyday world. (p. 41)

Even though intuition is experienced individually, and can create meaning for the individual, we are social creatures who re-create meaning when we interact with one another (O’Brien & Kollock, 2005). A curricular objective, from kindergarten onward is

to know and understand oneself (*gnōthi seauton*). Whether coming to know oneself is accomplished through Pinar's currere, (m)any of the forms of psychoanalysis, reflection and introspection, or phenomenology, intuition can be a tool in this exploration.

As many students know, it is exhausting to try and be someone else. Pretending to be someone else, or not oneself, results in a repressed individual. As such a (repressed/fragmented) self, Pinar explains, "lacks access both to itself and the world. Repressed, the self's capacity for intelligence, for informed action, even for simple functional competence is impaired" (1993, p. 61). The historically white, male, and Western goal of this type of self-knowledge, is encouraged throughout history by philosophers and writers such as Plato (*Dialogues of Plato*), Thomas Hobbes (*Leviathan*), Alexander Pope (*Essay on Man*), Ralph Waldo Emerson (*Gnothi Seauton*), and Nietzsche (*Ecce Homo*), which serves as a step to understanding others. Once a student understands himself or herself, they are better able to recognize and tolerate both the similarities and the *différance* (Derrida, 1982) in others. Alternately, the Eastern, feminist, Native American and indigenous view of finding one's self begins with acknowledging our interdependence. Philosophers and writers such as Lao Tse (*Tao Te Ching*, 1963 trans.), bell hooks (*Feminism is for Everybody*, 2000), Balenky (*Women's Ways of Knowing*, 1986), Gilligan (*In a Different Voice*, 1982), and Lame Deer (*Lame Deer: Seeker of Visions*, 1978) begin with the self as a part of community and nature. From this connectivity comes understanding of the self and tolerance of others. It is the *tolérance* which Freire (2010) elucidates is not 'putting up with' but 'respecting' differences. O'Brien (2005) explains this domino effect of understanding and agency; "if we understand how it is that we participate in the construction of our own realities, then we

can take a more active and purposeful approach toward making this the sort of world in which we want to live” (p. xvii).

The jump from self-relating to relating to others is best expressed through the philosophy of Buber. For Buber (1958) the lived experience is personal and knowledge begins in solitude, but the “dialogical” experience helps a person develop as a whole being. In terms of education, Buber (1963) believes the student cannot be prepared for every situation and that the role of the teacher is to dialogue and respond with their ‘Thou’, to the students’ ‘Thou’ to ensure students develop both individuation and an understanding of community. With ‘Thou’ we again have two sides to view things; as with intuition and science we have a subjective and objective way to view things – one which is easy to explain and describe, and the other which eludes description. Buber’s ‘I-It’ relationship is the frequent way we interact with our world and objectify (measure/examine) it to understand it. The ‘I-Thou’ relationship is the connection we have with people when we go beyond objectifying them to have dialogue, understanding, and meaningful relationships. Once again, we have a concept that is difficult to define and explain, but which Buber maintains you know it when you have it.

In the same vein, Derrida (1982) speaks of *différance*, as both difference and deference. And, although in his book he is speaking of the inability to pin down and specify text, he is also speaking of how we ‘other’ what we don’t know or are afraid of. A curriculum which includes intuition is one which respects the ‘self-hood’/’Thou’ of others. Post-modernism likewise sees individual understanding as iterative and inconclusive. Embracing post-modernist methods of deconstructing, redefining, and innovating, students are able to accept and respond to the ‘Thou’ in others. Post-

modernism, particularly in the social sciences, concerns itself with the forgotten, the irrational, the oppressed, and the silenced (Rosenau, 1991). A curriculum which embraces intuition encourages introspection, openness, and agency. Because we are social beings, our self is always a part of our communities. The self that we learn about as we learn about the world are not two separate curriculums. James Hillman (1992) describes the self as “*the interiorization of community*”; in effect he links political action as a natural outcome of a developed person. As a psychologist he cautions against ignoring the “outer soul” as doing so “supports the decline of the actual world” (p. 5). Curriculum is the making and re-making of ourselves and our social worlds – with others and with various communities.

A curriculum which values intuition and incorporates it into the four commonplaces of teacher, student, subject matter, and place can create concentric growth from understanding oneself and becoming ‘wide-awake’, to accepting otherness, to protecting otherness.

Chapter 2

Tasting Ladybugs: Intuition and Subject Matter

Childhood knows sudden awakenings of the mind, intense prolongations of thought which are lost again at a later age.

~Artaud, 1965, p. 50

I was engaging in the bad habit of nibbling at my cuticles when two thoughts simultaneously struck me: my finger tastes like ladybug, and, how on earth do I know what ladybug tastes like. Luckily I was at home, alone, and decided take five or so minutes to lose myself in reverie over this conundrum. I remembered that I had earlier in the day picked up a couple of dead ladybugs at the base of my south-facing window. This explained why I tasted ladybug; I assumed, but could not remember specific incidents as a child playing with ladybugs and storing the taste of their residue in my memory. Regardless, I remembered the taste. I wondered if it was the thick yellow slime that lady bugs can leave behind – which I always assumed was urine – that I tasted. My five minutes were up, but I could not let this experience go. I kept with it and remembered being so much closer to nature as a child – not just the pretty flowers and sunny days, but the insects which for some reason adults learn to fear, and the dirt which we are taught is abhorrent and needs to be cleaned away. Children seem to naturally immerse themselves in the physical world (Rousseau, 1762/1979). They see it, taste it, touch it, smell it, and listen to it. This naturally occurring curriculum, where one is not bounded by the classroom but learning from nature and from one's cultural or societal surroundings is referred to by Schubert (1981) as the out-of-school curriculum.

The bitter taste, I googled, was a chemical coating which protected these bugs from being eaten by birds. I had to learn more. They are used in organic farming as pest control, vintners and scientists are concerned with ladybugs affecting the taste of wine, and in medieval times the bugs were crushed to form a paste and used for toothaches. There are also various folklores and superstitions surrounding the insect; and yes, it is the warm south-facing windows that they like to gather around. Half an hour later, immersed in ladybug information and other childhood memories, I recalled I was a teacher and started to think about how I could share this sudden interest. Not just knowledge about ladybugs, but about getting lost in one topic that seems to beg your interest. Would thirty students in my classroom want to learn this much about ladybugs? No, but there is something they each would want to spend time pursuing. Perhaps not something others would be interested in, and perhaps not listed on their grade level standards. I had spent a satisfying half an hour in intuitive study. When I tasted the bitter ladybug residue on my finger I felt a call to ‘pay attention’ to it. When I discovered why the taste was bitter I asked myself if I was satisfied and listened to that small part of me that suggested there might be more. I learned additional and varied interesting facts. Certainly there is more to know, but the part of me that I try to listen to and continually ask ‘does this seem right’ indicated I was done. There is a touchstone I think we all have, that is different for each of us, which is acknowledging our intuition as it attempts to guide our curiosity. It is a restlessness that accompanies a stirring of the soul, until it finds temporary closure.

The above vignette typifies what Schubert (1981) calls the outside or out-of-school curriculum: learning that occurs naturally whether it is actively pursued – as in the case above, or naturally occurring through family, media, friends, work or other

forces. I argue it is essential to provide time, place, and flexibility as part of school curriculum for these learning experiences.

The rest of this chapter will speculate on the *what*, *when*, *how* and *why* questions of subject matter and intuition. The *who*, some more *when*, and *where* questions will be covered in subsequent chapters that look more specifically at the student, teacher, and milieu.

What: Intuition as Possibility

Traditionally curriculum has been defined and created as the scope and sequence of subject matter appropriate for individual grades or levels. This is a very practical way of putting together an idea of what to do in the classroom on a daily basis. The problem with set standards and mandated curriculum is that it lends itself to rigidity. The business model of conducting school is actually successful if one agrees with its purpose of producing adults who are compliant with maintaining the status quo and becoming successful producers and consumers in mass quantity at as low a cost as possible. The business model uses economies of scale, strict standards to measure production and output, and graduates students who are competitive and ready to *purchase* happiness and success. “The curriculum of wealth has been highly successful in preventing revolution of the masses” (Schubert, 2009, p. 92). This structure, based on principles of conformity and commodification, leaves little room for intuitive teaching and learning because it excludes both the student and teacher from decision-making. Further, it allows little time for additional/enriched subject matter. Maxine Greene (1978) makes the case for a curriculum that consistently allows for change and redirection stating that “(s)tudents must be enabled, at whatever stages they find themselves to be, to encounter curriculum

as possibility” (p. 18). Scope and sequence need to be organic, not only to benefit individual student interests, but because we live in an increasingly complex and ever-changing world. In fact, “more than half of the major, life-altering technological and social innovations introduced to the world came into being in the past 200 years” (Puccio & Cabra, 2010, p. 146). Students who are used to change, comfortable with multiple possibilities, and adept at looking for information are ready for the 21st century – whether that readiness is the college and career readiness of ‘skills to compete’ described by the common core standards (<http://www.ed.gov/k-12reforms/standards>) or readiness for life itself, where Dewey (1897) described education as ‘the process of living’ rather than ‘the preparation for future living.’

To use fashion as a metaphor, intuition as possibility is like that tiny loose thread in your clothing that begs your attention. Fashion expects you to present yourself neatly (no loose threads), fit in, and change your style only when the industry has forged the way. Intuition is about letting yourself pull that thread, unravelling what you present to yourself and the world, and seeing where it leads. Like the thread, it is often almost imperceptible, it offers nothing in the way of reward other than satisfying curiosity or compulsion, and runs the risk of upsetting others as things can get messy; there is no set path in terms of timeline or conclusion, and it is often not conformational/normative.

The word possibility hints at hope, choice, adventure, risk; there is a notion that there is something else out there. Again, we are at a point where intuition should be defined. Again, I am hesitant to limit its meaning. In terms of what intuition is as it relates to curriculum – what is to be studied – I defer to metaphor again: it is a stew. It is a compilation of possibility, interest, subconscious knowledge/remembering, soul-making

(Hillman, 1975), connection, and poetic reverie (Bachelard, 1960). It is individual, as each of these ingredients has different measures at various times for each one of us. To clarify some of the terms developed by scholars listed above ‘soul-making’ (Hillman, 1975) is engaging in imaginal connections and exploring fantasy, images, and dreams without judgment to connect with self and others (p. 13, 23, 77). Bachelard’s (1960) ‘poetic reverie’ is creative daydreaming which is in touch with the senses and attempting to expand consciousness through wonder (p. 6, 15).

Currently in our schools the fulcrum upon which curriculum rests is standards. Because it is so compelling, intuitive study often takes place outside of this setting; learners make time for what they are interested in. Schools, educators, administrators, in the students’ best interest and to achieve set curriculum limit individual pursuits as superfluous. I argue in the next section that schools need to provide time for intuitive interests whether it is exploring the protective yellow fluid ladybugs excrete or reading about Heraclitus’ unity of opposites. Further, we have to do away with the idea of ‘usefulness’ and return on investment. Some interests will result in short-lived mayflies of investigations and others life-long pursuits.

Standards are often vague. A sampling from the Common Core in a variety of subjects for kindergarten through twelfth grade students (Read the Standards, 2016) include: determining the central idea of a text; integrating visual information; distinguishing among facts, reasoned judgment based on research, and speculation; understanding statistics as a process for making inferences; generating measurement data. These standards do not have to drive instruction, and can instead be used in service of curricular decisions. At some point pursuing what is relevant to the student will meet

some of these standards. There is a flexible concatenation during learning: time and place, the student as learner, the teacher as guide, and content. The same subject, for example fifth grade social studies, looks very different across classrooms within one school and across schools throughout the country. The standards ensure we are learning similar content, while differentiation is tailored to what the students need in terms of learning. For example, an instructor might not have to spend as much time explaining drought to students living in the rural Midwest as their counter parts in Alaska or New York city. An instructor may use a novel study to explore the effects of drought, while a colleague may choose to look at scientific articles. Teachers need to use their professional discretion to teach what both they and the student determine—together—is relevant.

Returning to the notion of ‘what’ is important and ‘what’ should be learned touches upon many topics discussed in the first chapter. What is important is a philosophical question, as well as one which returns both individualized and shared answers. People have varied interests and passions, however we also recognize common goals such as earning a living wage, enjoying civil liberties, and pursuing what we individually define as happiness. Likewise, curriculum has broad goals of teaching students to read, write, and learn about history, science, mathematics and other topics. An intuitive curriculum allows for space, time, and flexibility for teachers and students to incorporate individual interests and passions.

When: Intuition and Seizing Opportunity

Children learn, quite successfully, long before they enter the schoolroom. Children are programmed to learn in order to survive and thrive in the world (Hirsh-

Pasek, Golinkoff, & Eyer, 2004). Dewey (1897) states that “(t)he child’s own instincts and powers furnish the material and give the starting point for all education” (p. 4). This type of learning, a learning fueled by a student’s natural curiosity, needs to not only provide a starting point for education, but should continue in the school setting. This can only be accomplished by making time for it. Jagla (1994), in studying teacher intuition, found that “(a) Deweyan teacher needs to ascertain the deep rooted interests of each student and allow for individualization in the pursuit of that which makes learning meaningful for them” (p. 21). Further, she recognizes that good teaching requires continuous spontaneous decision making to meet student interests. This intuitive adjusting, on the part of the teacher, to meet the intuitive explorations, on the part of the student, is often a reorganizing of time and subject matter. I agree with Pinar (2012) when he explains that “school curriculum guidelines must never be more than guidelines, inviting reformulation according to the professional judgment of the individual educator” (p. 54).

The familiar school jargon of ‘time-on-task’, ‘bell-to-bell instruction’, ‘efficient delivery’, and ‘progress monitoring’ is antithetical to intuitive curriculum. Chapter one offered the broad definition of intuition as an intangible and unidentifiable summons to notice or consider something – to bring it into the sphere of study and make the joyous connections which constitute learning. This may not happen between the ringing of bells at the beginning and end of a period, is not necessarily incumbent on how the instructor participates in the learning, and does not lend itself to progress monitoring until study is underway. Intuition does not accept an agenda or timeline of success. It has its own movement and its own standards of accomplishment. The usual means of assessing

teacher effectiveness and assessing student mastery does not apply. Alternative assessments for teachers could include talent and personal development (Astin, 2012), reflective teaching (Astika, 2014), and flexibility and responsiveness (Wilson, 2015). For students it could be portfolios, performances, exhibitions (Garcia, 2014), dialogue (Peacock 2016), real or simulated situations which require higher-order thinking skills (Tal & Meidijensky, 2005) and self-assessment (Boud, Lawson & Thompson, 2013). The 'when' in these instances does not always correspond to a semester or calendar year. Talent and personal development is an ongoing part of oneself before, during, and after the structured years of education. Reflective teaching can occur continuously, after a unit is completed, and/or after a year with the same group of students, but should be part of a teacher's repertoire for growth. A teaching moment cannot always be scheduled, but can be seized when it arrives unannounced. The act of inviting these moments and making time for them is in itself a valuable lesson for students.

Providing time, allowing for spontaneity, and guiding or co-creating individual projects or interests in a classroom can be a challenge largely because they do not fit into standardized curriculum maps and assessment. I reject the idea of a successful classroom as one in which students have 'mastered' for a cumulative test what has been predetermined as learning objects or goals. Instead, I embrace the more encompassing notion articulated by Dewey (1934) of a successful classroom being characterized by an assimilation of past, present, and future knowledge which integrates understandings as it opens new doors of interest and discovery. Performances and exhibitions allow a student to present their knowledge and academic explorations to date. Musical demonstrations are a common example of using performance for assessment. What do judges look for in

performance aside from technical virtuosity: energy, emotional communication, vulnerability, interpretation and passion. Another form of assessment is dialogue and checkpoints. Does a student necessarily have to produce something concrete for a teacher? Can they not, together, come up with their own curriculum map – especially at the early stages of a project or interest where flexibility is needed? And finally self-assessment is another form of assessment which works with intuitive curriculum and provides a least restrictive environment for learning at an individual pace. If a student is to pursue individual interests, they are probably the experts in demonstrating what they are accomplishing in the classroom. Because the ‘when’ factor is the most limiting in a brick and mortar school, (structured schedules, semesters, school calendars) teachers and students need to think creatively and be flexible and adaptive to include intuition as part of the curriculum.

The ‘when’ of curriculum is closely aligned with the ‘what’ or content. In a traditional educational system these two parameters determine how the school year will unfold grade level by grade level. And, although this system does work with the average social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development of children, it does not account for students that do not conform to the average or who have special talents and interests. Public education does address these issues with special education classes, gifted programs, and schools that specialize in arts or in STEM sciences. Additionally, Georgia has replaced the dual enrollment program, where high school students can earn college credits while still in high school, with the ‘Move On When Ready’ program. The MOWR program is available to students in ninth through twelfth grades who are interested in subjects not available in their high schools and whose content is more

difficult or enriched (“Transition Career Partnerships,” 2015). An intuitive curriculum allows for educational opportunities and differences daily, in the classroom, when needed, at all grades and levels. It is a less structured openness to allowing students to explore what they are currently interested in.

How: Boredom, Improvisation, Currere, Phenomenology, and Aesthetic Inquiry

So far I have proposed a curriculum which welcomes intuition and permits a student to pursue varied areas of inquiry, in a setting which allows time for these pursuits. Other avenues, or the how of accomplishing this could include, but is not limited to: boredom, improvisation, currere, phenomenological inquiry, and the arts.

A prevailing notion in education is that industry, on the part of the teacher and the student, equates to learning. There is something unusual about leaving a child ‘be’ in the school setting. Teachers attend colleges of education to learn how to plan out lessons, organize classrooms and provide rules for efficiency and desired behavioral outcomes, as well as how to assess how effective they are as teachers and how ‘much’ students are learning. There is constant busyness at school, and the implicit notion that when there is busyness there is learning. I argue that there is utility in boredom. Boredom forces the mind into places it might not otherwise go. To be bored, your mind is actively aroused and looking for something to occupy it – otherwise you would be relaxed (Eastwood, Frischen, Fenske, & Smilek, 2012). In a dated, but still relevant study on the experience of boredom Damrad-Frye & Laird (1989) identified an interplay of frustration; the mind, at the same time, has difficulty concentrating on one thing – or is dissatisfied with what is presented to it. To cope, people begin to daydream, which can lead to avenues of interest. Children especially need to experience boredom which often precedes great

discoveries; it is a stage of expectation before something else begins. Psychoanalyst Adam Phillips notes,

How often, in fact, the child's boredom is met by that most perplexing form of disapproval, the adult's wish to distract him—as though the adults have decided that the child's life must be, or be seen to be, endlessly interesting. It is one of the most oppressive demands of adults that the child should be interested, rather than take time to find what interests him. Boredom is integral to the process of taking one's time. (1993, p. 73)

Boredom is not only directed outward, towards the *what next*, but also teaches us about ourselves. In an interview, Eckhart Tolle states “So even boredom can teach you who you are and who you are not” (2015, p. 25). Bachelard (1960) explains this as recognizing who you were, and realizing it as a part of who you still are.

To meditate on the child we were, beyond all family history, after going beyond the zone of regrets, after dispersing all the mirages of nostalgia, we reach an anonymous childhood, a pure threshold of life, original life, original human life. And this life is within us—let us underline that once again—remains within us. (p. 125)

The connection to intuition is the understanding of the self. Also, intuition is an understanding without being told or taught by others. To quote Bachelard again,

Character consolidates itself in the hours of solitude so conducive to imaginative exploits. These hours of total solitude are by their very nature universal. The human being who abandons the world of human affairs for the depths of reveries sees things as they truly are *at last*. (2002, p. 21)

Increasingly, as a culture, we do not have the opportunity to face boredom and learn from it. With the advent of smartphones, tablets, and a proliferation of apps, there is always something readily available to distract us and occupy our time. In a phenomenological study, Lomas (2017) finds three merits to welcoming the experience of boredom: altered perceptions of time, attentiveness and curiosity towards our immediate environment, and an exploration of the self. Not only is technology denying the lessons from boredom, but well-meaning parents are also.

There is a similarity between boredom and improvisation. Like boredom, with improvisation you are faced with a nothingness with which your mind and creativity must react. Improvisation is largely associated with acting, comedy and music -- being performative and spontaneous. Spontaneity of students should not always be seen as a digression that should be stopped – a potential discipline situation. Improvisation can be a tool in the classroom for students to think intuitively, and likewise a tool for teachers to direct the classroom. Although he believed it was the instructor's job to provide the selection and organization of subject matter and guide discovery, Dewey said that "improvisation that takes advantage of special occasions prevents teaching and learning from being stereotyped and dead" (1938/1998, p. 96). Improvisation on the part of the teacher is not something one must resort to when plans don't work out, but teaching situations that can be taken advantage of for the benefit of the student. To improvise successfully, one has to have a lot of background knowledge (Jagla, 1994). Kazembe & Lessing (2015) conclude "If improvisation can be summed up colloquially as a breaking of the rules, then before the rules can be bent or broken, they must first be learned" (p. 225). Skilled teachers can use improvisation to improve instruction and learning.

Dealing with boredom is something the student must accomplish on his or her own. Improvisation in the classroom is largely at the direction of the teacher. The following describes two methods of learning which use tools of intuition in which the teacher can act as a guide for the student. Phenomenological inquiry and currere are terms given to other possible ways in which we can learn about ourselves and the world around us. They preclude an acceptance of steps or rules, but understanding what they are can help us participate in a type of thinking which draws on intuition.

Phenomenological inquiry dates from the early 20th century with the philosopher Edmund Husserl, and the method of currere from 1975 with William Pinar's publication *The Method of Currere*. These forms of inquiry are highly intuitive and self-reflective. Introspection, self-examination, and meaning-making of course existed prior to this time. Husserl and Pinar gave a name and method for different forms of self-inquiry. I agree with Dewey that the study of the self is the most important curricular subject. He stated (1902/1990) that "personality, character is more important than subject matter. Not knowledge or information but self-realization is the goal" (p. 187). This study of the self could appear self-indulgent, but it is the cornerstone of all other curriculum. It is difficult to understand others without a clear understanding of the self.

Marla Morris (2015) explains the process of currere,

For Pinar the self is fluid and interiority complicated. Most simply, for Pinar, the student of currere should look backward, remembering the past—especially one's childhood—then look to the future in order to see what lies ahead educationally, psychically, and spiritually, then take things apart in an analytic sense and finally

synthesize the movements in order to experience life as continual movement. (p. 104)

Currere is a process for both the student and the teacher. I consider one of its most important contributions in the educational setting its homage to open-endedness. It rejects the closure of an answer and sees the value in revisiting, reevaluating, revisioning, experiences and conclusions. In terms of relationships with students, currere requires teachers to understand and explore their own educational journeys and consider the similarities, differences and depths of their students' educational expeditions. Although currere is highly self-reflexive, it has a strong component of connecting with others as education is both an individual and group activity. Another aspect is the development of respect and empathy for the different paths we take on this journey.

An additional benefit of currere is the creation of critical thinkers. Kanu & Glor (2006) contend it is imperative in a knowledge society and market economy to maintain a stance of skepticism and even exile in order to question what is mainstream as well as the institutions which direct education policy. Citing Edward Saïd, they believe that currere lies at the heart of creating 'amateur intellectuals.' An amateur intellectual, it is to be noted, is not a dilettante but rather is a person (every person) who has the right to question the status quo and the educational experience. Saïd (1996) explains "amateurism means choosing the risks and uncertain results of the public sphere—a lecture or a book or an article in wide and unrestricted circulation—over the insider space controlled by experts and professionals" (p. 87). Further,

The intellectual's spirit as an amateur can enter and transform the merely professional routine most of us go through into something more lively and radical;

instead of doing what one is supposed to do, one can ask why one does it, who benefits from it, and how can it reconnect with a personal project and original thought. (p. 83)

If we are to promote critical thinking in schools, students of all ages need to question their individual process of education; they need unbridled permission to question authority and the status quo, and they need not fear speaking what they believe is true.

Phenomenology is likewise a pathway to self-understanding. It does not problem-solve (1990, Van Manen), but is described by Moran (2000) as

an attempt to get to the truth of matters, to describe *phenomena*, in the broadest sense as whatever appears in the manner in which it appears, that is as it manifests itself to consciousness, to the experiencer. As such, phenomenology's first step is to seek to avoid all misconstructions and impositions placed on experience in advance, whether these are drawn from religious or cultural traditions, from everyday common sense, or, indeed from science itself. Explanations are not to be imposed before the phenomenon have been understood from within. (p. 4)

As a method, phenomenology is reflective "while abstaining from theoretical, polemical, suppositional, and emotional intoxications" (Van Manen & Van Manen, 2015, p. 610). Exploring lived experiences, in and out of the school setting, can be an approach to professional practice as well as a way for students to explore the world they live in. Unlike currere which examines the self and the educational experience, phenomenology examines all other phenomena but in an equally self-reflexive and recursive manner. Like currere it rejects unitary conclusions.

There are many avenues to self-inquiry. Dewey (1916) saw education as the reconstruction of lived experience and social experience, describing sensory experience and reflection as central to the process of education. This type of exploration, whether pragmatic or phenomenological, is particularly salient to intuitive thinking as the practitioner comes to realize the elusive nature of understanding. Jungian psychology and phenomenological practice both hold a tension, a counterpoint, of understanding the self and the wider, collective meaning of objects and experiences. Jung (1953) stressed the importance of individuation, but pointed to the many lessons our collective subconscious had for us. Similarly, phenomenological practice teaches that everyone's experience is different, and that everyone's interpretation of common occurrences and subjects is different. It reveals that an experience is never fully able to be communicated as the accounts of lived experiences are changed not only once they have passed and become a part of memory, but also as they are transformed through communication – whether retold through story or captured in writing. At the same time, it promotes epoché which attempts to bracket out individual experience and interpretation to get at the universal aspects of a phenomenon. Knowledge is complex and elusive; every tool available, including intuition, should be used to achieve consilience.

Curriculum needs to provide the information that people need to live in the world: mathematical facts and equations, reading a map, communicating through written expression, and so on. Equally useful is knowing that interpretation of these facts and information is never fully exhausted, and that understanding grows and changes throughout the life span. There seems to be a certain entropy to phenomenology. Moustakas (1994) claims, “(a)t every moment of perception we find variations in what

we perceive, a continual passing away of one thing and the appearance of another thing, yet each time something essential is retained and carried forward into the next moment (p. 75). This plasticity Van Manen (1990) describes as a *theory of the unique* (p. 7). The acceptance of change, difference, the unique, and uncertainty come together to demonstrate to the student, and teacher, that what we don't understand, or don't yet understand – whether it be a phenomenon or person – has value.

Although there are numerous ways to explore intuition via subject matter, I would like to examine one last way – aesthetic inquiry – another avenue which opens up multiple perspectives. The beauty of art lies not only in its aesthetic impact, but its ability to sooth feelings of confusion and alienation. Stories help us understand ourselves and others. Art makes people see; it doesn't tell them what to see. My experience with music, visual arts, literature is different than your experience with the same sights and sounds. The experiences they offer however are twofold: they help us discover our true nature and they connect us to others. Greene (1978) explains this first connection as “informed encounters with the arts at any age so often lead(ing) to disclosures of interior landscapes; they offer opportunities for persons to become present to themselves” (p. 84). When you see yourself, or parts of yourself represented in others' works you know you are not alone. And, Lake (2015) summarizes the second connection as being “focused on ways that the arts apply imagination to create personal spaces of knowing, understanding, and being with self and others in the world” (p. 131). The aesthetic experience is an embodied metaphor that uses intuition to seek understanding both individually and collectively. This understanding is not finite but has a profound effect on ourselves and our ways of being in the world. Art provides comfort, it provides food for thought,

inspiration, insight, connection, empathy. It is strong enough to change who we are. In an interview by Akshay Ahuja in *The Sun* (2014), Steven Buhner summarizes these thoughts when he explains

It is remarkable how much consolation and hope we can receive from authors who, while offering no answers to life's questions, have the courage to articulate the situation of their lives in all honesty and directness. Kierkegaard, Sartre, Camus, Hammarskjöld, and Merton: none of them have ever offered solutions. Yet many of us who have read their works have found new strength to pursue our own search. (p. 16)

This open-endedness to representation and understanding is existential as it focuses on individual needs, includes the non rational as well as the rational, and develops the notion of *possibility*. Aesthetic inquiry, its fidelity to intuition, and its malaise with the status quo is summarized by Maxine Greene (1978):

It is my belief that those who have made a 'consciousness revolution' today are expressing their own longings to come in touch with themselves and with their original intuitions of reality. I believe that they are trying to recapture the themes of their lived lives and of the worlds they have constituted as they have grown. Because they feel imposed upon by too many official schemata, by others' namings and demarcations of things around they feel both mystified and restive. They grope for ways of emancipating themselves. It is not the scientific method itself that strikes them as oppressive, nor is it scientism alone. Without being clearly aware of it, they are afflicted by some of the consequences of scientism or

positivism, most particularly the subject-object split and the links to technological controls. (p. 12)

Greene's perspective of aesthetic inquiry centers on the visceral reaction to art versus a more intellectual evaluation. Schusterman (2006) identifies two other categories where aesthetics plays a role in education: the more essentialist notion that students should be aware of major works of art and their enduring beauty – similar to the Great Books canon of western literature; and, art as a means to understanding other cultures. I have honed in on the imaginal connections of aesthetic inquiry because this aligns with intuition, individuation, and agency. Art is intuitive because it conveys complex emotions and understandings that are not always easily articulated. Spivak (2012) sees aesthetic inquiry as resistance to institutional and educational control as art celebrates the individual and unites students against the tyranny of rules and intellectual colonialism.

There are as many avenues to an intuitive curriculum as there are students. I have offered up boredom, improvisation, currere, phenomenology, and aesthetic inquiry not as curriculum maps, but as possible ways in which to tap into individual interests. These may or may not work for any given individual, but they serve as examples to help others in their own explorations. To emphasize again, the role of the teacher here is that of a colleague and friend with students versus a commander who is deciding what is to be learned, in what time frames, and how this learning will take place.

Why: Intuition as a Journey from Self to Others

Exploring, validating intuition keeps us alert to meaning and purpose. Not only in relation to ourselves, but to others, to material objects, and to ideas. This way of thinking, I believe, can't help but foster respect. And, from respect comes empathy and

hopefully social action. There is a concatenation of discovery from self to action. Once you recognize your own truths and are free to articulate them you find a coterie of like-minded individuals; your sense of alienation is lessened. Alternately, you find individuals with their own experiences and views of the world and recognize, like Rilke (1929/2012), that moral life is inclusivity – learning to connect through, or in spite of, contradictions. And, this recognition once again lessens a sense of alienation. With this validation, self-actualization and respect, hopefully comes the desire to lessen the alienation of others.

Buber (1958) encourages subject matter which lessens isolation and encourages connection and understanding. He also believed that education should cultivate community. His philosophy of dialogue, connection, and care influenced Noddings's work (1984) centering on the ethics of care, and, Levinas's (1998) ethics of responsibility. His basic philosophy is one where life's meaning and purpose is met in moments of I-Thou relationships – where the other is never objectified versus I-It relationships where we encounter objects and people as concrete matter which can be defined and categorized. Similarly his philosophy of education (Buber, 2003) looks at two strands of understanding. He creates the word *lehrnstat* to describe curriculum as gaining defined knowledge and engaging in discovery—current notions of gaining mastery and learning defined standards. But, he suggests that *lehren* or *learning* should be encounters of meaning for the individual child engaging in subject-subject (I-Thou) discoveries with others and subject matter.

How much can teachers really do to change the world? Working in the microcosm of a classroom it becomes depressingly obvious that change at even a system

level is arduous, thankless, and often suspect. However, working intuitively with students, letting subject matter unfold, being yourself, using the tools of currere, aesthetics, phenomenology, and creating a space of validation and inquiry have the potential to create agency in our students. Schools are not institutions which seek to change our culture of competition, commodification, and financial success and stability. Arendt (1963) spoke of the *banality of evil*, and though I am not suggesting schools are evil, there is a lot in the way they are structured that is banal and normalizing. But, the world is full of surprises. Arendt also assures us that

The new always happens against the overwhelming odds of statistical laws and their probability, which for all practical, everyday purposes amounts to certainty; the new therefore always appears in the guise of a miracle. The fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected from him, that he is able to perform what is infinitely improbable. (p. 177)

The change that I, and many educators seek, may one day come sweeping through as an utter surprise. But, if it doesn't, individual teachers, teaching from a position of intuition, relating to students and their interests and selves, making time and space for them to grow individually and collectively is a form of agency that is needed in classrooms.

My position vis-à-vis education may seem combative, but it is really a reflection of my existentialist position with intuition as a mode of feeling and acting to develop individuality and authenticity. Sartre's critique (1943/1992) of education as a means of streamlining society and helping students adapt to and fit into the political and social status quo is a battle which I think must be continually fought. Further in *The Ethics of*

Ambiguity (1948/1964) de Beauvoir delineates that this battle will never be won.

Ambiguity is a part of the human condition-- there is no certainty and no objectivity. As we struggle to understand ourselves and others we deal with conflict and tensions by “inventing an original solution” (p. 142) as we go about our everyday lives. Her philosophy is practical, authentic, and action oriented.

Although this is a philosophical essay, it is also an essay about shaping student experiences. This chapter has attempted to describe subject matter but has remained equivocal about what that might be. Instead, I have described how a teacher might introduce or seize upon intuitive moments in the classroom as well as avoid timeframes and usual modes of assessment. It seems contradictory that I laud de Beauvoir’s pragmatism and agency without a concrete curriculum. However, I see teaching as an art rather than a science. I believe in both the teacher’s and student’s ability to use intuition and *invent an original solution*.

Chapter 3

What's Love Got to Do with It?: Intuition and the Teacher

My heart is what isn't my ego.

~Artaud, 1965, p. 101

My journey, as it relates to teaching, has been one from a starting point of selfishness, but has transformed to one of love. I started teaching because I needed a job after being a stay-at-home mom for ten years. I could have gone back to the corporate world; in hindsight it would have certainly been a smoother transition, but teaching at the time seemed the easier choice. I held a fairly common misconception that 'anyone can teach.' I had no training, no experience, but spoke French, so I was hired 'conditionally' as a native speaker. I chose a teaching job for the self-serving reasons of wanting to work close to home, not having to travel, not having to work overtime, and having summers and holidays off with my children.

My first year teaching was a disaster. I struggled with controlling five classes a day of disinterested middle-schoolers who largely took French because they didn't want to take Spanish – for whatever reason. Every student in middle school had to take a language class and some were completely tuned out. In addition, the county had a language program from kindergarten onward and some students were fairly adept at the language while others, those new to the school or had been in an elementary school that opted for Spanish rather than French as the additional language, did not speak a word. Everyone was placed on the same level so there was a lot of review for those with the basics. In addition, the county office was proud of their quasi-bilingual status and insisted the students were so well-versed in a second language that they did not need

additional texts or workbooks and urged us to hold classes where everyone was simply chatting away in a foreign language. This didn't happen.

To cope, I became punitive. It was what other teachers and the literature was telling me to do. Colleagues told me to 'write students up', put them in rows, and assign detention. Harry Wong (1991) in *The First Days of School – a de rigeur* instruction book for new teachers – talks about organizing the classroom so that students know what to do and what is expected at all times. It felt wrong, but I had to do something. I became stricter, the students quieter, and we both were increasingly unhappy.

The turning point to this mess came from my students. As the only French teacher at my school I also taught my own daughters as they progressed through the k-12 public school system. Without going into the whole story, my younger daughter was expelled from school for a drinking and drug related incident, and sent to an alternative school in the county to finish her 8th grade year. The next day the school was abuzz with the news. Not a single colleague spoke to me about the event or asked about my daughter. I don't remember a single adult looking me in the eye. It was confounding at first, then it was just plain depressing. Three classes in a row of unusually silent children made the day excruciatingly long. The fourth class was the one in which my daughter was my student. The students filed in and her desk was conspicuously and depressingly empty. Some students whispered quietly together, most avoided looking at me, a few had the silent 'I'm sorry' look. And many I'm sure were thankful they were not in her shoes.

After a few minutes of uncomfortable silence I stood up and addressed the class. "I'm okay. I'm sad, but I'm okay. Today has been really tough. Devon started at the alternative school this morning and she'll be okay too. If all goes well she'll join you in

9th grade next year.” Everyone relaxed and I spent the rest of the class answering a barrage of questions. Nothing was off limits. Did I punish her, and how? What was the alternative school like? What happened to the other girls? Is she allowed to get her learner’s driving permit? Will this stay on her record? The students appreciated my opening up to them and including them in the pain of the event. We became closer and talking about something that would normally be ‘off limits’ opened up a variety of other conversations that were no longer – or perhaps less so – uncomfortable. I was struck by how shitty the other teachers had made me feel versus how empathetic my students truly were.

Of course it wasn’t a rosy path from there on out for either Devon or myself. Getting her to school was very difficult (there was no transportation provided and she had different school hours than myself), her old friends were not allowed to hang out with her anymore, and she was very isolated and lonely for a long while. As a gifted student, time spent at the alternative school was academically quite wasteful. She also had a hard time transitioning to a regular high school. We both learned from the incident though and I don’t think either one of us wishes it hadn’t happened now that it is over. Devon spent her time teaching a few other students reading and other academic skills. She learned to be open to others and not be as judgmental as some of her peers. I found out that I really don’t care if my children screw up as long as they learn from and assimilate their experiences. Best of all, I learned the importance and the joy of making friends with my students, of really listening to and sharing with them. It was that piece of teaching I knew I was missing that suddenly found me.

Don't Listen to the Teacher: Listen to Yourself

What does this story have to do with teaching and intuition? Just as the ladybug story does, it intimates that one has to listen to oneself – listen to the whispers of what feels right and what seems wrong. At a fundamental level I knew I was teaching ‘wrong’, but I kept looking to others, to literature, for a fix. Granted, it was the reflexes of a drowning person. I ran to the teacher in the next classroom, and the ‘popular’ cultural literature on education. I did not discriminate, I did not have time; I simply wanted someone to tell me what to do. Thinking back, this is what Sartre cautioned against. Worse, I was blaming others; students were apathetic, the administration was not being supportive, I lacked a teaching background, my colleagues had fewer preps versus my teaching all three middle school grades, and so on. The moment I realized love was the answer – to pretty much every question surrounding the issues of a good education – I was at peace and I became a good teacher. I am proud of my teaching now. And, part of my teaching incorporates not listening to the teacher as an acceptable way to learn. Permission to question authority is a breath of fresh air for middle-schoolers.

This chapter covers some of the *who* and *how* questions brought up in the introduction. Who is the teacher? How should she or he teach? My pedagogic stance is that the teacher is a co-creator of learning. Not learning as a predetermined activity or guide to ‘learning outcomes’ but as Biesta (2013) explains a ‘demystification’ of events and ideas. When we teach with a specific end in mind, Freire’s (2010) ‘banking education’, we are passing judgement. Not only on what students have learned but what they ‘say’ they believe. Students should feel free to accept or reject ideas, as well as change their minds many times over. The ‘right answer’ approach to teaching gives the

false impression that the process of education is linear. “Teachers can never fully control the ‘impact’ of their activities on their students” (Biesta, p. 56) and that impact is not measurable, and certainly not within a one year/semester period of cocreation. Teaching, it seems to me, if it is to be transformative for the student, should be interpretive, respectful, open, and improvisational.

Examining each of these words individually we see how the role of the teacher is that of mentor and supporter rather than an authority or commander. Beyond the notion of interpreting as the activity of explication, we have the etymological root of hermeneutics (interpretation) which is a derivative of the Greek god Hermes. Hermes is the ‘border crosser’, an intercessor and messenger of the Gods. A teacher, interacting hermaneutically with a student, reveals language can be revealing, concealing, or ambiguous. A good teacher reveals that there are many perspectives and is wary of imposing his or her own.

A respectful attitude towards the student is both respect for the student as a human being as well as respect for their interests, understandings, and even misunderstandings. Sagan (1996) is widely quoted for the following observation: “There are naive questions, tedious questions, ill-phrased questions, questions put after inadequate self-criticism. But every question is a cry to understand the world. There is no such thing as a dumb question” (p. 325). ‘Dumb’ and ‘stupid’ are words that are quickly hushed and censored in the classroom because they are judgmental and negative. However, there is a growth component here we shouldn’t ignore. Hunt, in her essay *Queer Theorem* explains, “*Dumb* is not a fair adjective when I think about all of the places dumb and discovery intersect: teenagers, new parents, failed experiments, luck”

(p.210). We have all felt/been dumb, naïve, and confused which brings me to the next word in our list of ‘how’ teachers should interact with students: openly.

If teachers continually model that they are not experts, are continuing the life-long process of learning, they will dispel the notion that graduation means the end of education. Students appreciate the humble ‘I don’t know’ coming from their teachers. They revel in knowing something their teachers do not. I am uncomfortable with the pride that accompanies the notion that the universe is knowable. Carl Sagan (1974) compared understanding the brain to a speck of salt to underscore what we are up against:

A typical brain neuron (one of perhaps 10^{11} neurons in the brain) has perhaps a thousand little wires, called dendrites, which connect it with its fellows. If, as seems likely, every bit of information in the brain corresponds to one of these connections, the total number of things knowable by the brain is no more than 10^{14} , one hundred trillion. But this number is only 1 percent of the number of atoms in our speck of salt. (p. 1)

It is overwhelming to think of how much we can’t know, don’t know – but it is also humbling and unifying – we are all struggling with it. Or, many of us. There is also the specter of fundamentalism. I am not referring to specific religious groups, but to the strict adherence to certain principles and understandings – regardless of scientific evidence, personal doubts, and psychological anxiety. An intuitive curriculum embraces multiple perspectives, it fosters a critical approach, is ecumenical, dialectic, recursive, and has emancipatory aims.

As teachers, one of the greatest dangers is to slip into the very accessible authoritarian role. We are supported by administration and parents when we lay down

the law so that our school day runs smoothly. How can we teach compassion from this stance? How can we elicit paradigm shifts when we appear rigid in our thinking? How can we teach open-mindedness when we are modeling a closed system? And, how can we ask students to question political and economic inequities while we place them in a position of powerlessness? The rest of this chapter will explore the importance of authenticity, individuation, shared worlds, and agency.

Possible Hows - Authenticity

If we are not careful, teaching – with the mission of altering minds -- can become a form of colonialism. How do we teach without imposing answers? Socrates accomplished this via questions and dialogue until the student felt they had come to the right but unconfirmed conclusion (Plato, Meno). This open system of thinking and talking is not so much a method for learning as a realization of the complexity of acquiring knowledge, and acknowledging different points of view and possibilities. Other methods of teaching without imposing answers is teaching multiple perspectives and views at the same time and preparing students for those Kuhnian (2012/1962) paradigm shifts. Kuhn's book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* itself served as a paradigm shift for scientific and lay people alike. In it he details how most scientific work is done within given paradigms and that scientific revolutions come about through questioning and experimenting with basic concepts as well as looking outside narrowed disciplines. In essence he demonstrates that scientific facts are opinions which serve as conclusions until a more robust understanding replaces it. Teaching facts, in this way, helps students formulate their own conclusions while leaving room for shifts, changes and revolutions in understanding. Point of view is taught in literature, but this needs to

be expanded to all subjects. Noam Chomsky provides a concrete example of this in an interview for *The Sun* when he explains that if we teach middle schoolers about climate change, we should also teach them about climate-change denial “so they will learn to weigh the opinion of 99 percent of scientists on the one hand versus a half dozen skeptics hired by corporations on the other” (June 2014, p. 7).

In the 17th century, the word indoctrination simply meant ‘to teach.’ Today, it has the nefarious connotation of proselytizing and brainwashing. Dewey (1902/1990) linked indoctrination with authoritarianism, repetition and drills, as well as the restriction of discussion and interaction. Teachers do not believe they are indoctrinating their students, and hopefully do not intend to, but often in their choices of materials and presentations convey their beliefs and biases. A teacher who chooses to study his or her favorite novel *Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand versus one who has been impressed by *The Communist Manifesto* may be sending very different messages to students. A transcendental curriculum, discussed earlier in this essay, recognizes and questions indoctrination. It assimilates, accepts, modifies or discards the information. Macdonald (1995) explains,

Thus, it seems to me that education has as its basic meaning the process of helping each person transcend the parochialism of his/her own time and place, and the creation of fostering of human possibilities that may be entered into and eventually chosen as the most fulfilling personal values and life styles. (p. 128)

Teachers provide experiences for students. It is important to remember that these experiences differ from our own experiences and that each student, in turn, experiences them differently.

For myself, learning has always always been authentic when there is resonance. Moran (2000) explains “*Authentic* moments are those in which we are most at home with ourselves, at one with ourselves” (p. 240). In these moments the student is comfortable with who they are and what they believe. Klein (2013) explains this resonance as insights which “are coherent and unambiguous . . . We feel a sense of closure. This sense of closure produces a feeling of confidence in the insight” (p. 24). Teachers cannot really teach to moments of closure; they can however provide opportunities towards such depth learning. The key is to spot hesitation, excitement, and connections, as well as encourage and provide time for exploration. A teacher can give examples of what this might look and feel like to attune students to these magical, but often fleeting moments. For example, reading the first few pages (pp. 48 – 51) of Marcel Proust’s *Remembrance of Things Past*, details the joyous discovery the author had while eating a madeleine cake. The description slowly reveals how the author’s attention was caught, how he was aware that something important was taking place, culminating in a rush of memories, sensations and emotions. This example not only denotes how an interest may come from something seemingly small, but how it can take on a life of its own. Proust’s 1,107 page book began when he himself was inspired by memories brought on while eating a dessert.

Note however that I started this last paragraph with the caveat ‘for myself.’ Thinking is complex; the history of philosophy demonstrates this. There is no set curriculum that can inspire every student. The example of literature above may not appeal to everyone, but nature might, or physical activity, or social encounters. As with every curriculum, finding new ways to reach students is part of the ongoing curriculum.

There are dangers to avoid however, and, as with every curriculum it is necessary to look critically at what is being taught. The intuitive learning and moments of comprehension that I argue for in curriculum are not related to ‘magical thinking’ and its ugly step-sister bias.

Magical Thinking is not Very Magical

A few years ago I picked up a book because I was captivated by the title; it was *The Year of Magical Thinking* (2007) by Joan Didion. I pictured a contemplative and poetic novel along the lines of Thoreau’s *Walden*. I was very wrong. The memoir was about a year of trying to cope with debilitating grief and how it changed rational thoughts into wishful thinking, along with other coping mechanisms such as denial and delusion. Other examples of magical thinking can be found in children who might believe their rage at a parent will result in their harm; in adults, believing in hexes or having slot machine fever. It is a combination of wishful thinking, hope, denial, fear, and ego assuagement.

Didion, looking back, recognizes that this period of coping was a form of mental illness. It is only when she begins to study the grief process and self-evaluate that she can move forward with her life. Didion provides an extreme example of the necessity to scrutinize what is happening when we are carried away by emotions, to take a long view of what appear to be synchronicities, and to cautiously evaluate what is often ‘easiest’ to believe.

Along with magical thinking, bias and foreclosed confidence can also give people the sense of ‘closure’ I described earlier and attributed to intuitive understandings. Current headlines demonstrate that many people believe Muslims are mostly terrorists;

historically we have the example of manifest destiny where a whole population thought it was inevitable and excusable to steal land. How can we honor open-mindedness on the one hand, while denouncing people's views that embrace oppression, despotism, fundamentalism because it is 'for the good of the people' or 'what God decreed?' The only answer I can think of to this conundrum is to teach, teach again, and teach some more. Teaching is not providing answers, but providing questions then providing resources to help students find answers. It is discussing difficult questions, honoring all voices, and gently suggesting: maybe your parents are wrong, maybe society doesn't have it right yet, maybe I am wrong, maybe you are wrong. Followed by 'let's try and figure this out.'

A curriculum which encourages and supports intuitive explorations will also have to teach caution, reflection, perspective, and the elements associated with many types of thinking: rational, deductive, intuitive, magical, critical, divergent, reflexive, creative, abstract, concrete. Because an intuitive curriculum engenders a variety of individual interests among many students in the same milieu, it is hoped that this exposure to divergence demonstrates open-mindedness and consideration. That is, that students embrace resonance in learning, but realize the learning process is never concluded and to beware of the antipodal certainty that is also found in racism, stereotyping, and dogmatism.

Providing Opportunities for Joy

Liston (2001) uses the metaphor of Joy to symbolize the convergence of knowledge, curricular fields, human spirit, and community. She goes beyond the simple definition of joy as happiness to include the notions of possibility and compassion (p. 21).

This chapter is about the role of the teacher. Simply put, I see the role of the teacher with an intuitive curriculum as a provider of opportunities for Joy. I see intuition as a convergence of knowledge which facilitates a compassionate understanding self and leads to a compassionate understanding of others. Joy and intuition begin with the self, but their expression emanates to others. The following sections consider the individual, others, and community.

Who is Teaching Whom? – Individuation

“Society demands imitation” (Jung, 2009, p. 52). This is very conflicting for the individuation process. Schools likewise demand conformity and imitation. It is the easy and cost effective way to run a school. Weaver (2010) summarizes “public schools exist for three reasons: job training for future workers, docile test takers, and future consumers” (p. 6). What has happened to education for democracy as delineated by Dewey (2004/1916)? In *Democracy and Education* Dewey identifies education as the sole means to train youth to be a part of, and eventually lead the society in which they live. For Dewey, education is a communal activity where individuals, as they mature, constantly adjust to each other and the community, which eventually leads to the benefit of the group as a whole. Current scholars who teach for social justice, engage in critical pedagogy, and teach community are in effect teaching for the democracy that Dewey wrote about a hundred years ago. The commercialized, commodified world in which we live is fueled by fear. The fearful have no hope and no time for individuation. The fear of ‘being left behind’ is even articulated in government educational policies. Teaching through competition is rife because it plays into this fear and helps create a docile nation. I agree with O’Brien (2005) who articulates,

The American Dream, I see now, is governed not by education, opportunity, and hard work, but by power and fear. The higher up in the organization you go, the more you have to lose. The dream is *not losing*. This is the notion pervading America today: Don't lose. (p . 517)

What can teachers do about this? What can they do as the policy of fear trickles down into their classrooms with retention and even pay tied into compliance and student test scores? With the mindset of don't lose – don't lose your job? Once again we are back to the notions of authenticity, individuation, and love.

Some of my favorite scholars in education confirm the importance of the teacher knowing themselves and encountering the student as a unique individual. Biesta (2015) speaks of the *risks* of encountering the student and sharing ourselves; of providing exposure and demystification (p. 72) and allowing students to draw their own conclusions. If we are celebrating the unique, encouraging intuition, it is necessary to step outside of the role of 'expert' and allow students to become experts in that which they are passionate about. Nieto (2013) finds *joy* in education through relationships and feels success is achieved in understanding students as part of a community; it is attitude rather than methods that define success in teaching (p. 20). Here, the teacher's role with an intuitive curriculum is one where room is made for each individual, and community becomes an inclusive rather than conformist collective. In Palmer's *Courage to Teach* (1998), he affirms that the book's theme is that "*good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher*" (p. 10). The role of the teacher here is as a model of individualism: individualism as an ongoing and unique process. In *Individualism: Old and New* (p. 157) Dewey explains "... it is

impossible to develop integrated individuality by any all-embracing system or program No individual can make the determination for anyone else; nor can he make it for himself all at once and forever.” Jagla’s (1994) research identifies openness (p. 75) as a significant variable in effective teaching. This grounding in self-awareness, mindfulness, serves as a model for students and fosters an environment in which student individuation is also a goal. The term individuation here is simply used as a person trying to answer the questions himself or herself of: Who am I? And, What is the authentic me? This idea of individuation seems contrary to the notion of community. It is not. It is simply a first step in order to understand and communicate with others, and eventually participate democratically and with an eye to justice in society. Palmer (1998) explains this best when he says “The inward quest for communion becomes a quest for outward relationship: at home in our own souls, we become more at home with each other” (p. 5).

The more I teach and the more I study, the more I am convinced that love is the capstone to good teaching. Unlike the Greeks who have six words for love, Sanskrit which has 96, and ancient Persian which has 80, (Johnson, 2014) I confine myself to the Western, English word to speak of love of subject matter, love of self, colleagues, and of course students. It is a word that encompasses respect, patience, wonder, openness, and wanting to help provide what is best for the other, to be present with the other.

What Does This Have to Do with Intuition?

Teachers have to teach from the selves they are discovering and from a place of love. (I use discovering as individuation and as an ongoing process.) As I harken back to my definition of intuition in chapter one -- an inner sense of correctness and fidelity -- I contend teachers, that is reflective teachers who strive to become better teachers, come

to know themselves, their students, and how to react in the classroom at various given moments. In one of many interviews with teachers Jagla (1994) was offered this advice,

‘Very simply to teach the ‘I.’ To teach that one cannot lose the ‘I’ or all is lost. To teach the exact antithesis of what is generally taught.’ A sound understanding of your own ego supersedes any recipe-like system of methods that you might adopt. In order to enable ourselves to apply suggestions we must know ourselves and glean the ideas suited to our unique personalities. Just as we cannot dole out worksheets and expect our students to comprehend from a rendering of facts, we cannot expect teachers to be handed worksheets of understanding. We all must make our own connections. (p. 148)

In her book *Teachers' everyday use of imagination and intuition: In pursuit of the elusive image*, Jagla also notes that teachers correlate intuition with confidence (p. 38) which triggers the imagination (p. 39). This intuitive confidence comes from being in tune with students, remembering and reflecting upon having once been a student, spontaneity and openness, and having fun with students. She concludes “Love is a vital aspect of good teaching. Quality teachers display love and concern for their students, their subject matter, and for teaching and learning in general” (1994, p. 141).

Love is important to good teaching. Administrators often look for educators with a passion for their subject. However, there is also the aspect of loving one’s students. The word love, with its as mentioned limited and singular meaning in the English language, can make people uncomfortable – especially when one is talking about children. It seems to me that educators who care for their students have greater success than educators who care about test scores. Garrison (1997) makes this connection in

Dewey and Eros: Wisdom and Desire in the Art of Teaching. He stresses feeling, intuition, and ‘sympathetic understanding’; teaching which involves openness and empathy with the feelings and experiences of others. He encourages teachers to foster those teachable moments where “the rhythm of nature, human nature, and learning is the same. It is an endless process of growth and becoming through the creation of meaning” (p. 125). Individuation is a process of recognizing one’s authentic self. In a group setting, such as the classroom, where everyone, including the teacher, is engaging in the process we have the recognition that others, though different, have their own processes, understandings, and intuitions.

Beyond Group Work – Others

Sharing worlds goes beyond creating groups of every possible combination within a class so that all students work with each other at some point throughout the semester. It can also go beyond the notion of the teacher simply sharing his or her world with the student – or entering into the student’s world. If teachers are striving for the personal, subjective relationships described previously as the *I – Thou* relationships of Buber (1957) they need to start from the realization that everyone lives in their own constructed world, a world that is constantly in flux, and a world that is different from one’s own. The Piagetan definition (2013/1950) of egocentricity is the inability to contemplate the world other than from one’s own perspective. The psychological antonym to this is the notion of Theory of Mind, where we come to understand that others have beliefs, wants, understandings, and perspectives that are different from our own. The outgrowth of this is hopefully the listing of antonyms to egocentrism found in any common Thesaurus: altruism, generosity, and impartiality.

The classroom doesn't need to mimic the dog-eat-dog world children are often told is out there. Creating a space of tolerance, support, diversity, equity, vulnerability, and friendship/love is the liminal area between individuation and agency.

Out of Darkness – Agency

I have been intimating throughout this essay that self-actualization leads to agency. Perhaps I hope this is so more than it is actually true. Perhaps individually it is more obvious than collectively. The short span of time from 500 BC to 300 BC gave us the foundations of current Western philosophy, the idea of democracy, and a flourishing of the arts. Education was seen as a means to actively involve a greater number of people, and the most suited, to governance. A foundation upon which this society existed was the notion of shared responsibility for the common good. This idea was the basis for our own, compulsory, and public schools. In a blog, Diane Ravitch (2012) elaborates:

the reason for establishing a norm of education in a democratic society remains the same. It is one of those measures that democratic societies enact in the effort to maintain themselves as democratic societies. Failing that, a government of, by, and for the people is far more likely to perish from the earth. (p. 1)

With the Renaissance, we also have a shift in education; humanists were active in attempting to create a populace that would engage in their communities and in civic life. During this time, education attempted to break free from the influences and control of the Church, but it still catered to a patriarchal and monied society. From these roots we have the philosophy of humanistic, or person-centered education based on the work of humanistic psychologists Maslow (1954) and Rogers (1969). Although self-actualization

is professed as an aim in education, we more often hear of the need for college and career-ready students – as citizens who are joining society rather than ameliorating it.

The Western idea of agency as ‘duty’ and ultimately self-serving as it benefits all, is one perspective. Others include Eastern thought, Indigenous concepts and feminist perspectives. Eastern thought cannot be as easily distilled and summarized as the Western concepts of duty as they relate to education. The Confucian notion of education is that it is a learner-initiated rather than teacher-driven process which guides a person to right living – the Way – with the most adept leaders ruling by example and creating a successful state (Kim, 2014, p. 173). This idea most closely resembles the Western ideal described above. Daoist concepts are less linear and stringent; they stress instead the importance of being humble, flexible, and open and recognizing equality of individuals as well as the relativity of knowledge (Nagel, 2014, p. 209). The Daoist way reminds us that we are all responsible for peacefully supporting each other. It is rather passive when compared to other Eastern ideas of advocacy. Ghandi, a Hindi, led by the example of nonviolent action. He believed that education was important in gaining knowledge and building character, and, felt this was best accomplished through experiential learning and apprenticeships. A life of action, for Ghandi was a sacred duty to help bring about *sarvodaya* – welfare for all (Singh, 2014, pp.345 – 347).

Indigenous education and indigenous agency is a way of life. It is not something that is structured to bring about change or justice because indigenous ways often epitomize respectful and caring societies where all members feel responsible for and take care of one another. Without essentializing indigenous groups, I am thinking specifically of the Maori, Samoans, Inuit, and Hmong groups. Education has two strains here; it

comes about naturally through experientially learning from one's elders and also from listening to storytellers. As Archibald (2008) explains, the myths and stories are provided to "educate the heart, mind, body, and spirit" (p. x), with the Trickster often providing examples of "the power of interconnections within family, community, nation, culture, and land" (p. ix).

At the other spectrum, Feminist thought recognizes that our patriarchal societies need to be educated to become respectful and caring and that the purpose of education is to balance a history of injustice perpetrated on half, or rather slightly more than half, of the population. Education, historically and sociologically appears to be associated with 'doing the right thing.' And, although this is not always the result of education, it is often the intent.

It is my experience that change feels slow – and then it happens all at once. I hold out the hope that Jung (1971/1921) was correct when he claimed we were entering a *New Age* – an age during which the value of symbol and myth were recognized and there would be a fundamental paradigm shift in human consciousness. The transformative role of disaster and grief is explained time and again through both mythology and history (Campbell 1968; Zinn, 1980); but, we have also recently and collectively experienced this via natural and man-made/enhanced disasters. The 2004 Indonesian Tsunami and the September 11th (2001) experience, for example, demonstrated community and action. In the words of Rebecca Solnit (Fall 2009), a writer and activist, "What happens in disasters demonstrates everything an anarchist ever wanted to believe about the triumph of civil society and the failure of institutional authority" (para. 9). I hold out hope that

education can, and eventually will, fulfill its aim of continually working toward a just society.

What can curriculum do to change the world? Do we ask too much of teachers when we suggest that they teach students not only how to read and write, but also how to get along with each other, behave, share, forgive? With limited time, space, and resources teachers are to reach ever increasing numbers of students and ensure they know algebra, the eight parts of speech, and how to use a semi-colon. Is it fair to ask them to teach individual and collective altruism? Luckily there is no standard for this. However, the teacher that is authentic, open, flexible, attuned to individual interests, and inclusive provides a venue for students to see how they not only form a part of the community they live in, but ways in which they can make it better.

Chapter 4

Scrabbling for the Crumb of Transcendent Exhilaration: Intuition and the Student

I say the mind and life communicate at all levels. I want to make a Book that will derange men, that will be like an open door leading them where they would never have consented to go. A door simply ajar on reality.

~Artaud, 1965, p. 26

There is a dichotomy in my life as a student that I see played over and over again in the life of my own students. I hated school. I hated the monotony, the interminable waste of time with procedures (lining up, packing the book bag) and waiting for everyone to be at the same place (finishing a worksheet, waiting for recess to commence). Philip Jackson details this painful, monotonous, and intrinsic part of education in his article *The Daily Grind*. I have often wondered as an adult if this also serves to prepare us for the daily grind of the work world. As an introvert I also hated the constant noise, busyness, and interruptions to my perpetual daydreaming and reading. I seriously thought of dropping out of high school as these irritations grew to encompass that bizarrely small world of fitting in. Social anxiety and tedium aside, I persevered for those glorious and ecstatic moments of connection, awakening, and what Liston (2001) terms ‘Joy.’ Joy for Liston is non-linear understanding which “includes the powerful and poetic connotations of an inner and profound light radiated from the human spirit” (p. 9). School, for me, was like *Waiting for Godot*. I held out hope and was willing to ‘do’ school for those moments of joy. These moments as a student were not frequent enough. They occurred, and I recognized them when I felt a certain transcendence. Sometimes it was the ‘how

are people able to write like that' moments after reading a great book – or even, the 'I should have written that – it is exactly how I feel' moments. Sometimes it was being overwhelmed by a work of art. Klein (1998) has felt this. He describes,

Have you ever noticed, after you have spent an afternoon at an art museum staring hard at paintings and sculpture, that when you walk out, the world looks different from when you entered? Colors become brighter; contrasting shapes are more striking. We go to museums to see objects, but the process of seeing is affected, and that is one of the things we carry away when we are finished walking through the galleries. (p. 292)

We carry these moments of profound learning and joy with us. We are changed by these events. These moments where new worlds open for the learner are not just moments of exhilaration, sometimes they are defamiliarizations which need to be assimilated; they can follow Greene's (2001) definition of aesthetic education where there is

an intentional undertaking designed to nurture appreciative, reflective, cultural, participatory engagements with the arts by enabling learners to notice what is there to be noticed, and to lend works of art their lives in such a way that they can achieve them as variously meaningful. When this happens, new connections are made in experience: new patterns are formed, new vistas are opened. (p. 6)

Sometimes learning takes place all at once, and sometimes it is a slower process.

Sometimes we can make connections and associations instantaneously, and frequently it is helped by people with whom we share aesthetic experiences – either fellow student or teacher (really probably a fellow student in these instances). How can curriculum bring about this joy? How can it do so consistently? What will this lead to? Teachers can plan

and provide moments and lessons for these experiences – but they can't force them. Of course, the more moments provided the more likely these experiences will take place. It is to be hoped the enjoyment of these experiences, profound shifts in understanding and appreciation, is something the student will continue to seek both in school and out.

Students know what interests them. They are not always asked in a school setting what they would like to study – or even read. Students, pursue interests outside of school when they feel strongly about them. In the same vein, students will pursue interests inside of school when they feel strongly about them. This chapter uses the example of storytelling to look at how this form of curriculum can tap into intuition and stimulate self-awareness, empathy and agency. It begins by looking at the prevalence and role of storytelling in society, the shift in the 'hero's journey' in contemporary literature and film, cautions against the 'two cultures' identified by Snow in 1959 – an ongoing battle today, and considers again the role of authenticity in curriculum.

Growth Through Stories

Stories can be told through pictures, songs, film, literature, or orally. We are surrounded by, immersed in, stories every day throughout the day. We dream stories and we live stories. When we come home from school or work we share the day's story over dinner, and when we watch TV to unwind we are entertained by stories. Reading, examining, sharing, acting out, remembering, and creating stories is the clearest example I can think of to relate intuition to curriculum and to demonstrate what I believe is a natural outcome of discovering who one is – empathy and agency.

Stories have different effects on different people. In fact, the same story read at different times can have very different effects on the same person. The first time I read *Madame Bovary* I thought she, the main character, was selfish and villainous. The second time, I found her selfish but pitiable. Intuitively, I surmise we glean from stories what we need, what helps us understand ourselves and our world. Perhaps this helps explain our preferences when it comes to stories.

When my children were little, and less self-conscious, I would see them act out the roles of characters they identified with as they watched movies. They would perch on the edge of the couch if ‘their’ character was perched on a tree limb. They would triumphantly hold up an invisible scepter at the conclusion of “Sailor Moon” episodes. This identification helped them consider who they were and who they wanted to be. Similarly, although I think the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series is far below the reading level of the boys I teach, I see how they identify with the main character, a middle-school weakling who confronts the demands of ‘fitting in.’ Children’s books which list and identify objects, and, nonfiction literature help explain the world around us in a very concrete, pragmatic way. On the other hand, stories, myths, and fiction in general help us discover ourselves and explore others’ perspectives and ways of living and relating. Archetypal characters, such as the ancient lost Odysseus (from Homer) or his more contemporary counterpart Ulysses (from Joyce) speak to readers who feel lost and unmoored. Although it is common to teach students that myths are stories that helped explain natural forces – but now we know better – they are moreso about how we participate in the world. Even the role of the ‘trickster’ in stories, which reminds us of the unexpected and the randomness we must deal with in life, does not serve the pupose

of explaining nature, but to give lessons in who we are when we choose how to deal with such baffling events and setbacks.

The Changing Hero(ine)

Taste in literature tells us about ourselves, whereas trends indicate transitions in our collective unconscious. The Romantic period in literature pointed to a collective backlash against Rationalism, as the Modern period demonstrated our malaise and sense of alienation with both the bleakness of history repeating itself and our loss as to how to correct this. Teachers can use interests and trends to understand their students – individually and collectively. Take for instance the shift in Campbell's (2008/1949) 'hero' and his journey. In his classic *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell describes a mythic journey the protagonist undertakes with clearly identifiable steps which include: a call to action, resistance, guidance from outside sources, despair, revelation and rebirth, atonement, and a return to the community to share the bounty – whether it be in the form of spoils or wisdom. Adolescents today, however, are drawn to a different hero. The popularity of post-apocalyptic books, movies, television shows, and video games portray a younger hero – not always male -- who saves a world the older generation has messed up – with a tribe of people not necessarily of his or her own choosing (Collins, 2008; Dashner, 2009; Diaz, Kirkman, & Adlard, 2007; Farmer, 2010; Roth, 2011). This is significant. The hero does not wait for society to determine he has transitioned to adulthood. The hero-child recognizes his or her significance and that his or her voice should be heard. The hero is often female; culturally and socially assigned roles are challenged. The call to action is not to deal with the vicissitudes of nature, naturally occurring misfortunes or the wrath of the gods, but to take care of what

humanity – often one’s friends, parents, and ancestors have messed up. Most importantly, the return to the community is often accompanied by others – unlikely friends who were an integral part of the journey. The beauty of these stories helps us form questions for a new world. What is a hero(ine); who do you want to emulate? Which stories strike a chord and why? Who is responsible? What is a friend, community?

Applebaum (2008) points out that “*Teachers tend to feign disinterest in childhood experiences of cyberculture*. They see as part of their job the need to further separate popular and high-status culture” (p. 99). I agree with Grumet (1988) that teachers need to look at the world with the student or through the student’s eyes. Although I have pointed out previously that everyone ‘lives’ in their own world, the cultural and social worlds – both conscious and unconscious – differ from generation to generation. *Romeo and Juliet*, as a Shakespearean play can be studied through different ethnographic and cultural lenses via different genres: *West Side Story* by Arthur Laurents (1958) as either a novel or movie, reading *Noughts and Crosses* by Malorie Blackman (2006) in a futuristic and alternate Jim Crow setting, or by examining modern Asian acculturation in *Rani and Sukh* by Bali Rai (2004). Racism, love, parental control, and vengeance are thoughtfully treated in all of these texts. A student could choose to read any one (or all) of these texts and thoughtfully contribute to various learning experiences (essay, presentation, class discussion). Although reading comprehension tests would have one believe there is one best answer or one way to ‘read’ a story, there is never just one lesson in a good story. Students, reading and interacting with literature do so intuitively when the teacher takes a back seat in the process. For instance, if a teacher tells his or her class that the theme of

Beauty and the Beast is about not being deceived by appearances – or that beauty is about the ‘inside’ of a person – students will be predisposed to read the story looking for examples that support this idea. They may not be attuned to other themes and ideas – they may not be affronted by the fact that the ‘Beast’ turns into a handsome prince in the end which in fact contradicts this message. Having a student attune to their initial reactions, readings, and interests develops critical thinking. It helps develop a reflective process. It gives them confidence to take what is important to them from a story rather than being told how to understand it.

A curriculum in which the student helps set the pace and subject matter develops critical thinking, helps them realize that they “don’t need anyone’s permission to interrogate the world” (Ayers, 2016, p. 158), and subsequently anyone’s permission to change it. Looking for answers is a different paradigm than being given answers. An educational system which offers four multiple choice answers with only one being considered correct leads to unitary thinking. My students suspect, given their reading interests described previously, that no one knows for sure what is coming. I’m pretty sure they all know, especially my minority students, that we do not live in a ‘fair’ system. Zombies, in current literature, serve as a metaphor for the compliant, the unthinking, the unfeeling, the never satiated consumer – there is no unitary answer for our collective zombies, the banal (Arendt, 1963), the anti-intellectual (Gitlin, 2000), the destroyers of our ecological system. Students, working individually and collectively to understand themselves and the world they live in can learn to understand and deal with these threats. As Ayers (2016) reminds us

The day before Rosa Parks sat down on that bus, Jim Crow was immutable; the day after, the Third American Revolution was unstoppable. . . The day before the Zapatistas declared a state of war against Mexico from its small base in Chiapas, the idea of a peasant and indigenous-led civil resistance was unthinkable; now it is a model for actions across the globe. (p. 197)

A good education, many moments of intellectual joy and aesthetic experience, foster a mindset that is attuned to possibilities and unafraid of change.

I'll be the first to admit the literal idea of zombies is silly. People don't come back from the dead to unthinkingly, unfeelingly consume other people. However, I'll also be the first to admit we often act like zombies and are encouraged by advertising and our capitalist economy to do so. You have to understand zombies in order to figure out a way to change them back to humans.

How Does Intuition Help Us Deal with Zombies?

Intuition helps us recognize inanity. When we get used to the idea that our intuition is valid, and is trying to tell us something – when it is not dismissed as unscientific or without cause – we develop the strength and the courage to articulate what we think is wrong and the confidence to suggest change. Take for example a rule that the eighth grade English teachers instituted at my school: students must have a minimum of six annotations on every page of the novels that they read as part of the curriculum. This is a 'zombie' rule trying to make eighth graders act like zombies. There are not necessarily six things of note on every page. The students know this – why don't the teachers? I have asked students how they work around this. Some of them pretend they don't know many of the vocabulary words and randomly circle the longer words. Others

highlight random phrases and paraphrase them in the margins. Many of them have complained about this rule, but as far as I know it is still in force. One student, who plans on becoming a teacher, told me she is ready to change this system and has been thinking about what she would do. Her plan: students annotate as they see fit, no one gets graded on quantity, at the end of the novel students will go back and analyse their annotations; for example, why did Chapter three get few versus Chapter six with many – what was being noticed? I asked her about the main complaint that I heard from students – annotating interrupts reading. She wasn't sure about this, but she was excited to find a solution. This student, without naming 'intuition', is trying to tap into reading intuitively and is resisting what I call zombie teaching and learning.

Why We Need More Than Two Cultures

In 1959 C. P. Snow gave a lecture titled "The Two Cultures" which discussed the gulf that had developed between the scientific and humanities communities. This gulf, he explained, was fueled by educational specialization and the "tendency to let our social forms crystallise" (p. 18). That is, society enforces the status quo and it enforces this divide which is in turn having an impact on economic inequalities. His recommendation, which I agree with, is to rethink our educational structures. I am not taking sides as to which culture is 'better,' but suggesting that students have a say in the politics of their education and be given the freedom to explore their interests along the explicit and tacit spectrum of available information.

Convergent disciplines narrow their focus of study whereas divergent disciplines are broader, more encompassing, permeable, and cross-disciplinary (Bayer, 1991). Scholars who have crossed these boundaries and impacted the way we see the world

include Polanyi and Kuhn. As a scientist, Polanyi rejected the popular idea that experience is reduced to sense data and our concrete, physical world. He spent nine years, supported by Manchester University, working on his book *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (2015/1958) attempting to bridge the science/humanities gap and concluding that the branches of science are not separate from the influence of the scientist as an individual. He also explained the notion of tacit knowledge (1966) as knowledge which we all have and develop which is irreducible to concrete examples or explanations via language. Basically, he argues that science is more complex than rationalistic explanations. We stop short of understanding more fully when we only use science and rationality as we actually understand more than we can prove or explain.

Tacit knowledge is equated with intuition (Gascoigne & Thornton 2014; Shamsie & Mannor 2013). It is knowledge that is difficult to transfer and explain, but recognizable when it happens. Included with tacit knowledge is craftsmanship, artistry, comedic genius, culinary skills, and the subtleties of language. My definition of intuition, that sense of closure and correctness is a part of tacit knowledge which also comprises subjective memories, and learned skills which become automatic (walking). Tacit knowledge in the school room would equate to an intuitive instructor that has a sense of how a class should proceed and what will work best, but may not be able to articulate exactly why to colleagues.

Kuhn (2012/1962) was another scholar who chose the role of student outside his given field. As a scientist, he became interested in the history of science, and

approaching his field as a humanist developed the concept of ‘paradigm shifts’ in the history of science to explain our individual and collective shifts in consciousness.

Like me, you are probably thinking *I’m no Polanyi or Kuhn*. It is always more fun and more impactful to take extremes as examples. A more commonplace, and more current example that students could relate to is the rise of the graphic novel. I am ashamed to say that like many of my colleagues my first reaction to the graphic novel was: *Why are teenagers reading comics!* The graphic novel blends story with visual captions, and explores a variety of adult themes beyond picture books (Gibson, 2010). In addition to story line, McCloud (1993) explains that lettering, color, layout, and time sequencing add to the experience of reading. The early creators of graphic novels bore criticism of their approach to storytelling, but their interest in broadening their field (whether it was in producing comics or novels) resulted in a new genre. As a convert to the enjoyment of this type of storytelling I can attest to the fact that teaching about the Holocaust through the graphic novel *Maus* (1986) by Spiegelman is the most meaningful way I have been able to convey that part of our history. Furthermore, this is not the first time we see a change in the history of storytelling. The adaptation of symbolic form and the development of the alphabet gave rise to the fixed, written story. A story which we can go back and explore over and over, debate, question and critique. Reading a book silently is a far cry from the communal performance of a bard. Reading a graphic novel is a different experience than reading a book. Not better, not worse – different. It is not a teacher’s job to rate what teaches a lesson best. I am sure there is a way to test and graph learning outcomes that work best for the *majority* of learners, but I am not interested in the majority – I am interested in all learners.

The two cultures described by Snow (1959) are coextensive with today's educational mindset. The scientific corner conducts studies to find out why our schools are failing, insists on testing, data, and looks for the correct formula to teach scripted lessons. The humanities corner insists on experiential learning, incorporating the arts, and involving the community. As these two opponents fight for space, time, and dollars – students pay the price for their discord. History and psychology indicate there is no one best way to teach and reach every student. To iterate Snow's message, our educational culture needs to work at being less divisive. Making space for, not replacing with, intuitive teaching and learning can allow for a less rigid either/or educational structure as it encourages students to be more involved with their learning and allows for time to experiment with what works, acknowledges learning in finding what doesn't work, and respects both student and teacher decisions.

Supporting Students

Students are able to create multiple personas via technology today. Their comfort in the world of social networking sites is commensurate with the cliques they established and clung to when I was growing up. What has not changed is the search for authenticity from the safety of conformity. Students seek authenticity; they look for it in their relationships, and they look for it in school. Research by Thomaes, Sedikides, Van den Bos, Hutteman, & Reijntjes (2016) define authenticity as “the sense of being one's true self.” Their study of 759 adolescents supported the precept that authenticity enhances well-being and that it co-varies with needs for relatedness and competence. Most students don't talk about authenticity; they use the phrase ‘being real.’ Working in the classroom I have heard students disparage each other, parents, and teachers when they are

not ‘being real’ – or when they feel the need to take on personas that students do not feel are authentic.

On the other hand, teachers seem to view authenticity as something they bring to the classroom through subject matter and dialogue (Kreber, Klampfleitner, McCune, Bayne, & Knottenbelt, 2007). The teacher’s role in this quest for an authentic classroom and authentic relationships with students can start with being authentic himself or herself. The teacher can aid the student in pursuing their own interests. In today’s world teachers are measured on how effectively they can show they have made a difference in a student’s life. Being able to graph and demonstrate that you raised a child’s reading lexile by two grade levels, or, that 80 percent of your students mastered 90 percent of your grade level standards are virtual guarantees of a favorable evaluation. What is not part of an evaluation beyond your own personal reflections as an instructor is the time you spend in homeroom listening to a child’s nightmare, watching a movie your students recommend, or acknowledging the power of tacit knowledge. Most professions pay homage to tacit knowledge. Craftsmen, experts, performers, artists all call upon unexplainable skills they have accumulated. Teachers do too – it is a way to serve students that often does not have an identifiable source or provable effect.

Fundamentally, I believe the best service we can offer students is to instill the idea that learning is ultimately enjoyable and useful. I won’t argue the fact that it is often a struggle to assimilate new information, to write, to search and research. However, whether learning in a school setting or out, it has, at a minimum, personal value. An intuitive curriculum helps students learn to tap into individual interests, remain flexible and open to new ideas, people and paradigms, to question authority and what is minority

and the status quo. An intuitive curriculum fosters curiosity rather than fear of the ‘different.’ I hope intuition will serve to not only acknowledge what is wrong or unjust but to look for ways to change and redress such situations.

One Last Example

As I write I struggle with clarity, the limitation of words to convey thoughts and feelings, and the nagging question at the end of each chapter *have I made myself clear*. This dissertation is the first time I have written on a subject and produced more than 25 pages. It feels like I am rambling at times and not doing the topic justice. I would like to circle around one last time to intuition and the student and what that might look like. I’ll take as an example the lifelong learner C. J. Jung, not just because he spent his life in pursuit of knowledge, but because he made space for intuition as a part of discovery.

The scenario I would like to give as an example is recounted in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (Jung, 1963) where at the age of forty-nine Jung encountered a Native American chief in New Mexico. The chief was explaining how he and his people did not understand white men and thought they were ‘mad’ because they thought with their heads. In answer to Jung’s question of what he thought with, the chief indicated his heart (p. 248). This was significant for Jung and provided not a new way of thinking, but a recognition of how sometimes we ‘think.’

Chapter 5

Virginia Woolf and Einstein: Intuition and Place

BEFORE THOUGHT. This is obviously the ideal condition for creativity.

~Artaud, 1965, p. 33

My daughter is a very pragmatic thinker and doer. She recently asked, “Why is this chapter taking so long for you to figure out and write?”

“It’s about place.” I fretted.

“Jesus Christ. Place. You’re writing about school. Don’t you think it is the building, the school room, and maybe the bus?”

“I don’t think so. I think it is about where your head is. I think it is about the timespace continuum. It might even be about where we are not – our memories, for example.”

“What!”

“Where I am as an object, five feet and one hundred thirty pounds of ‘mother’, is not necessarily where I am as a subject – a confused student with various thoughts fighting to take precedence in what I write next. Also, it’s raining,” I wailed, “which means my surroundings will be different, and I will be different when the sun comes out.”

“If I ever talk about going to graduate school, stop me.”

“Sure thing, baby.”

“Remember about poking your memories with a stick? Would that help?”

“Oh, yes. You are brilliant.”

Poking My Memories with a Stick

My current understanding of the spacetime continuum is that we live in a three-dimensional world, with time being the fourth and, to date, a fairly linearly understood dimension (DiSalle, 2016). I have always suspected that the fifth dimension is not another component of space, but of time. That is, that time is no longer linear, but also has depth. It would be the corollary of z in (x, y, z, t) . However, because we perceive time as linear I worry about Kahneman's (2011) realization that our decisions and our perceptions are determined by our remembering selves – selves that did not do the actual living but are conduits to function in this world. To give this remembering self as many tools as possible to capture the past I engage in some of the following activities: trying to recreate smells, taking out clothes that were worn on certain occasions, looking at photographs, and using google maps to get satellite images of places – all of this I call poking my memory with a stick.

In observing an aerial view of my old high school I realized it was designed along the same panoptical lines as the current school I teach in. In looking at old pictures of my elementary school I was able to recall the dimly-lit and smoke laden air of the teacher's lounge and compare it to the chair-less space provided to teachers in my current school which offers us a fridge and a copy machine. I have no conclusions in comparing settings. My task in this essay is not to design or find the perfect space for teaching and learning, but to consider how it impacts curriculum and intuition. In the rest of this chapter, rather than look at the concrete confines of place – school building, classroom, cafeteria, bus – I will consider the emotions associated with them: confinement versus freedom, remembrance, sensory perception, and engagement versus withdrawal.

The Pen

The most obvious, for me, given of space in the school setting is the lack of it, the confinement of students and teachers, and the prison-like manner in which we are expected to move about in and function in our given space. Farmers pen like animals together in confined spaces. It is easier to track and protect them this way. Prisoners call their confines ‘the pen’—and although I am sure they feel as if they are treated like animals, the name is also a shortening of *penitentiary* (a penitent being sorry for their acts). Confinement seems to indicate mistrust – that the pent up require the authority of those who know better. Children spend a large part of their day closely supervised – both at home and at school. At school however the child is typically confined to one room that they cannot leave – to go to the bathroom, media center, nurse – without first asking the teacher’s permission. They also are confined in a room in which they have had no say in who their teacher or classmates are. In most classes, they are confined to a few feet of space at a desk they did not get to choose next to people who were likewise assigned a specific spot. Depending upon the teacher, they may be chastised for having a snack, getting up to walk or stretch, whispering to a neighbor, checking their phone, or even reading a book if they are bored. As a teacher, I often resent playing the farmer or warden as part my profession. And, no matter how that tiny domain is run, whether in quiet rows or noisy groups, when an administrator walks into the room I can be evaluated negatively or positively in both situations. The quiet row scenario may result in: a positive appraisal of a teacher maintaining order and having good classroom management, or a negative one in which the environment is sterile and students are not engaging in collaborative or stimulating work. Similarly, an administrator walking into the noisy

classroom may perceive active learning, or, a free-for-all. For many teachers, preparation for the evaluation is not so much preparing a relevant lesson as it is gauging the mood of the observer and trying to figure out what will impress him or her the most. This lack of clarity and the feeling of powerlessness on the part of the teacher feels like, and sadly can result in, psychological manipulation. This type of oppression, as Freire (2010) realized, remains a problem until both the oppressed and the oppressors work together to respect each other and change their situation to benefit all. He detailed the oppressive, stagnant, and mutually detrimental results of such relationships of power in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. He likened freedom to a habitual conquest for responsible and informed action which constantly challenges and questions the status quo. These micro-revolutions by which we can live serve to liberate everyone. He explains

As the oppressors dehumanize others and violate their rights, they themselves also become dehumanized. As the oppressed, fighting to be human, take away the oppressors' power to dominate and suppress, they restore to the oppressors the humanity they had lost in the exercise of oppression. (p. 56)

Schools should not be centers of oppression where administrators try to colonize teachers who in turn try to colonize students. In fact Freire saw education as the best means to fight oppression. Conscientization, or *conscientização* (2010) is developing critical consciousness to recognize and take action against injustice in one's own life and in the lives of others. For teachers, this oppression usually occurs a few times a year. For the student, it can be a daily occurrence. How can students learn when they are miserable? I specifically chose to examine intuition and the student after the chapter on intuition and the teacher to underscore first the importance of teachers' self-reflection, authenticity, and

relationships with students. This chapter on ‘place’ reminds us that we are all – teachers, students, administrators – confined in a space in which it is in the best interests for all to work together towards individual growth and communal justice.

As children grow, they need to feel secure and this needs to be balanced with opportunities to test limits and supervise themselves (Archard, 2014; Crain, 2015; Perry 2014). Both parents and teachers grapple with the best way to do this. Children are confined in school to keep them on a learning schedule, to protect them from potential bad choices, and to protect them from the dangers of evil in this world. The freedom teachers can provide is to teach to the fact that the current system might not be the only way, or best way to learn. They can teach children to examine critically the notion of education and the treatment of children. Bateson notes that “(e)ven protectiveness and benevolence toward the poor, toward minorities, and especially toward women have involved equating them with children” (2001, p. 107). Students should not lose sight of this; invalidation is always oppression. It seems a cruelty that can only serve to retard individuation and meaningful relationships.

What is the role of teacher and of student when held in a metaphorical pen? Intuitively, I believe, they know there is a better way and that they can work together to make the best of, if not change their situation. The imprisoned, who learn from their confinement, have a philosophical appreciation for the experience. Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King Jr. and many others speak of incarceration without resentment. In an interview on life after prison Eddie Ellis explains,

My deepest human insights and my understanding of myself and others were sharpened as a consequence of my being locked in a cell. I don't often admit this, because most people wouldn't understand it, but I may very well be a better person because of my time behind bars. I don't consciously say, 'Bless you, prison,' (referring here to Solzhenitsyn) but prison was a period of divine preparation for me, a blessing in disguise that continues to enhance and enrich my life I ways I can't articulate. (July, 2014, p. 6-7)

Confinement in itself can be a learning experience, but this is not the case for all prisoners; it was devised as, and is usually perceived as both a punishment for crimes committed as well as an institution to rehabilitate and teach conformity.

Arguably the routine of school prepares students for 'the real world.' Adults must show up for work and dedicate a certain number of hours to earning a living. Be that as it may, I am glad a group of malcontents instituted unions, a five day work week, minimum wage, child labor laws, and rules about working conditions. The catalyst for change is often discontent – looking for better ways to accomplish something, changing the environment, restructuring how things are done, inventing things that make life easier and do things faster. There are many instances of confinement, both physical and psychological. Who feels free for more than a few moments? Parents have the responsibility of caring for their homes and children, students have curfews, there are deadlines, bills, expectations, promises, legal obligations, and the list goes on. Intuition and critical thinking can combine forces to examine what freedom means individually and collectively. Together, students and teachers can question: why am I here, how do I cope, what does this mean, is this fair and humane, are there options?

Remembrance

The psychological state of freedom can seem as strong as the physical one. I keep coming back to the notions of memory and reverie. These seem to be triggers for intuitive moments. Children are expected to remember quite a bit about what they are taught in school, but I am not sure that remembrance as a self-reflective activity is given enough prominence. *Currere*, discussed in chapter one, requires memory and reflection. Our brains seem to operate without our conscious input when they choose what to store in long-term memory (Richter-Levin, Kehat, & Anunu, 2015). When our intuition is at work I suspect we use memory as a form of confirmation or justification to counteract the seeming randomness of intuition. The problem with using one's intuition is that it can be wrong – very wrong – from jumping to conclusions to falling in love with the wrong person, to disliking someone without cause. It can result in fostering false hopes -- don't gamblers have a lot of trust in their instincts? Pessimists seem to 'know' something is wrong, just like hypochondriacs 'know' they are sick. Although it has a sinister side, I argue that intuition needs to be examined and considered rather than followed blindly. It is a potential starting point; it is something which demands our attention. It works, along with our other five senses which are also occasionally wrong, but of which we are much more forgiving when they err. We are imperfect, intuition is imperfect, and combining the two can be disastrous. I still argue for its inclusion in curriculum. To quote Jung yet again,

The irrational fullness of life has taught me never to discard anything, even when it goes against all our theories or otherwise admits of no immediate explanation. It is of course disquieting, and one is not certain whether the compass is pointing

true or not; but security, certitude, and peace do not lead to discoveries. (p. xxxiv)

Although intuition does not always work, and certainly does not always work the way we would like, it should not be discarded as an avenue to discovery.

Our Senses

Our five senses have historically deluded us into believing we can make sense of the world simply by using them correctly. However, there seem to be layers of understanding even with these. You ‘see’ when you read, imagine, and dream, in addition to your eyesight. You ‘hear’ when you compose music and write dialogue, in addition to your hearing. You ‘smell’ and ‘taste’ when you remember a favorite dish. I believe our senses are a starting point for understanding – as is intuition. Our senses are limited, so we have wholeheartedly embraced technology to enhance them. The microscope and telescope have helped us see what is beyond the capacity of our vision. Some ways to try and enhance intuition might include repetition, silence, nature, creative endeavors, and examining our dreams and memories; however, whatever anyone gains from this is individual. That is, it is not confirmed by others, technology, or the senses. The role I suspect intuition plays is that it addresses our own personal gestalts. It points to what we are missing through sensory perception that we need to pay attention to.

I am sure there are other ways than those mentioned above to enhance intuition, but I would like to elaborate on how they may kickstart or play a role in intuition.

Repetition, it has been stated earlier, results in in highly skilled internalized craftsmanship. It is embodied knowledge developed from repetition and experience (Green, 2012). There is also the soothing nature of repetition which calms the active,

engaged, mind and allows for a more subtle, subconscious flow of thoughts. It is a method to get one 'in the zone' or in the mindset of detached, creative thought.

Repetitive acts to attain this state include chanting, drumming, knitting, long road trips, and fishing among many others.

Silence and immersing oneself in nature are other ways of becoming quiet and waiting to see what presents itself in your mind. Chapter two has already discussed the role of boredom in intuition, but silence also has that waiting quality, the accepting 'what next' aspect that allows for less planned and controlled thought which stimulates possibilities in thinking. Jensen (2000) speaks of a language beyond words, it is a language that I equate with intuition and that is grounded in nature.

There is a language older by far and deeper than words. It is the language of bodies, of body on body, wind on snow, rain on trees, wave on stone. It is the language of dream, gesture, symbol, memory, We have forgotten this language. We do not even remember that it exists. (p. 2)

Creative endeavours are another avenue to get in touch with one's intuition. We are not all artists, but creativity can appear in many aspects of our life. I think it is unfortunate that many people don't play with art because they feel they will never produce something 'worthy.' Carl Jung is an example of someone who was not an artist, but who used art, created art, to learn about himself and to connect with intuitions. Jung spent time creating mandalas, (circular, geometric designs symbolizing at times the self, or the cosmos) which helped him meditate upon and formalize his theories of self-actualization, psychological types, and the tension of opposites (Rosen, 1997). He also

carved stone and meticulously constructed his home in Bollingen as an intuitive meditation. Explaining his architectural creation he says,

Words and paper did not seem enough to me. To put my fantasies on solid footing, something more was needed. I had to achieve a kind of representation in stone of my innermost thoughts and of the thoughts and of the knowledge I had acquired. (1963, p. 212)

A final look at how intuition can be welcomed in our world is through memory and dreamwork. It is not within the scope of this dissertation to elaborate upon dreamwork. There are in fact many theories of how this should be accomplished and what dreams actually mean. I will defer to Bulkeley's (2016) explanation of 'big' dreams, which I think most clearly and concisely ties intuition into this form of exploration. He explains 'big' dreams as "relatively rare in frequency, but highly memorable and impactful when they do occur" (p. 146). These dreams, he explains, "have the tangible effect of expanding the individual's range of imaginative understanding" (2008, p. 273); speaking in images and metaphor they can be interpreted "as expressions of a *different kind of intelligence*" (2008, p. 18).

These attempts to get in touch with our intuition may or may not work. I have just offered suggestions of what seems to have worked for others. As I have tried to reiterate throughout this text, I don't claim to know everything about intuition. I am interested in the topic and think it is worth reflecting on as well as worth trying to incorporate into curriculum. I see it as an alternate, not superior, form of knowledge. We deal with the world through our senses, which usually help us understand our environment. The

cautionary tale here is that we should not solely rely on our senses, but allow room for unexplainable perceptions and tacit knowledge.

Engagement

With imposed standards we are McDonaldizing (Ritzer, 1983) our curriculum. We are offering a limited menu because it is cost effective and we can control output. It is not the best there is, but that dollar menu (charter schools, professional learning) with the occasional nod to health with a salad or yogurt parfait (band class/foreign language) keeps most people happy. Intuitively I know we can do much better. One of many possible solutions to this sterile world of education is building the capacity in teachers and students to realize there are more nourishing food sources. This begins with questioning what is offered.

Just as colleges of education cannot cover every teaching situation, schools cannot cover everything to prepare students for life. An intuitive curriculum develops a hovering quality in the mind of both the teacher and student. It creates readiness and heightened self-consciousness. It develops the habit of thinking about what you are doing and why. As it questions the given, the norms, and the experts it consults with an internal chord, a resonance or coming together of which way to go and what seems right. This leads, as Ani DiFranco explains, to a consensus for change.

(O)nce you begin to recognize your own truths, then you can find words to speak them. And once you speak, you find that you are not alone. All it takes is for one person to come out and say, 'Me, too,' and then bingo! The alienation is gone.

(Leviton, 2016, p. 9)

Throughout this dissertation self-awareness has been equated with depth and understanding. The next step in this process is agency; it is the breadth of our collective conscious. It is the ‘outer soul’ that Hillman (1992) speaks of which must engage with the world and recognizing our political responsibilities.

I began this chapter speaking of how disengaged I actually was as a student. As I write about intuition and its possibilities I seem to reach a crescendo of excitement which I hope the reader feels—which I hope engages them. As a teacher however, I have to constantly remind myself of the practical. The voice of my daughter is the practical here; what about the bus, schoolroom, and cafeteria.

In speaking to my students they have described the bus ride variously as a time to be with friends, part of the drudgery of going to school, a time to tune out and listen to music, or a chance to let loose after a day of confinement. I have had moments driving my own children around where the mood of ‘letting loose’ has pushed the limits of my patience. I can’t begin to imagine driving a busload of rambunctious children.

A Room of One’s Own

When Virginia Woolf gave her series of lectures, on the need – or necessity -- for women writers to have time, space, and financial freedom to produce (1929), she struck a chord with men and women alike which speaks to the necessity we feel to have a place to retreat to in order to think, dream, be creative, and wander/wonder in privacy and safety. A room of one’s own – whatever that looks like – is each person’s place to tune into and pursue their intuition. I am not sure a school building can provide this – not with so many individuals. My own remembrance of the school room was of a noisy, intrusive place where it was hard to be ‘alone’ except when caught up in a good book.

Nevertheless, it is probably a good idea for teachers to explore with students what their own ‘room’ would look like. To explore what room they need to make room for their thoughts, fancies, interests, and work. Just as students are taught to consider setting in literature, it is important they also consider setting in their own lives.

One of the main themes of *A Room of One’s Own* is the importance of money – not for the sake of accumulation or consumption—but for security and power. The small world of the child’s or adolescent’s bedroom is an example of security and power versus the classroom environment. The bedroom is a retreat from the everyday world as well as an area where one stamps one’s evolving goals, interests, and likes (Lincoln, 2013). From lighting, to music, artwork, and personal objects a child creates their own nest of comfort which may or may not resemble the rest of the home, or the room previously decorated by a parent. It is not an area that the student has to adapt to. The schoolroom, on the other hand, is typically decorated by a teacher with subject-themed or motivational posters and there is usually little room available for areas in which students can relax, stretch out, and retreat.

Most teachers have ‘planning time’ or times during the workday where they are not in the classroom with students, but in meetings, are planning lessons, or engaging in professional development. We often forget that students do not have this break in their routine. In Georgia, there is no longer ‘recess’ once a student begins middle school. For the majority of the day, students are directed when it is time to be quiet (usually), and when it is time to participate and engage in group activities. Teachers, with increasing class sizes over the past years (US Dept. of Education, 2016), have had to police spontaneous interaction when a majority of students begin making noise. The tension

between chaos, excitement, and learning is something that teachers have to juggle as part of their profession.

With no built in ‘rooms’ in which to retreat, regroup, power down, or take a moment for oneself, teachers can offer small respites to students in the form of creating a corner of the classroom in which students can alone, or in small groups, have their own space. Creativity, support and community can come from a dedicated space for those purposes. Consider the Black Studies, and Women’s Studies Departments and programs of the 1960’s and 1970’s (Grant, 1999). Alternately, it has been proposed (Reid-Walsh & Mitchell, 2004) that technology, in the form of web sites and blogs, offers the opportunity to construct one’s own virtual room.

‘Timeout’ in the classroom is usually the aversive procedure of temporarily excluding the student from participation due to behavioral issues. By changing the stigma of ‘timeouts’, by allowing students to declare occasional ‘timeouts’ for their own good, we are helping them learn to create their ‘own’ rooms and reflect upon and control their behavior.

Chapter 6

Reflections on this Inquiry: Intuition and Agency

I see in the act of throwing the dice and of risking the affirmation of some intuitively felt truth, however uncertain, my whole reason for living.

~Artaud, 1965, p. 91

Our identities change throughout our lives. Sometimes they change through conformity, sometimes through individuation, sometimes through communication, education, paradigm shifts – but they are ever-changing. We go through life improvising (He, 2003) who we are. In *A River Forever Flowing: Cross Cultral Lives and Identities in the Multicultural Landscape*, He uses the metaphor of a river to illustrate this. Her text examines personal change due to political and environmental circumstances, due to culture and cultural shifts, due to friendships, hardships and intellectual challenges. Her journey embodies the growth, assimilation, critical inquiry, and passion for antiracism and equity that I wish for for all of my students. He doesn't 'arrive' at the conclusion of her text. The metaphor of the river and the river delta continue to remind the reader that He continues to be affected by the world and people around her and that there is a need for life long inquiry to understand oneself, others, and the process of change.

Change within oneself, recognizing change and growth within others hopefully instills the need to act upon fostering positive change for all. In a recorded dialogue, turned into a book, Horton and Freire (1990) discuss how liberation and justice are realized through popular participation. Education is not a mandatory sequence of courses, but a response to curiosity. "Education is *before*, is *during*, and is *after*. It's a process, a permanent process. It has to do with the human existence and curiosity" (p. 119). Both of these educators see the role of the teacher as someone who creates

environments of tolerance, understanding, and safety to think critically about the world around them and to take responsibility for positive change. Horton explains, “I was interested in going as far as I could in helping people develop the capacity to make decisions and to take responsibility, which is what I think is the role of an educator” (p. 125).

Both Myles Horton and Paulo Freire worked with adults. Horton’s Highlander Folk School and Freire’s cultural circles were developed with the goals of bringing about social justice. Our public schools are tasked with educating children from kindergarten through twelfth grade with a battery of standards and academic goals. Although public school teachers teach subjects as diverse as math, biology, reading, and health, it is possible, and to my mind preferable, to keep in mind the overarching goal of social justice.

Empowered

Teaching can feel like an overwhelming profession at times. By and large teachers have many demands placed on their time; they have demands placed by administrators, parents, and students. The profession is not known for its largess in terms of salary or supplies. In addition, many teachers are very demanding of themselves. A large number of teachers enter the profession with altruistic and intrinsic motivation to make a difference in the lives of their students and enhance social equity (Watt, Richardson, & Wilkins 2014). Looking at the lives and impact of the giants in education discussed in the paragraph above – Freire and Horton – who have in fact inspired innumerable students and teachers, the practical day to day teaching and its attendant

demands can make one feel like a failure when sweeping changes are not, in fact, taking place.

I feel like a very small player in our school system; but I am, in spite of occasionally feeling overwhelmed, happy with that role. Being a teacher has helped me grow and sharpened my sense of critical inquiry. It has helped me become more tolerant and more attuned to injustices. I have learned not to just disseminate information, but to consider which lens to present information through. I take pride in the small steps, little changes, and individual relationships that take place because I am a teacher. In the busyness and business of the school day I try to return to the touchstone of intuition to remain true to myself, respect and respond to the ‘thou’ (Buber, 1958) of others, and as Horton (1990) expounded, help people develop the capacity to take responsibility.

I wish I had a politically themed vignette for this last chapter where I came to a profound realization via intuition and had a positive impact on one of many segments of oppressed people in our world. I don’t. This last story addresses the resistance to intuition that I encounter time and again: you don’t know what you are embarking on when you follow your intuition; you don’t know the ultimate cost when you listen to your intuition; you could be using intuition for self-serving purposes – as a subconscious excuse; and, you could be wrong.

A few years back I was engaged to be married for a second time. Probably, like many women, I felt rather ambivalent about embarking on a journey I had previously failed at. I wasn’t sure it was the right thing to do, but I had no strong convictions or reasons to not go through with the union. What I did have however was an overwhelming desire to take ballet lessons. Not in a ‘that would be fun’ way, but as if I

was an addict who needed a dancing fix. It was bizarre. I had not done ballet since my late teens. In true addict fashion I pursued this regardless of the consequences or judgement of others. I signed up at a local dance school and in my mid-forties took up ballet again. I'd walk in, head down, past the moms waiting for their kids to finish class to join my group. I was an anomaly. The next oldest person was a junior in high school and the majority of girls in the class were the age of my middle school students. It was awful. Regardless, week after week I went to class and spent a grueling hour training my body to do things I remembered how to do, but which my body railed against.

One evening during class I realized that it was not the ballet I needed so much as it was the need to remember who I was. I didn't want to remarry. The nineteen year old me would have never gotten into this awkward/engaged situation and would have certainly known how to get out of it. My intuition found a way to reach me and to make me think more deeply about what I was doing and what I truly wanted. I didn't know what I was getting into – or even why – when I signed up for class. Further, I am not saying I would have not come to the same conclusions about remarrying some other way – but I am grateful my intuition kicked in and I followed it. Sure it was mildly embarrassing at times, but ultimately it was worth it.

Artaud

It was suggested I wrap up the dissertation with some kind of a framework. I don't really like the idea as it implies boundaries, and I believe intuition occasionally suggests we go beyond boundaries. The broadest interpretation of Tyler (2011; 2013/1949) without going into the details of teacher planning, student experience, and both teacher and student evaluation is a three-circled Venn diagram where there is a

meeting of learner needs, societal needs, and knowledge. It is a starting block for curriculum planning, which if it is to remain open to intuition, is flexible every moment in the classroom. An intuitive curriculum gains life and meaning as it played out in classrooms (Cornbleth, 1990) and it embraces explorations where rules have not yet been set (Lyotard, 1992). Intuition is not conclusive. This dissertation in fact seems more of a preamble than a complete thesis. It is a preparatory statement, but I have tried to avoid dictating what should come next.

My epigraphs throughout this dissertation have been taken from Antonin Artaud. I haven't found a way to work him into this essay, but he has had a profound effect on me as a teacher. I like what he has to say because he does not hold back or self-edit, he does not seem to care what others think, is disparaged by some for his vulgarity and madness (Jannarone, 2012), and through theater attempted to explore the unconscious mind rather than rerepresent stories. He represents, to me, that nonconformist in the classroom whom teachers say 'is bright and capable' but 'doesn't apply himself' to what they are teaching. An intuitive curriculum would care for this type of student rather than make his or her education a battle or an outside interest.

He is also a heroic figure for me because he sought revolution. He was discontent with the Western historical prevalence of logic and reason (Hagerty, 2016) and was looking to change or redirect culture (more so than politics) to be more inclusive of the primal, the sublime, the subconscious, and the little understood.

Anarchy and Chaos as an Intuitive Framework for Curriculum

Teachers are trained to avoid anarchy and chaos and are supposed to try to control them once they take over in the school setting. The classroom is frequently chaotic.

There are often up to thirty bodies in a room performing a variety of tasks, with not everyone working at the same level, or even on the same project. However, I am not sure chaos is such a 'bad' thing.

Chaos is the science of surprises, of the nonlinear and the unpredictable. It teaches us to expect the unexpected. While most traditional science deals with supposedly predictable phenomena like gravity, electricity, or chemical reactions, Chaos Theory deals with nonlinear things that are effectively impossible to predict or control. (Fractal Foundation)

There is much about the world that we live in that is nonlinear: people, nature, power, and education to name a few. Fractal mathematics is a branch of mathematics that tries to capture, this complexity. It seems to me that intuition is a way of thinking that likewise tries to capture this complexity. In an essay on *Curriculum as a Political Process* (1995) Macdonald proposes *bounded anarchy*. Here boundaries are set by adults, but once within these boundaries, students are free to exercise choice and develop themselves (p. 152). A framework that recognizes chaos as a part of life, and anarchy as a means to avoid autocratic control seems the most conducive to integrating intuition as part of curriculum. Out of school curriculum has demonstrated that the confines of *place* can hinder education, while meaningful, joyful, learning and curiosity have demonstrated knowledge is a life long journey.

Potential

There is a concatenate relationship between potential and intuition. Intuition has the potential to develop interests, to develop the self, and to bring about change.

Potential is dormant until it is discovered. I believe intuition is a pathway to hidden potential. To reiterate the goal of this dissertation, I am seeking, at the most basic level, to advance intuition as a useful partner in the teaching and learning process. I realize bounded anarchy and welcoming chaos may be extreme for some, but in the day to day there are a myriad of ways that teachers can welcome intuition for themselves, their students, and as part of subject matter as well as the manner in which to choose and present subject matter.

There should be a place in curriculum for intuition. Curriculum is about making decisions as to what is important to learn; it conveys what is important and valued. A curriculum in which students pursue individual interests conveys the message that the student is important. A curriculum which respects others and demonstrates there are many ways to understand a very complex world and its very complex people conveys the message of love and tolerance. I believe ultimately that a curriculum which helps situate a student in community, teaches critical thinking and an awareness of equity, compassion and rights, ultimately teaches responsibility and fosters agency to decry injustice, fight oppression, and share knowledge.

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