Classrooms as Creative Learning Communities: A Lived Curricular Expression

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CLASSROOMS AS CREATIVE LEARNING COMMUNITIES:
A LIVED CURRICULAR EXPRESSION

by
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A DISSERTATION

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Creativity—the fundamental basis of human experience, expression, and learning in the communal world of the classroom—is the primary concern of this dissertation. While creativity is one of the buzzwords of 21st century education the world over, its lived understanding as fundamental to being human is understudied. This gap calls attention to the significances for all involved of entering into meaning making as creators. To explore the significances, I draw upon and give expression to my experiences of building such creative learning communities (CLC) in my own Multicultural Education (ME) classrooms as a teacher educator and curriculum theorist. Ways to enable educators to envision the power and possibilities of CLC are foregrounded as I theorize what creating and sustaining CLC entails.

In Chapters One and Two, I propose the need to understand creativity as fundamental to human nature and already present within acts of expression in human communities. I turn primarily to Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s and John Dewey’s thoughts on expression to glean insights into how creativity can be reclaimed in the intersubjective and intertwining experiences of being and learning with others in a phenomenal world. I also employ expression as a philosophical mode for my curriculum theorizing.

Chapters Three, Four, and Five expressively theorize my curricular practices of creating and sustaining CLC in my own ME classroom as modes of bodily, aesthetic, and
communal expression. In each chapter, I explore different kinds of curricular and instructional practices—introductory activities; arts-mediated presentations; and staged-readings of *The Laramie Project*—while articulating how each of these activities and practices is created and enacted so as to employ the three modes of expression and to theorize their meanings.

Finally, the concluding chapter synthesizes my theorizing. In CLC, my students are empowered to be creative knowing bodies, expressive meaning-makers, and interdependent co-creators of their curricular experiences and witness of their individual-collective learning through expression and (re)creation of their lived meanings. I also articulate this study’s contribution to re-envisioning creativity as a basis, not a result, of education in the standardization-oriented educational contexts of the U.S. and South Korea where I now continue my career.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION: RECLAIMING CREATIVITY

- Creative Learning Communities ............................................................... 2
- Creativity as Developable and Achievable, Measurable and Evaluable ..... 16
- Consequences for Teachers’ Education: The Necessity of Reclaiming Creativity ................................................................. 26

## CHAPTER 2. EXPRESSION FOR CURRICULUM THEORIZING: A PHILOSOPHICAL MODE OF INQUIRY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .... 35

- Expression as a Mode of Philosophical Inquiry for Curriculum Theorizing 37
  - Self-Reflective Initial Engagements: Theorizing My Practices Of Practicing Embodied Theories ................................................................. 37
  - The Creative Task of Teaching: Curriculum Making through Philosophizing and Theorizing ................................................................. 41
- Expressive Curriculum Theorist as Teacher-Artist-Philosopher ................. 46
- Three Modes of Expression as an Embodied Theoretical Framework ........ 50
  - Bodily Expression ..................................................................................... 50
  - Aesthetic Expression ............................................................................... 55
  - Communal Expression ............................................................................. 59
- Folds, Folding, and Unfolding: Theorizing Creative Learning Communities 63

## CHAPTER 3. BODILY EXPRESSION WITHIN CURRICULUM IN THE MAKING:

- Initiating Creative Learning Communities in Classrooms .......... 65
  - The Beginning of the Creative and Expressive Curriculum Making .......... 66
  - The Classroom as an Open Space ......................................................... 74
  - Use of Tangible Materials .................................................................. 85
  - Creating an Artwork ............................................................................ 94
- An Initiated Creative Learning Community ........................................ 100
CHAPTER 4. CONNECT/ QUESTION/ PLAY/ CREATE: AESTHETIC EXPRESSION AS CURRICULAR MEDIUM................................................................. 103
ENVISIONING CURRICULUM AS MEDIUM .................................................. 108
OPERATIVE WAYS TO FACILITATE ARTS-MEDIATED AESTHETIC EXPRESSION .... 117
RHYTHMIC DIALOGUE AS A MEDIUM: CURRICULAR EXPRESSION IN THE MAKING ..... 126
CONNECT / QUESTION / PLAY / CREATE PRESENTATION: TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH ARTS-MEDIATED AESTHETIC EXPRESSION ........................................ 143

CHAPTER 5. COMMUNAL EXPRESSION THROUGH ENACTING THE LARAMIE PROJECT: INTERTWINING VOICES OF CREATIVE LEARNING COMMUNITIES ........................................................................ 147
THE INITIAL SOUND OF STUDENTS’ READING VOICES AND INTERTWINED LISTENING. 160
EXTENDING VOICES THROUGH SHAKING HANDS WITH A BROADER COMMUNITY ...... 169
INTERTWINING WITH CHARACTERS’ VOICES FROM THE LARAMIE PROJECT ............. 178
THICKENING FLESH THROUGH COMMUNAL EXPRESSION IN A CULMINATING PERFORMANCE ........................................................................ 187

CHAPTER 6. CULMINATION AND MOVING FORWARD ........................................ 195
SUMMARY .................................................................................................. 196
SYNTHESIS .............................................................................................. 199
ENVISIONING FUTURE DIRECTIONS .......................................................... 201
EXPRESSIVE CONSUMMATION .................................................................. 208

REFERENCES .......................................................................................... 213
APPENDIX A: COURSE SYLLABUS .............................................................. 227
CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION:

RECLAIMING CREATIVITY

While creativity is one of the buzzwords of 21st century education the world over, its application as a fundamental basis of human experience, expression, and learning in the communal world of the classroom and beyond is understudied. This gap in curriculum and pedagogy calls for theoretical studies grounded in practice that enable educators to imagine the possibilities of various forms of creativity present in their practices and to articulate their potential significances for learning. In this dissertation, I explore and theorize what creating and sustaining a creative learning community entails and signifies through giving expression to my experiences of building such communities in my own classrooms as a teacher educator. In this introductory chapter, I locate this expressive curricular work in the context of previous research, particularly regarding the notions of creativity and community. I propose the need to understand creativity as fundamental to human nature and already present within acts of expression in a human community. I turn primarily to Murice Merleau-Ponty’s (1968; 1973; 1993a; 1993b; 1945/2002; 2007a; 2007b; 1945/2012) and John Dewey’s (1922; 1934; 1997, 2007; 2008) thoughts on expression in order to glean insights into how creativity can be reclaimed in the intersubjective and intertwining experiences of being and learning with others in a phenomenal world—“which…is the real,” (Dillon, 1997, p.92), “lived” and “perceptual
world” (p.93), different from “the objective world” (p.92). In navigating and theorizing my embodied experiences in creative learning communities, I attempt to understand the connections between the current discourses concerning creativity and their consequences for teacher education. In doing so, I begin to imagine other curricular possibilities of learning through creative expression and expressive creation in the teacher education classroom community and beyond.

Creative Learning Communities

For about a decade, I have been engaged in various communities where people—both amateur and professional—are involved in creative works, particularly through arts such as theater, art, dance, and music. In such creative communities, even when those involved have not consciously planned for a learning situation, learning happens. Invited to create and seek expression, expressing with and through other(s), participants are respected as creative and expressive beings. Partaking in such communities, participants develop their own experiences to meaningful culminations. Interacting with self, others, and the world, participants continuously bring their past and future into their present

1 To clarify, Merleau-Ponty’s understanding of the phenomenal and objective world is not dualistic. As Dillon (1997) says:

Merleau-Ponty came to philosophy with an extensive background in scientific methodology and a healthy respect for its ability to generate truth. And his affinity with American pragmatism is strong enough to preclude his ever adopting a position which implies the unreality of the objective world of science. For Merleau-Ponty, the objective world is not unreal; it is abstract and ideal...because [the objective world] is a construct...[and] functions as a regulative ideal for all claims to theoretical validity. (p.92)

Merleau-Ponty believed that “[t]he objective world is an ideal variant of the phenomenal world” (p. 92-93) rather than that the former is in opposition to the latter.
expression and creation. The “aesthetic” experiences that are incited within creative learning communities become “educative” experiences (Dewey, 1934) when participants seek to interweave what is already expressed with what is yet to be expressed—“the visible and the invisible” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968)—by creatively constructing individual/collective experiences in the arts. Within such aesthetic experiences, the participants are “singing the world” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p.193) through the act of expression. Such singing as expressive creation opens up multitudes of possibilities for participants to learn together and enrich the lives of the individuals comprising the creative learning communities.

Although increasingly rare due to standardized curriculum and scripted teaching practices fostered by encompassing educational policies like No Child Left Behind (2001), classrooms of all kinds can become aesthetic-educative experiential spaces where deep and meaningful learning happens. Such spaces assume a context where teachers and students coexist as already capable, creative beings. My experience in one of the courses I participated in as a Master’s-level student drew my attention to the tangible benefits of locating such creative and expressive communications for learning at the core of the classroom experience. This classroom experience inspired me to further explore and continually seek to give expression to that which constitutes what I hereafter refer to as a creative learning community and why and how it can be created and sustained.

Recently, I had an invaluable opportunity to navigate the process of building such a creative learning community in my own classroom through the teaching of a Multicultural Education (ME) course. From 2011 to 2012, I taught four sections of the ME course at a research university in the United States Midwest for undergraduate pre-
service teachers and practiced my lived, embodied, and yet-to-be-articulated theories of creative learning communities in my own classroom. This dissertation is the process and, at the same time, the product of my expressive journey theorizing my practices of teaching a ME course. In particular, I intend to engage potential readers of this dissertation in my expressive journey in such a way that they can experience possibilities of the concomitant living-practicing-theorizing of teaching and learning in creative learning communities. In doing so, as I seek language and images that vivify learning with and from my students while attempting to value everyone’s participation as active meaning-makers and artist-creators, I hope that this work can initiate “complicated curricular conversations” (see Macintyre Latta, 2013) about the great potential of building and sustaining creative learning communities in K-12 classes, teacher education classrooms, and beyond.

I begin my dissertation by examining the notion and context of creativity, which is widely valued among various disciplines including education, business, and politics, and is often mentioned in relation to concerns of globalization in the twenty-first century (Yang, 2003; Pope, 2011; Jones, 2011). Often defined as originality and innovation and desired for the economic profits it can yield for individuals as well as their societies, creativity has been examined in order to uncover how it might be promoted through various instructional practices in and beyond schools; yet, creativity seems understudied as a fundamental basis of human existence and learning in a shared world. By reclaiming creativity as inherently present in human beings’ expressive ways of existence in the world, I suggest that creativity in education be understood as implicitly interwoven with
the act of expression in a human community and further, that its expression be encouraged in both processes and products of learning.

The element of the human community I want to explore here, however, is not a matter of determining how one gains membership in a community, or how certain practices are engaged by its members, or the kinds of repertoires that are shared and evolved. Such conceptions of community are important in that they enhance the awareness of the situatedness of learning. However, on the one hand, as Gee (2004) also points out, this account of community connotes “‘belongingness’ and close-knit personal ties among people” in the community and considers people “‘members,’” which can mean various things in different kinds of communities (p.77). On the other hand, by conceptually distinguishing people into members and non-members, discussions of community based on these perspectives ignores the participants’ experiences of always being with others, already working together “at the most primordial level” due to their engagement in “the phenomenal world” that is “a communal world” (Dillon, 1997, p.115). Moreover, the notion of newcomers learning from old-timers and becoming one of them in a community of practice reveals a more linear and objective perspective of the notion of time. From Merleau-Ponty’s (1968; 1973; 1993a; 1993b; 1945/2012) standpoint, this perspective ignores the temporal, spatial, and social “depth” of perception and experience, linearly deflating the profound and complicated meanings the participants may have experienced in their intertwining with the self, others, and the world in their community. Also, the notion of community in Lave and Wenger (1991)

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2 See Wenger, 1998; Lave and Wenger, 1991 for the detailed explanation of a community of practice; See Holmes and Meyerhoff, 1999 for the comparison of the community of practice framework with some other sociolinguistic theories and social psychological frameworks.
focuses on how the practices of the group members are learned and developed rather than on what they experience when they are learning from each other and how they make sense of their relationships with others in the process of learning.  

Critical of the notion of communities of practice, Gee (2004) suggests starting the discussion of community by considering “space” rather than “communities.” In that way, he argues, we can ask questions such as to “what extent the people interacting within a space, or some subgroup of them, do or do not actually form a community” (p.78). This approach is progressive in that he does not limit the discussion to “physical or geographical space” (p.79), but extends it to various “affinity spaces” (p.79) including virtual spaces. Gee (2004) analyzes the affinity space of the users of an online game and articulates how such space engages the game players in learning while playing, blurring the traditional dichotomies between masters and newbies, leaders and followers. The affinity space Gee (2004) explores promotes gaining and dispersing intensive, extensive,

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3 Lave and Wenger’s understanding of newcomers’ learning through peripheral participation does not seem to help understand learning in a classroom where students should be considered as and encouraged to be capable learners from the moment of their first entrance into the classroom community. Regarding students as newcomers and engaging them only in peripheral participation at the beginning prevents teachers from fully empowering their students’ potential to create their own learning experiences and from creatively adjusting their ways of teaching according to students’ needs and interests. Hay (1996) articulates this point:

Lave and Wenger…reconceptualize learning, focusing their attention…upon the problematic idea of a community of practice. However, they have done this at the expense of making the student/newcomer almost completely impotent vis-à-vis the community…the newcomer has little or no ability to make or even impact decisions concerning what is taught, how it is taught, and by whom. Students have no “space” to create knowledge within the community practice until they reach a certain station in relationship to the center of the community—by which time, most newcomers are transformed into old-timers. Then they are so vested into and implicated by the community of practice that to think certain thoughts would undermine their position in the community, as well as the community itself. (p.92-93)
and tacit knowledge through the players’ various ways of participation. While I value Gee’s insightful perspective on community as an affinity space where participants learn by interactive playing, my exploration of community focuses on classroom practice where teachers and learners meet in person. This is not to dismiss the possibility of a virtual learning community, but to begin my exploration from the most fundamental understanding of the phenomenological-ontological meanings of human beings’ expressive co-presence as bodily beings in a learning community.

It seems necessary to briefly clarify what I mean by phenomenological ontology before I continue my exploration of the notion of community, since it will be a reoccurring expression throughout my writing. Both phenomenology and ontology have thick histories in Western Philosophy and their meanings vary when taken “as a disciplinary field in philosophy, or as a movement in the history of philosophy” (Smith, 2011, What is phenomenology? Section, para. 1). In order to clarify what I mean by phenomenology, ontology, and phenomenological ontology, I particularly turn to Merleau-Ponty’s philosophical theories. This is in line with my intention to acknowledge the embodiment in and communality of teaching and learning and their consequences in curricular theorization throughout my expressive journey of writing this dissertation.

Merleau-Ponty critically takes up traditional phenomenology—that which “studies structures of conscious experience as experienced from the first-person point of view, along with relevant conditions of experience”—from other philosophers like Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre (Smith, 2011, The discipline of phenomenology section, para. 2) and develops his own theory of phenomenology, followed later by that of phenomenological ontology. For Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology is to “seek to
describe...our perceptual, embodied experience of the world” (Cerbone, 2006, p.107) while fully acknowledging human beings’ inseparable connection to the primordial world even in the moment of reflective philosophical interrogation on phenomenon. His phenomenology particularly emphasizes human beings as bodily beings and overcomes the mind-body dualism by arguing that “consciousness is embodied (in the world), and equally body is infused with consciousness (with cognition of the world)” (Smith, 2011, The history and varieties of phenomenology section, para. 16). Thus, when I use the phrase “being phenomenological,” I intend to emphasize human beings’ bodily engagements in their lived experiences of thinking, knowing, learning, communicating, etc. always in relation to their phenomenal world. Further, when I say “being phenomenological-ontological,” I have Merleau-Ponty’s theories in mind, particularly those in his later development of phenomenology with more radical ontological concerns as present in *The visible and the invisible* (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). Ontology generally means “the study of beings and their being” (Smith, 2011, Phenomenology and ontology, epistemology, logic, ethics section, para. 8). The concept of ontology I borrow from Merleau-Ponty is one which understands its relational nature; thus, it is non-dualistic, distinct from more “traditional ontology… [which is] characteristically dualistic” (Dillon, 1997, p.153).

Merleau-Ponty’s non-dualistic phenomenological ontology is “based on the thesis of the ontological primacy of phenomena,” that is, “an ontology in which being or reality is conceived as phenomenon” (Dillon, 1997, p.156). According to his theory, in “the phenomenal world” that is “the perceived world,” “[t]he Other’s world is my world because the two views are reversible” (p.156). Seeing and being seen between self and
others, self and objects, and self as subject and as object cannot be completely separable in our perceptual experiences; it is, although “asymmetrical” (p.168), always reversible. For example, I cannot perfectly “live [someone else’s] experience of” her perspective because “I am always on the same side of my body,” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.148). Nonetheless, her “viewpoint” is not completely “closed off to me” (Dillon, 1997, p.169) because we live as bodily beings in the same visible world. Within such a reversible relation, I and other are “place[d]…within the same ontological category,” what Merleau-Ponty calls “flesh [emphasis added] which is reversibly seeing and seen” (p. 169). In this sense, I exist in such a way as to intertwine with others and objects in the phenomenal world non-dualistically because we are “made of the same stuff:” (p.169) “flesh of a unitary world” (p.170). Thus when I say “(phenomenological-) ontological” in this dissertation without further explanation, it is to express non-dualistic meanings of human beings’ relational experiences of living, knowing, learning, etc. Such meanings are born from human beings’ perception of the phenomenal world that they have already been a part of as bodily, visible beings; they are continuously turned back upon the same world, enriching it and its “interwovenness of things” that is “primordial, elementary, irreducible” as an element of being (Dillon, 1997, p.156).

Returning to the discussion of community in the phenomenological sense described above, a virtual learning community that Gee (2004) explores is only possible because its participants are already bodily, intersubjective, expressive, and creative beings in their relationships with their selves, others, and the world. My inquiry is therefore located in a classroom practice where teachers and learners are bodily present
with each other and experience their co-constructing creative learning community in person.

Phenomenologically speaking—that is, describing a phenomenon not as an object spreading in front of me but rather as an experience of me which is always enveloped in such a phenomenon—a phenomenon of community emerges when there is more than one person in the depth of my perceptions of the world. When I perceive a world where I can find others in their own places distant from me and one another and yet close enough to be perceived by me and others, there is a community; at the same time, when I see others in my perception, my seeing—taking place here where I am—of the others—located over there, at a distance from me—presupposes that “I already hold [them] or I still hold” [them]; the others are “in the future or the past at the same time as in space” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p.277). This means that within a perceptual experience forming the foundation of my experience of a community, my past and future are always called into the present moment at which I am living the community. In other words, when others appear in my perception, a community emerges “spatiotemporally” (Cataldi, 1993, p.42).⁴

However, a community consisting of people visible to each other is more than the phenomenon of people merely appearing in each other’s lines of sight. In a phenomenological-ontological sense, the perceived phenomenal world includes not only the visible but also the invisible, always linked to and reversible with the former. As Maldiney (2000) says, “this appearing is not an appearing involving two terms, going from one term to the other—which would turn the appearing itself into a third term” (p.

⁴ For further interpretation of Merleua-Ponty’s understanding of closely linked space, time, and depth, refer to Ito, Y. (1998) from p.74 to p.76.
That is, community is not the third term that can gain its meaning only after a person’s absence becomes his or her presence. The ontological notion of community already assumes this possibility of the reversibility of appearing and the reflexivity between the absence and presence. Absence partially includes presence, and vice versa.

In this shared world, community has always been there ontologically as our basic condition of living. Maldiney’s (2000) expression is insightful: “By itself, the surface is nothing, but without the surface there is no depth, since it lacks the there where the flesh can…[appear]” (p.69). In a similar sense, visible persons in a community may not mean much by themselves since it is not the mere visibility in itself that makes community possible. However, without their appearances and visibility, there is no depth that makes a phenomenological-ontological community possible—the kind of community where learning as “complicated conversations” (see Pinar, 2004) and webs of relationships takes place and grows further in communication.

In this sense, creativity present in the expression of one’s existence always takes place in a community in a broad phenomenal sense. Also, especially where creativity is concerned in education—in which the participation of more than one person is always taken for granted—the notion of creativity cannot be thought of without recognizing its intertwining relationship with a phenomenological community where creativity is expressed and communicated. This examination and reclaiming of the notion of creativity in relation to the phenomenological/ontological emergence of a community provides the

\footnote{Flesh is one of the most critical and complicated notions in Merleau-Ponty’s ontological account of his phenomenology. In the same chapter, Maldiney (2000) explains, “flesh is the universal being [l’étant]”; it is “the place of the ontological difference” not as an absolute divergence, but as “the being itself the divergence and the reversibility of the visible and of the invisible” (p.67). I will provide a more comprehensive account of this notion in my next chapter.}
philosophical grounds upon which I explore what creativity means in teaching and learning in a classroom as a creative learning community. Moreover, although I do not deal directly with questions such as what kinds of creativity and community are good and desirable and need to be nurtured in this dissertation, my dissertation fundamentally presupposes my ethical and political position toward education. Ontology of human beings basically perceives people—students, teachers, parents, etc.—as beings in the world who share the fundamental nature and conditions of living in the world and the potentiality of living/growing/learning/knowing, etc. regardless of their class, culture, language, race, age, etc. I take this ontological perspective with a belief that truly just and democratic education is possible only when each human being is perceived as having equal potential to be creative, expressive, communicative, etc. in his or her learning experiences. I explore how such an ethical and political perspective on human beings and their potentiality of learning can be expressed and communicated in my curricular practices and my theorization of building a creative learning community.6

My theoretical framework—which will be illustrated in more detail in the following chapter along with the rationale of the mode of inquiry and context of this dissertation—draws on Merleau-Ponty’s (1968; 1973; 1993a; 1993b; 1945/2012) and Dewey’s (1934; 1997; 2008) philosophical theories to support my call for a renewed understanding of the creative learning community. In particular, I employ Merleau-

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6 Jacques Rancière (1991) examines human beings’ intellectual equality for building a truly democratic society. In his book, Ignorant Schoolmaster, he argues that believing that human beings are equal can initiate emancipating them and make the human community possible. To quote him:

It is true that we don’t know that men are equal. We are saying that they might be. This is our opinion, and we are trying, along with those who think as we do, to verify it. But we know that this might is the very thing that makes a society of humans possible. (Rancière, 1991, p.73)
Ponty’s phenomenological-ontological perspectives on the notions of body subject, expression, reversibility, and flesh. Although Merleau-Ponty does not directly mention educational issues, I find that his non-dualistically ontological perspective on human beings’ relationship with the world provides a critical lens, one through which I can explore the primordial conditions of human learning and understand complicated webs of relationships in the visible and the invisible, lived experiences in the world and the meanings that are expressed, intertwined, and communicated in a classroom. I also draw upon Dewey’s pragmatic perspectives, which consider the notions of expression and aesthetic experience. Searching for inspiration in the works of Merleau-Ponty and Dewey entails making sense of my lived experiences of teaching and learning through expressive creation and creative expression in my ME course and exploring possibilities theorized through curricular enactment.

In addition, I introduce the philosophical approach of this dissertation in the next chapter, namely, expression—borrowed from Merleau-Ponty’s (1968; 1973; 1993a; 1993b; 1945/2012) account of expressive philosophy. This approach illustrates the creative act of writing this dissertation as a way to “find new words (beyond their ‘pre-established signification’\(^7\)) that open up a powerful, illuminating way to articulate the silent, mute ‘concordance of the world’\(^8\)” (Hass, 2008, p.199). Rather than presenting my teaching practices or representing them as mere examples of some theoretical concepts introduced by Merleau-Ponty and Dewey, I consider writing itself as a continuous creative attunement to a process of exploring the world I have created and engaged with and as an expression of my on-going constructions of meanings within that world.

\(^7\) Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.38, as cited in Hass, 2008, p.199
\(^8\) Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.39, as cited in Hass, 2008, p.199
Dewey (1934) also informs my understanding of the method of expression as he portrays the act of expression not as mere “self-exposure” (p.64) but as an active “carrying forward in development to completion” (p. 68). Through the writing of this dissertation, my impulsion to explore meanings of my own teaching experiences will transform my experiences of teaching and learning into an authentic expressive dissertation by playing with “sedimented” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p.416) philosophical concepts and turning them into “a medium” (Dewey, 1934, p.67) for my own writing. In this process, I will be able to express creatively how I make sense of my practice in relation to philosophical and educational theory.

Thus, my aim is to embody the thesis of this dissertation by exploring the notion of *expression* not only as key to understanding the significances of creating and sustaining a creative learning community in a classroom, but also as a method of my own exploration. Through this work, I attempt to overcome the false dichotomies between form and content, research topics and methodologies, means and ends, process and product, theory and practice, action and reflection, past and present, teacher and learner, and so on. In doing so, I want to navigate both the expression of my practice and my practice of expressing while mediated by evolving theoretical languages.

Following Chapter Two’s theoretical framework and modes of inquiry, Chapters Three, Four, and Five expressively theorize my curricular practices of creating and sustaining creative learning communities in my own ME classroom as modes of (a) bodily expression, (b) aesthetic expression, and (c) communal expression. In each chapter, I explore different kinds of curricular and instructional practices—classroom settings and introductory activities in Chapter Three; creative presentation assignments in
Chapter Four; and a staged-reading of *The Laramie Project* (Kaufman & Tectonic Theater Project, 2001) in Chapter Five—while articulating how each of these activities and practices are created and enacted so as to employ the three modes of expression described above and to theorize their meanings. Finally, my last chapter brings synthesis to my theorizing of creative learning communities as expressed in my practice and newly (re)created in my expression of this dissertation.

In writing the following chapters—particularly Chapters Three, Four, and Five—I plan to revisit my lived experiences of teaching the ME course in order to express how creative learning communities might feel and what they could entail in more a concrete sense. For this, I intend to revisit various documentations I have kept with me in relation to the ME course—my planning documents alongside the reflective teaching journals I wrote regarding my teaching efforts and students’ responsive works throughout the course. However, these documents are not to serve as research data. Rather, my revisiting of these documents will provide me with windows through which I can re-encounter my initial teaching experiences of ME, having now already lived, embodied, and wondered about them through and through. The documents, along with the philosophical theories, are the materials that I play with, while interweaving the concrete and the abstract, and renewing, doubling, and thickening their meanings in relation to creative learning communities.

Through such intertwining play, I offer some examples of my engagements with my ME students in Chapters Three, Four, and Five. In doing so, I introduce composite student characterizations derived from my teaching experience of ME and describe my engagements with their thinking rather than revealing the identities of the actual students.
The composed student characters presented in the examples share genuine traits with the actual students in that they are based upon continuous reflections of my teaching ME and are representative of permeating themes. Pseudonyms are also employed to ensure anonymity. While the composite students in the examples are therefore fictional, they are intended to reveal the encounters I navigated in endeavoring to build a creative community in my ME course.

All in all, I hope to provide some meaningful avenues for the potential readers of this dissertation to consider how a creative learning community—"a community [that is always] in the making" and necessarily presupposes "a curriculum in the making" (Greene, 1997, p.7)—might form and reform in teacher education classrooms and beyond.

Before I move on to the next chapter, I first want to examine the notion of creativity as represented in educational research literature in order to consider the context for what it means to engage in creating a classroom as a creative learning community.

**Creativity as Developable and Achievable, Measurable and Evaluable**

The word creativity—which is emphasized more and more as a form of critical "human capital" in the “new global knowledge-based economy” (Yang, 2003, p.129)—is often found accompanying verbs such as develop, enhance, promote, improve, boost, and so on in and beyond the field of education. Whether to help students live richer, more meaningful personal lives, achieve higher academic goals, or contribute to the knowledge economy with innovative ideas, many educators strive to understand creativity in hopes of determining how they might improve their students’ creativity through their
instructional practices. Regardless of how the notion of creativity is incorporated into educational practices—whether by explicitly aiming for its enhancement (teaching for creativity), or implicitly employing it as a mode of teaching and learning (teaching/learning creatively), or dealing with the two as inherently related (Jeffrey & Craft, 2004)—almost all of these teaching approaches have one assumption in common: they conceptualize creativity as a matter of capability or proficiency to be developed, or as a “thing” to be cultivated in students (and teachers). In this context, creativity becomes a goal for students to achieve.

The goal-oriented view is so prevalent in many kinds of studies on creativity in education that it seems difficult to dismiss. In fact, most of the studies on creativity in

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9 Although there can be cultural differences between Eastern and Western societies in understanding the concept of learning in general (Li, 2003; 2004), I feel that Eastern societies tend to share with, rather than differentiate from, Western societies’ typical understanding of creativity as individual (intellectual) capabilities or proficiency. The concept of creativity was first developed and studied in Western cultures and introduced to Eastern countries later mostly by the scholars in the field of psychology strongly influenced by Western thoughts. For this reason, discourses on creativity even in Eastern countries are not that different from those in Western countries. For example, in South Korea (S. Korea), I often observe that people consider creativity as an individual’s gifted capability, which some special people have the good fortune to be born with. This perspective is more similar to the perspective Western people have toward intelligent and “smart” people and the meaning of learning (Li, 2003; 2004) than it is to that which Eastern people usually exhibit (i.e. by attributing perseverance and diligence to the concept of learning). Seong, Ryoo, Ha, Lee, Han, and Han’s (2007) research—a comparative study on the recognition of S. Korean university students in S. K regarding implicit creativity of Americans and S. Koreans—supports this understanding. In the research, Seong, et al. (2007) suggests that Korean university students understand the notion of creativity similarly as that presented in Western psychological studies; they also consider American individualistic learning culture as favorable to promoting creativity, which shows their understanding that the concept of creativity itself credits Western values of individual learners’ characteristics including cognitive skills and intelligence. Moreover, the issue of how creativity can be developed is present in the fields of education of both Eastern and Western countries, regardless of different notions of learning. Whether they believe people learn through practice of certain cognitive skills or through more contextual and collective support, for example, they still share the assumption that creativity can be developable and achievable.
education are psychological; they are conducted based on the assumption that creativity can be explicable (Gaut & Livingston, 2003), developable, and achievable. This basic assumption as creativity as explicable and measurable is one of the reasons why there are many more psychological studies about creativity than philosophical discussions about it in education (Gaut & Livingston, 2003). In philosophical traditions, creativity was understudied because of the assumption that it is not explicable. Plato argues that creativity is possible only through “inspiration” from “god” (Gaut & Livingston, 2003, p.13); Kant considers creativity “in relation to the operations of genius” and holds that “no explanations [are] available to us of…creativity in art” (p.14). I searched the word “creativity” and “creative” in three major SSCI peer-reviewed journals—*Educational Philosophy and Theory, Studies in Philosophy and Education*, and the *Journal of Philosophy of Education*—that have published philosophical studies in education for decades. I was amazed by how few articles appeared as a result of my search. Each journal had only a few articles directly centered on the issue of creativity. Although this alone cannot function as convincing evidence of the lack of philosophical studies on creativity, it explains why it was difficult for me to find research on creativity that deviates from the perspective of creativity widely shared in psychological studies.

This assumption of creativity as explicable (Gaut & Livingston, 2003), developable, and achievable often leads educators to set goals of achieving the explicated characteristics of model creativity and to strive to find effective ways to evaluate and measure these characteristics in order to ensure that efforts to enhance students’ creativity have made a difference. This approach seems universal regardless of scholars’ different understandings about and approaches to the issue of creativity.
For example, some of the psychological studies on creativity provide exemplary models of the highest level of creativity by revealing the critical attributes of people who are considered creative with “a capital C,” those whose creative accomplishments have contributed to human history and social betterment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). The researchers studying creativity with a “big c” (Gardner, 2011; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) assert that not everyone can or should achieve this kind of creativity; people’s involvements in their personally creative activities, even though they may not leave a trace in history, are also meaningful. However, the reason educators and many others interested in creativity take these researchers’ studies of creativity with a “big c” seriously is because they hope that by learning about the effective conditions and supporting strategies that can ultimately facilitate eminent creativity they may help their students achieve “big c” creativity.

Other researchers insist that various kinds and levels of creativity (with a lower-case, rather than capital c) can be found in ordinary people’s everyday activities extending beyond traditional disciplines such as art and science (Richards, Kinney, Benet, & Merzel, 1988; Richards, 2007; Beghetto & Kaufman, 2011; Sawyer, 2011). These researchers have influenced many progressive educators who have tried to empower every student to develop his or her own creativity, rather than focusing on the development of the creativity of a few (who are often labeled gifted). The researchers and educators valuing this “little c” creativity found in every ordinary person seem very different in their views of creativity to the researchers who focus only on “the accomplishments of a handful of people throughout all of history” (Richard, et al., 1988). However, those educators valuing “little c” creativity tend to focus their conversations
mainly on a “pedagogy” of creativity, often in the context of “pragmatic accounts of ‘the
craft of the classroom’” (Banaji, 2011, p.41); their concern is how their instructional
practices can facilitate and develop ordinary students’ various creativities in the
classroom, through, for example, the “artful balance…between structure and
improvisation” (Sawyer, 2011, p.12-13), or “with disciplined improvisation” (Beghetto &
Kaufman, 2011, p.94). In this sense, it is apparent that most of the teachers and
educational scholars who celebrate students’ everyday creativity also assume that
creativity can be developed and achieved as a result of education. Creativity for them is
more oriented toward an achievable goal rather than an ontological condition of human
existence.

Still other educational researchers re-categorize various kinds of creativities and
criticize the widespread dichotomized views on creativity as either “big c” or “little c”.
For example, Kaufman and Beghetto (2009) claim that “the best way to foster a
creativity-nurturing environment” is by “conceptualizing and classifying various levels of
creative expression…[that] points to potential paths of creative maturation” (p.6). Their
latest model of creativity, which emphasizes the “more interpersonal (and developmental)
nature of creativity” (p.2), demonstrates explicitly how various educators perceive
creativity in their practices. The intent of those educators is to help students develop their
creativity and measure and classify creativity in order to see if their students have
achieved it.

Moreover, some of these researchers look for qualitative data to find meaningful every
day, informal creativity in order to encourage “little c” creativity outside the limits of
traditional disciplines such as the arts and sciences. But these researchers still utilize
quantitative methods to figure out how “little c” creativity can be categorized into
different levels or degrees, confirming their belief that creativity is developable and
achievable, and measurable and evaluable. (Refer to Richards, et al., 1998).
Understanding the notion of creativity as developmental and achievable has educational benefits. For example, by acknowledging broadly shared stages or levels of creativity in human lives and events, teachers can identify qualities in their students’ behaviors that can be further developed. More specifically, learning about various attributions of people who are perceived as highly creative (Gardner, 2011; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) may help teachers welcome, rather than criticize, students who show behaviors different from the “norm” and guide these students to develop their potential creativity. For instance, understanding the stages of various creative processes\textsuperscript{11} may motivate teachers to be patient and to allow their students to take some time to “incubate” their creative ideas in their learning processes (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Valuing the products of their students’ creative works may furnish teachers with ways to engage their students in learning as active participants, rather than as passive receivers. In this way, teachers can understand how creativity can be recognized, who shows greater or lesser creativity, the circumstances that encourage creativity, and how the less creative can be guided to become more creative. This empowers teachers to make a difference in their students’ development of creativity or capabilities supported by creativity, to find the most fitting instructional strategies, and to create better support structures in the classroom.

However, while appreciating the contributions that psychological studies on creativity have made in education, my experiences in various creative communities have

\textsuperscript{11} Csikszentmihalyi (1997) suggests a five-stage creative process that is “simplified” but “relatively valid”: the emergence of problems, presented and discovered problems, the mysterious time, the “aha!” experience, and the 99 percent perspiration. He argues that these stages “in reality are not exclusive but typically overlap and recur several times before the process is completed” (p.83).
told me different stories. As I mentioned briefly earlier, I have been a participant in varied creative communities where people were engaged in creative works, particularly in the arts. The communities I have experienced varied in expertise and interests, age, and intent. Interestingly, these communities rarely talked about creativity as measurable or as something developable and achievable in the future. The participants were (encouraged to be) involved in creative activities as if they were already inherently creative. When I am actively engaged in communities such as these, I also feel that I am creative. But I do not feel this way because some kind of official measurement (such as a test or survey) assures me that I have a relatively higher level of creativity than do others, or because I can finally “master” some of the qualities of or steps toward creativity that Sawyer (2013) suggests in his latest book.12 Rather, I sense that I am perceived as already being a creative human being who is simply capable of creating opportunities for meaningful experiences through artistic acts of expression. I find the expression “simply creative” most fitting in that my creativity was not a matter of achievement or development as a result of education, practice, training, or supportive environment, but instead a matter of the phenomenologically ontological status of being. That is, I am creative in the way I exist in the phenomenal world as I experience it with my moving and perceiving body while making sense of it and in the way I communicate my creative existence with other bodies in that world. In creative communities, I feel “simply creative,” that is, phenomenologically/ontologically positioned to be creative. Acknowledging such

12 According to Sawyer (2013), “[c]reativity doesn't always come naturally to us (p.1)” but, since all human beings “have what it takes to be creative” such as “mental building blocks” (p.1), when they “master [emphasis added] [creativity’s] eight steps”—ask, learn, look, play, think, fuse, choose, and make—by “daily practice”, “creativity comes naturally to” us (Saywer, 2013, p.228).
creativity experienced at the primordial level of my everyday engagements with the world seems to be the fundamental basis for and the link to its potentiality, allowing it to manifest and become perceivable in my learning through aesthetic experiences.

These experiences of being phenomenologically and ontologically creative inspired me to encounter the notion of creativity in more embodied terms. I have come to understand the concept of creativity because I have experienced it and it has been “the very condition of life” for me in various creative learning communities (O’Loughlin, 2006, p.12). In fact, without having lived such a concept at some level and found it somehow present in their relationships with their phenomenal world, teachers and students would not be able to reflect on what creativity means. They can only understand the word “creativity” because they somehow embodied the word from the world they are “always already belonging to, or are ‘of’”—the surface from which [they] can never be regarded as completely separated” (p.14). The idea of creativity is inherent in our ways of being in the world. I sense that, by seeking connections between embodiment and creativity and understanding the notion of creativity as a condition of human experience embodied from living in the world, I will be able to explore and express the often unrecognized and undermined deeper meanings of creativity in education, calling attention toward the powers and possibilities of a creative learning community in education.

By taking this position, I intentionally orient away from the perspective of creativity as explicable, developable, and achievable. I do believe that we can explore the qualities of creativity as seen in the creative person and his or her creative work(s) and that theorizing on these qualities in a contextualized way certainly can give educators
insights for their teaching practices. However, I hold that it is problematic to imagine that we can extract the qualities of creativity from their contexts and lay them bare in front of us for examination, and then make such idealized qualities a universal goal for others to achieve.

Such an approach to creativity is problematic in three folds. First, it brings about the issue of who gets to judge whether someone is creative, whether the criteria of the judgment is right and just, and whether such a judgment can be a universal truth regardless of temporal, spatial, and social contexts. Second, when education takes this notion of creativity for granted and sets a goal for developing students’ creativity—that is, achieving the universally explicable and measurable qualities, traits, and features extracted and generalized from creative people and their works—it runs the risk of seeking fixed ends. As Dewey (2007) insightfully articulates, “development when it is interpreted in comparative terms, that is, with respect of the special traits” results in “the direction of power into special channels” (p.42). Thus, when education sets a goal of developing students’ creativity based on this particular definition of creativity as an ability or faculty to be gained and achieved, it is in danger of unconsciously employing the “false idea of growth or development that it is a movement toward a fixed goal” by regarding “growth…as having an end, instead of being an end” (Dewey, 2007, p.42). In this case, education works based on “the doctrine of fixed ends-in-themselves at which human acts are—or should be—directed and by which they are regulated if they are regulated at all” (Dewey, 1992, p.224). Last but not least, people understanding creativity in this sense tend to postpone calling students creative until they arrive at the final goal and consequently ignore the possibility of creativity already at work in the present. By
doing so, the educational activities aimed at developing students’ creativity instead make “present action” in education merely “a means to a remote end” that may be achieved some day in the future (p.226). According to Dewey (1992), however, education should work toward its “aims” as “ends-in-view” (p.225), and this “end-in-view is a means in present action” (p.226). Although Dewey did not mention creativity directly in terms of ends, it seems reasonable to assume that he would agree that teachers should not only consider creativity an ends, but also that such ends, when brought into their current educational activities, should function as means. This means that creativity, in order to be an ideal of education, can and should be already present in the educational activities that value creativity as their aim. However, this is unlikely if teachers start with a hope for a “certainty” regarding the traits and characteristics of and developmental steps toward creativity; this “certainty” about creativity that is proposed “in advance of [educational] action” in classrooms is “a demand for guarantees” that their students will become creative in fixed ways at the end of participating in selected learning activities (Dewey, 1992, p.237).

I do believe, as Dewey (2007) does, that “education” and “life” are “development” and “growing” (p.41). However, given the reasons I have just described, I reject the notion that a person is simply more creative than others, or more creative in some areas than in others, because such a statement is not in line with the kind of growth and development education should aim for—the development as “ends…forever coming into existence as new activities occasion new consequences…[with] no fixed self-enclosed finalities” (Dewey, 1992, p.232). In this sense, I believe that I can only say that an individual has expressed his or her creativity in particular circumstance(s), in certain
work(s), and in such and such way(s). I may be able to say that there has been growth and achievement in that individual’s creativity, but only in the following sense: while a person has been employing and re-employing her creativity, she experiences developing and re-developing that creativity. In a way, she has built habits of being creative or of “creativeness” (see Yang, 2003) based on her having already been creative in certain previous contexts; in such experiences, she consequently finds her creative ways of being with herself, others, and the world to be effective ways of being, living, knowing, learning, etc. in her potentially varied future experiences.

In the next sections of this introductory chapter, I explore some of the consequences of understanding creativity exclusively as developable and achievable, and often as measurable and evaluable in teacher education. Based on this examination, I suggest the need of reclaiming creativity through phenomenological-ontological perspectives. In doing so, I share some of the questions I find significant in exploring creativity in relation to what it fundamentally means to teach and learn in a classroom.

**Consequences for Teachers’ Education: The Necessity of Reclaiming Creativity**

Today, teachers live in a society where creativity gets more and more attention as a promising quality for future success; “creativity” is a catchword easily found in many current educational policies and discourses worldwide (Sefton-Green & Bresler, 2011). Most teachers seem to agree with the idea that creativity is important for their students. However, I often hear the expression, “I am not that creative” not only from students but

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13 The UK is a country that explicitly aims at creativity in national education; countries like Canada and China, Singapore, Korea also often mention ‘creativity’ in their educational policies and curriculum (Kim, Lee, Seo, Park, & Kim, 2010).
also from both pre- and in-service teachers when asked to perform something “untraditional” in their teaching and learning practices. One of the reasons for this statement must be related to the contradictory reality of the teachers’ mandated practices subject to grand narratives that claim to value creativity in education. Contrary to slogans chanting creativity, in their daily practices, teachers are required to follow scripted lesson plans and to prepare their students for standardized tests rather than to creatively design their instructional practices. In such a reality, education for creativity is just another duty for teachers to achieve and report, not a means with which to actively create something meaningful independently while responding creatively to students’ various needs. Rather, teachers follow yet another set of instructions that are supposed to enhance their students’ creativity. It is no wonder, then, that when teachers are asked to be creative themselves rather than being told exactly what to do, they tend to say that they are not creative enough to do so.

However, I believe there is more to why teachers—even those who do say that they care about “creativity” and look for ways to value it in their teaching practices—think of themselves as unqualified (or are afraid of being perceived as such) to teach creatively or to employ creativity in their practices. The reason pertains to the deeper assumption behind the notion of “creativity” that these teachers (unconsciously) have, which I have been problematizing in the previous section: a perspective on creativity as developable and achievable.

Suppose that I teach my students based on an assumption that their creativity is in a developmental continuum, and I can help them achieve higher levels of it. At first glance, I may exclaim, “How great I am, as a teacher, for being willing to help my
students reach greater creative ability!” After giving some more thought to the idea, I find that this way of teaching has a problematic assumption: in order to help my students to achieve a higher level of creativity or to reach the next stages of creativity, I must always presuppose that my students are currently not that creative, at least not yet. I have to doubt, rather than believe, that their creativity is already actively working in the present.

By the same token, I, as a teacher, am not free from doubting my own creativity either. I am forced to feel unsure of whether I have reached a greater creativity, even when I must already be working creatively in order to plan my teaching and to make sense of my students’ responses to it.

It seems that teachers already sense that creativity is often understood as a measurable and quantifiable notion and that someone professional, although currently invisible, can always measure their creativity and ultimately judge it in relative, developmental terms. With these reasons, teachers seem often to feel afraid that they may have not yet developed their creativity to the fullest extent and that they may be judged as unqualified to lead their students to achieve the same goal. Ironically, the assumption behind these teachers’ frustration and fear is the same assumption that they have about enhancing creativity for their students. In other words, because they (unconsciously) assume that creativity is a kind of faculty that is developable and achievable, they try to promote their students’ creativity; because of that very same assumption, the teachers have to (secretly) fear that they themselves may not (yet) have the qualifications to do such work for their students.

Moreover, teachers in this situation end up in a paradox of understanding creativity in their pedagogical practices. That is, while they admit the importance of
social interactions in fostering creativity\(^\text{14}\) (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997), they ignore the possibility of understanding creativity as a fundamental condition that makes such interactions among human beings possible in the first place. In other words, teachers in this situation seek for ways to promote creativity through facilitating favorable social interactions in a classroom on instructional levels, yet they doubt that their students’ expressions of their learning in a classroom may already be creative.

Also, doubting (often unconsciously) that creativity is already working at present rather than only achievable in the future leads to a constant deferral of the full potential of both students’ and teachers’ creativity in every present moment of teaching and learning; such deferment in turn contributes to divorcing creativity from the present and therefore from human beings’ very condition of living/growing/learning. The goal-oriented view of creativity also doubts that teachers are already creative as they are preparing for, adjusting in, and reflecting on their teaching practices and making sense of what they experience in the classroom and beyond. In this sense, such a view impedes, rather than promotes, the creativity of teachers and students in their teaching and learning.

Dewey (2007) also mentions the possible problem of understanding the notion of development in comparative terms in relation to “originality of thoughts” (p.130), which people often associate with the notion of creativity.

We have set up the notion of mind at large, of intellectual method that is the same for all. Then we regard individuals as differing in the quantity of mind with which they are charged. Ordinary persons are then expected to

\(^{14}\) Csikszentmihalyi (1997) significantly claims that creativity can be “observed only in the interactions” (p.27) of its three components—domain, field, and individual person (p.28)—and influenced by the social interactions among people and environment in and around the field of the creative domain.
be ordinary. Only the exceptional are allowed to have originality. The measure of difference between the average student and the genius is a measure of the absence of originality in the former. But this notion of mind in general is a fiction. How one person's abilities compare in quantity with those of another is none of the teacher's business. It is irrelevant to his work. What is required is that every individual shall have opportunities to employ his own powers in activities that have meaning.

(p.130-131)

I agree deeply with Dewey’s assertion that comparing students’ (as well as teachers’) abilities in quantity should not be a teacher’s work; rather, he must invite students to activities through which they can “employ [their] own powers” (p.131) of creativity, ones that they have already utilized as human beings.

It is necessary, therefore, to reclaim the notion of creativity from that as developable and achievable in order to recognize the ways in which creativity is a part of our everyday lived experiences, which always includes interactions with the bodily self, co-existing others, and the phenomenal world. In order to do so, I suggest a phenomenological-ontological view on creativity and on creative learning communities, seeking answers responding to the following questions: what does it mean to live in a creative learning community where people are already (regarded as) being creative? In such a community, how do teachers and instructors presuppose their ontological relationships with themselves, their students, and the world of their classrooms? What constitutes such a creative learning community?
While pondering these fundamental questions of creativity to better situate and understand the creative learning community in education, I realize that creativity cannot be explored in isolation. In order to locate my inquiry in the contexts of philosophical explorations concerning the ontological meanings of human beings, creativity should be contextualized along with the deeper understanding of what it means to be human in the world. That is, an exploration of creativity and creative learning communities necessitates exploring the issue within the inescapable conditions of human beings’ ways of co-existence. This way of understanding creativity on a more fundamental level as that of being human would ultimately help teachers create ways to value creativity deeply in their educational practices, even when its growth is not the direct aim of their lessons or class activities.

In this sense, Merleau-Ponty’s (1968; 1973; 1993a; 1993b; 1945/2012) phenomenological-ontological philosophy provides great insights into why the notion of creativity is closely related to the issue of creating and sustaining a creative learning community where its participants learn through creative expression and expressive creation. Merleau-Ponty understands a human being as the embodiment of the world who intersubjectively exists while constantly expressing his or her meaning of existence. According to him, a human being is a “living-conscious body…that is at once individual and general, at once dynamic, affective, intentional, incorporative, and contingent” (Hass, 2008, p.91) amid other things and other “self-moving mover[s]” (p.108) in the world.

In a classroom, in other words, students and teachers are never alone but always involved in a world shared with others. As bodily and conscious beings caught in the same world, they always express themselves in each other’s presences; such expressions
are constantly perceived by others. In their way of expressing a way of being (Park, 2010), creativity is present. In particular, the act of expression—that is, not a mere repetition or a plain copy of a social custom, but an active taking-up of a sedimented world and transforming it beyond what is given—is creative (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012).

While understanding what a creative learning community constitutes in a fundamentally ontological sense, the theory of expression by Dewey (1934)—who shares common ground with Merleau-Ponty in understanding the nature of human beings as always interacting with self, others, and the world—also provides a critical perspective in imagining a picture of a creative learning community. Dewey’s theory of an act of expression within aesthetic experience supports my inquiry of creative learning communities as he more explicitly suggests that creativity is present in expression. According to him, creative expression and expressive creation is key to the aesthetic and educative experiences of human beings who are always in active interactions with themselves and their surroundings in the world to which they belong.

In the next chapter, I explore the philosophical theories of Merleau-Ponty and Dewey in greater depth. In the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Two, I articulate what I have taken from Merleau-Ponty and Dewey’s insightful suggestions, and then illustrate the mode of my dissertation, namely, expression. In so doing, I will look for theoretical answers to the following questions: What is the significance of understanding creativity as always already present in a human being’s expressive existence in a shared world? What are the significances and consequences of building a
creative learning community in a classroom and of teaching and learning by creatively expressing students’ and teachers’ existing beings?
CHAPTER 2

EXPRESSION FOR CURRICULUM THEORIZING: A PHILOSOPHICAL
MODE OF INQUIRY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter consists of two main parts. In the first part, I propose expression\(^{15}\) as a philosophical mode of curricular inquiry, a mode through which I articulate my creative teaching and learning experiences and the expressive creation of their theorized meanings. In particular, I share how I came to understand expression as a methodology by reflecting on my constant involvement in meaning making activities regarding my curricular experiences as a student, teacher, and curricular theorist. In the second section, I introduce expression as the theoretical framework of my curricular inquiry by providing philosophical analyses regarding different modes of expressions—bodily, aesthetic, and communal—and by introducing briefly how they are explored in my embodied theories in Chapters Three, Four, and Five.

Chapter Two is purposefully organized so that readers can gain a sense of the processes I underwent in coming to envision expression as a philosophical and aesthetic method of my curriculum theorizing before being introduced to the framework of the three modes of expression, which are always intertwined with creativity. In this way, I want to ensure that readers envision my acts of practicing and theorizing, living and knowing, and experiencing and sense making in an interdependent manner.

\(^{15}\) I will italicize the word “expression” when it means a mode of inquiry used in this dissertation. I am aware that expression as a philosophical method cannot be separated from its general meaning. However, this serves to clarify that I am talking about the act of expression methodologically employed for the writing of this dissertation, rather than indicating the notion of expression as a theoretical concept.
To clarify, “curriculum” in my proposal does not merely “refer to a prescribed list of outcomes, objectives and content”, but “is derived from currere,” (Sameshima, 2008, p.31). “Currere” is “the Latin infinitive form of curriculum meaning to run the course, or, in the gerund form, the running of the course” (Pinar, 2011, p. 44). My curricular work, in this sense, includes not only my curricular plans and relevant documents, but also, and more importantly, my students’ and my own lived experiences of running the curricular path—the path that I may have initially envisioned but is ultimately, through constant communication and co/re-envisioning, co-created with my students, whom I believe are already capable creators of their lived meanings.

When curriculum refers to these co-creative experiences in educational practices, “curriculum theorizing” necessarily means more than constructing a curricular theory that provides a prescriptive remedy for education in a universal sense. Rather, it comes to indicate the participants’ constant involvement in the ongoing and interactive acts of sense-making throughout the curricular engagements—before, during, and after the events of teaching and learning. In this sense, when I say that I devote myself to the “creative intellectual task of” (Miller, 2014, p.14) curriculum theorizing through writing this dissertation, I propose that I have engaged myself in “the never-ending process of thinking, imagining, positing, reconsidering, reinterpreting, and envisaging anew various situated and contingent conception of curriculum and their obvious and inextricably intertwined relations to teaching and learning” (Miller, 2014, p.14).

When I am engaged in these acts of curriculum theorizing, I find myself continuously expressing my being engaged with, perceiving, and making sense of my educational practices. I find that “Theory and practice unite” in my engagement in such
continuous *expression* in relation to my creative curricular work (Garrison, 2013, p.5); they become “subfuctions within the larger function of making meaning, knowledge, and value” (p.5)\(^\text{16}\) of my curricular experiences. In this sense, I see expression as the means and ends of all the different yet intermingled acts involved in my curricular practices and philosophical thinking and writing. The whole process of writing this dissertation, by expressing what has not yet been expressed, will be a way toward expression.

In the following pages, I attempt to illustrate how my engagement in curriculum theorizing through expression was initiated through making sense of my own memorable learning experience and how that engagement was enacted by participating in the creative task of envisioning and teaching my own course. From such illustrations, I endeavor to suggest how my engagement in curriculum theorizing concerning the building of creative learning communities is then expressed aesthetically in my writing of this dissertation.

### Expression as a Mode of Philosophical Inquiry for Curriculum Theorizing

#### Self-Reflective Initial Engagements: Theorizing My Practices of Practicing

#### Embodied Theories

\(^{16}\) According to Garrison (2013), it is Dewey who “conceive[s]” theory and practice in this way: “Theory and practice unite within [Dewey’s] account of production, or if you prefer, his account of construction and reconstruction” (p.5). Garrison (2013), in this sentence, uses Deweyan notion of construction that Dewey (2008) claims to mean “the creative mind, the mind that is genuinely productive in its operation” (Dewey, 2008, p. 127).
One of my most powerful learning experiences that led me to pursue my Ph.D. was an Arts in Education (AIE) course\textsuperscript{17}, which I took as a Master-level student. Throughout the year, I was invited to learn by actively making sense of various scholarly articles and class conversations about education through expressions with artistic media. I entered the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) with a strong sense that learning through the creative processes of the arts often reveals exemplary qualities of best teaching and learning, but unable to articulate why it does so or what it signifies. During my doctoral studies, I encountered Merleau-Ponty (1968; 1973; 1993a; 1993b; 1945/2002; 2007a; 2007b; 1945/2012) and Dewey’s (1922; 1934; 1997; 2007; 2008) non-dualistic philosophical understandings of human beings and the phenomenal world\textsuperscript{18}, and their theories about expression and creativity have deeply inspired me. They have given me a theoretical language with which to articulate the significance of the kinds of learning I personally experienced through my previous engagements in artistic and aesthetic expression in classrooms.

More importantly, I was empowered to make sense of their theories narratively by reflecting on my own lived experiences of learning. Through these narrative-theoretical experiences, I began to be involved in philosophical inquiries that often question “the

\textsuperscript{17} This yearlong Arts in Education class was a mandatory course for the Master’s-level students enrolled in the Arts in Education program at Harvard Graduate School of Education. Most of the students were interested in the role of arts in education and in ways of integrating various artistic activities in education.

\textsuperscript{18} Although Merleau-Ponty and Dewey’s theories are positioned under different philosophical traditions—the former in phenomenology and the latter in pragmatism—I find that their accounts of creativity as relevant to the expression that is key in human communities share important aspects. In fact, both Merleau-Ponty and Dewey rarely mention the word creativity explicitly in their writings (Yang, 2003; Hamrick, 1994). However, the notion of creativity is central to their philosophical understanding and inevitably present in their notions of expression and their understandings of human beings as interactive and intersubjective worldly beings.
nature of reality, knowledge and, value” regarding my learning experiences— especially those in AIE compared to my other more traditional educational experiences (Koetting & Malisa, 2004, p.1011). I could finally begin to see the invisible and mute experiences in my most vivid memories of learning through art-making in the AIE classroom.¹⁹ I also found that my lived experiences could give concrete meanings to Merleau-Ponty and Dewey’s theoretical concepts. My understanding of my lived experience and of these philosophical theories as intertwined has doubled and deepened, blurring the boundaries between them.

I believe that it was through these initial engagements in philosophical inquiries into my lived learning experiences of AIE that I began to participate in the act of expression as curriculum theorizing. In a way, I was engaged in self-study. Some might question whether my philosophical exploration qualifies as a self-study because my version of self-study has neither an explicitly set purpose to improve my teaching practices nor the formation of an actual group of educational researchers with whom I could regularly interchange diverse perspectives on my practices (See Loughran, 2004).

Nevertheless, I believe my act of narratively and theoretically making sense of my own learning experiences can be understood as a self-study, at least in a broad sense. As Bullough & Pinnergar (2001) say, although “Determining just what it means to be involved in self-study research has proven very difficult,” “[s]elf-study points to a simple truth, that to study a practice is simultaneously to study self: a study of self-in-relation to

¹⁹ Garrison (2013) says, “theory and practice are simply sub-functions with the larger function of making meaning, knowledge, and value in our lives” (p.5). My engagement in the meaning making activity particularly through scholarly-narrative writing began to empower me to unite the theories I encountered with during graduate studies and the educational practice I had previously experienced in AIE.
other” (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p.14). Berry (2008) also argues, “While the term ‘self-study’ seems to suggest an exclusive focus on the teacher educator, the ‘self’ in self-study encompasses a more diverse variety of selves than the teacher educator alone” (p.19).

As a doctoral student who was a part of a teacher education program at the time, my reflection on my AIE experience necessarily engaged me in related thinking about teaching and education in general. My “study of [my] ‘self’” in the context of my AIE experience “inevitably [led] to study of an ‘other’” (Berry, 2008, p.19), because in order to understand my experience, I needed to understand the relational aspects of my curricular experience which included my perceptions and responses to peers, professors, various educational scholars and philosophers (encountered in person and through reading), inspiring artists and their works, diverse students, the educational administrators who established the program, and even the people tangentially involved in the education of local/international cultures. I was constantly engaged in complicated conversations with these people in the study of myself in AIE, which not only helped me understand myself but also provided insights regarding the curriculum I had embodied and partially co-/re-created through these experiences. These conversations with others—visible and invisible—in studying my own engagement in learning ultimately empowered me to envision better practices as a future teacher and teacher educator.

Through my (unintentional and inchoate) self-reflective act of theorizing the AIE curriculum as I had lived it and philosophized it during my doctoral studies, I realized that what was lived yet previously unseen to me was the philosophical assumption upon which the AIE course was built and sustained. It became clear that, in AIE, learners
including myself were treated as already-creative beings who actively interact with the world and are capable of learning while expressing their embodied understanding artistically. In light of this realization, my expression in the form of self-study was the point of departure to current, more explicit engagement with my curriculum “[t]heorizing[,]… a mode of philosophical inquiry that [ultimately] suggests the complexities and possibilities for creating/constructing knowledge” of curricular experiences (Koetting & Malisa, 2004, p. 1015).

The Creative Task of Teaching: Curriculum Making through Philosophizing and Theorizing

I was still in the process of making sense of my AIE experience through the theoretical language of Merleau-Ponty and Dewey when I was assigned to teach the Multicultural Education Course for undergraduate students at a Midwest research university in the U.S. I was very new to teaching in general, and this was the first time I taught a class officially offered by a university as a credited course. Although I was a bit frightened at first due to my lack of teaching experiences especially in the U.S., I was soon excitedly envisioning a curriculum and imagining my own classroom. I believe that this enthusiasm was due to the fact that I had already experienced an AIE classroom where learning happens through shared creative expressions. Such an exceptional experience in AIE allowed me to see the traditional educational practices I had for long

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20 I taught an undergraduate-level Multicultural Education (ME) course for three semesters—one section in Fall, 2011; two in Spring, 2012; and one in Summer, 2012. Most of the students who took my course were either pre-service teachers or majoring in the field of or closely related to education; the majority of the students were white, with only a few minority students.
been a part of from the perspective of a “stranger” or a “homecomer,” a person who had “return[ed] home from a long stay in some other place” and begun to “notic[e] details and patterns in [her] environment [she] never saw before” (Greene, 1973, p.267). By beginning to “look inquiringly and wonderingly on the world” of my previously familiar educational practices (p.267), “[t]he formerly unquestioned [became] questionable; the submerged [became] visible” (p.268). Being a “teacher as stranger,” in this sense, empowered me to imagine my future teaching practice “in the light of [my] changed experience” (p.268).

As a teacher as stranger, I was given the creative challenge of choosing my own curricular and instructional practices and thereby being responsible for the different, and hopefully better, future I had come to imagine. For this, however, I could not merely copy the kinds of activities that I had previously experienced in my AIE class and hope that they would fit in my ME class. The AIE course and ME course differed in various aspects: their main theme, teaching purposes, course level, students’ interest in and familiarity with artistic materials, etc. I had to start looking for the invisible and mute qualities behind the readily apparent educational activities in order to ensure the kind of curriculum I wanted my students to experience in my ME classroom. This engaged me in a kind of curricular practice which I later realized was similar to the autobiographical engagement in the “method of currere” (Pinar, 2011; Pinar & Grument, 2006). The method of currere was “devised” with an understanding that “self-understanding and social reconstruction…are reciprocally related” (Pinar, 2011, p. 44); it consists of “four steps or moments”: “the regressive, the progressive, the analytical, and the synthetical” (p.45). In searching for ways to initiate curricular experiences for my ME students, I first
found myself “re-experienc[ing] past ‘lived’…experience” (p.45), particularly in relation to my most memorable learning moments in AIE (the regressive), and “look[ing] toward what is not yet the case, what is not yet present” (p.46), that is, the yet-to-be-created ME classroom (the progressive).

I was soon engaged in the next analytical step, which Pinar (2011) says is possible through “an intensified engagement with daily life, animated, paradoxically by an ironic detachment from it” (p.46). I experienced this step when I began to practice “posing [philosophical] questions” (Koetting & Malisa, 2004) particularly regarding the “lived relation (relationality), lived body (corporeality), lived space (spatiality), lived time (temporality), and lived things…(materiality)” that “belong to [my] life world” of curriculum practices and through which I “experience [my] world and [my] reality” (van Manen, 2014, p.302). In a way, asking rather fundamental questions regarding practical issues such as what curricular and instructional strategies to choose in the present, I could create a renewed relationship with my past and future. For example, when I had to decide how to seat my students in my classroom (see Chapter Three) and when I wanted to know how to meaningfully engage my students in staged-reading performance (see Chapter Five), I would ask: how do human beings exist in the world? What does it mean to have others around us? How do we make sense of our surroundings? What does the fact of having (or being) bodies mean? What do my curricular and pedagogical practices express about my understanding concerning these questions? Moreover, when I was debating whether and how I should ask my students to create arts-mediated works so as to express their learning (see Chapter Four), I would ask: how do people learn? What does having learned something mean? How do I know that my students have learned something?
What can the expressive work tell us about learning? And what does it mean to communicate through our creative expression?

At this point, some may find it strange that my main philosophical inquiries related to the ME course were not about diversity—which is often a key value of multicultural education and supposedly a main focus of its relevant research—but instead the condition of human beings shared across various people of diverse backgrounds. Others may even argue that I am trying to devaluate diversity by saying that all people are not that different after all. To clarify, I did wonder about different cultural, racial, and linguistic identities and about how I would address these differences within my teaching practice. Apparently, in front of my mostly white, American students, I was from Korea, had a yellow face, and spoke uniquely weird English. I was continuously reminded that I was different from the rest of the class. Nevertheless, my inquiries still evolved more profoundly around the fundamentally shared ground of human beings’ ontological conditions in their relationships with the phenomenal world. This emphasis stemmed from my discovery that having a common ground of human existence is not in opposition to the presentation of diversity; rather, the former is a background of the latter, and vice

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21 It was challenging for me as a racial, cultural, and linguistic minority in the U.S. to teach a college course to mostly white, middle-class, and native-English-speaking students. I feared that my students might not accept me as a teacher with authority due to my race, nationality, and lack of fluency in English. However, being a teacher while, to most of the students, being seen as “the Other” instead of a typical authority figure, was an invaluable experience for me because I have been always a member of the dominant cultural/ racial/ linguistic groups in S. Korea and had never experienced this fear of being seen as “the Other” in a classroom. Through this experience of being “Otherized” in a classroom setting, I was able to become more sensitive to the difficulties that minority students might encounter in classrooms and the emotions they might experience in their relationships with their peers and instructors. As S. Korea has been rapidly becoming a multi-cultural nation, I believe my experience of being “the Other” in a classroom will be extremely relevant to my future teaching.
versa. They are always to be understood as closely intermingled phenomena. Indeed, the issue of diversity was always rooted in the shared conditions of worldly human beings. For instance, my cultural differences could be understood and celebrated only when my students and I acknowledged the fact that human beings seek continuity while interacting with their surroundings and, thus, that each of them create meanings from their varied contexts of temporal-spatial-social experiences.\footnote{Students witnessed how their shared experience of the ME classroom could be made sense of and expressed in various meaningful ways through sharing their arts-mediated presentations (see Chapter Four).} Likewise, the meaning of inequalities could be communicated only when my students and I could admit and imagine that we both share the same possibility of becoming the “Other” (see Howard, 2006).\footnote{For instance, when my students read Howard (2006), I encouraged them to share their own life stories in which they otherized others as well as those in which they were otherized; I also shared how I was mostly considered a member of the dominant group in Korea, even though I suddenly experienced being otherized in the U.S. context. This helped my students see how the issue of inequality should not be a concern for only certain groups of people and how all of us have responsibilities and capabilities to make the world more equal (See Kim & Olson, 2013).}

Thus, my philosophical inquiry into the ontological common ground of human beings in relation to their phenomenal world is not done at the expense of the significance of diversity or of teaching my students the values of such differences; it is rather to build a non-dualistic foundation upon which the true meanings of diversity and the shared nature of human beings can be discovered, created, and expressed through curricular experiences as creative learning communities in classrooms and beyond.

Finally, I had synthesizing moments in which “the present becomes local and material, a situation, one populated with persons and with issues to be addressed,” moments “of intensified interiority expressed to others” (Pinar, 2011, p.47). I believe that this final step represents a mode of more complete expression that is similar to being at a
stage of “consummation” in an aesthetic experience (Dewey, 1934). These moments were often, although not exclusively, experienced through my encounters with students in a classroom where I actively expressed what I envisioned as a worthy curriculum and my students joined me as co-creators. In these moments, I attempted to attentively and rhythmically respond to my students while actively making sense of the practice in relation to my past engagement with the method of currere as well as with another future that was just about to appear.

As a “teacher as stranger,” (Greene, 1973) an autobiographical philosopher, I have been constantly involved in these four different steps of autobiographic expression in my curricular practices. I found myself searching for answers to various philosophical-practical questions throughout the three semesters I spent attempting to build and sustain creative learning communities in my classes, bringing my past and future into my present. In the next section, I attempt to articulate how I, as an expressive curriculum theorist, wove my practices of self-study and the method of currere into my creative task of writing of this dissertation.

**Expressive Curriculum Theorist as Teacher-Artist-Philosopher**

My use of the term expression as my philosophical mode of curricular inquiry was partially inspired by Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012; 1968) who suggests expression as his philosophical method in the sense that it is a mode of philosophical thinking and writing. According to him, expression seeks the openness of inquiry that philosophers ought to allow in and beyond their articulation of theoretical languages. At the core of the philosophers’ exploration in-between their embodied experiences and theoretical
languages, there is expression; through this expression, their philosophical works double and continue to enrich the meaning of being of the world (see Lefort, 1968).

I do not argue that the expression that I employ as a method of my curriculum theorizing can be characterized through Merleau-Ponty’s notion of expression that concerns the problem of Being, perception, phenomenon, etc. in a more primordial sense. Nevertheless, I find that an understanding of the meaning of philosophizing as expression—or expressing⁴—that is closer to “singing the world” rather than “revealing a fundament” (p.198) is deeply insightful in envisioning my engagement in curriculum theorizing. In this regard, it seems worth quoting extensively from Hass (2008), regarding expression that particularly shows Merleau-Ponty’s method of transformed philosophical—phenomenological-ontological—thinking. Hass (2008) writes:

the breakthrough idea, concept, model, or word illuminates and organizes the sedimented²⁵ data or field in powerful ways, but does not reduce to it; and the expressive result goes on to become part of the sedimented field, which may itself give rise to further expressive acts. In short, this

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⁴ Park (2010) says that the key of Merleau-Ponty’s ontology is expression, or, more precisely, “expressing” as in a progressive form (p.203); expressing is a way of Being.
²⁵ Simpson (2014) describes Merleau-Ponty’s understanding of sedimentation: Merleau-Ponty sees the social world of thought as sedimented—as fluid but building up a determinate, if changing, situation or setting. Sedimentation is inherent in the human being’s habitual being in the world…the acquired, sedimentation, must be taken up in a spontaneous, new and yet situated movement of thought. The present is fragile and changeable, but there is (present in the present) the “weight” of the past…The preceding “presents” are in the “heart” of the present, and the past is maintained as “the horizon of this present.” This sedimentation…is the means of understanding others in the same world. …Our past acts come to define us; they become strata of our situation even if we change or disavow them. (p.77)
Also, refer to Rosenthal and Bourgeois (1991) for a deeper understanding of “various levels of sedimentation” (p.102).
relationship isn’t one of “foundational grounding,” but one of interdynamic transformation, a non-reductive interweaving of different spheres. … In this new philosophical practice, beyond representation, beyond analytic or grounding reductions—this effort to illuminate the world by creatively expressing it—there is nothing final and nothing triumphal. … Whether it is a triangle, already spoken words, or the world itself, the contingent labor of expressing them genuinely adds to our understanding of what we live and transform how we live. And our expressions become part of our ongoing, but highly conditional efforts to find and create meaning in an overflowing, overwhelming, intersubjective world. (p.198-199)

What Hass (2008) describes here, referring to Merleau-Ponty’s expressive method of philosophy, is what I have endeavored and will continue to achieve in my curriculum theorizing activity. In accordance with Miller (2014), I do not think there can be “any sole notion of curriculum theory” that “provides the overarching scope, explanatory power or level of generalization that positivist connotations of theory imply” (p. 13-14). Rather, as Hass (2008) explains above, I envision my act of curriculum theorizing as that of “singing the world” of my classroom where I strive to build creative learning communities with my students. I theorize by “creatively expressing” my practices of embodied theories, not to find essences of such communities as “reductions”, but to create a resultant work of expression—this dissertation—that can go “on to become part of the sedimeted field [of curriculum]” (Hass, 2008, p.198). By doing so, I hope that my work may “give rise to further expressive acts” of other curriculum theorists and that my
“nothing[-]final” expressive effort “genuinely adds to our understanding of what we live and transform how we live,” particularly in educational practices.

In proposing to participate in curriculum theorizing by taking expression in this manner—that is, by emphasizing my interest in and commitment to “singing the world” of my curricular practices through writing—I must be more explicit about how I envision myself as an expressive curricular theorist. My experience of teaching, reflecting, interrogating, writing, etc. tells me that these different kinds of acts are neither separate nor linear steps toward expression, but interrelated activities. I find myself involved in more than one of these acts at the same time—whether explicitly apparent or not—in my effort to give my lived experiences philosophical-theoretical expression. For instance, when I was teaching, I already had some ideas about meanings that I wanted to express in my instructional practices. When reflecting on and interrogating the meanings of my teaching while searching for the words with which to express my inquiries, I had to admit that I was a part of the very teaching experiences on which I tried to reflect and a subject of the relevant questions I wanted to ask (see Merleau-Ponty, 1968). When I write, as I am currently doing, I look for ways to express my embodied experiences in a theoretical language while constantly reflecting on my lived acts of teaching, reflecting, and interrogating—or, more precisely, I bring forth such lived experiences to the present moment of expressing.

As an expressive curriculum theorist who is willing to take dynamically interwoven perspectives of teacher-artist-philosopher, I teach for learning through creative (and often artistic) expression and reflect on such teaching practices from philosophical perspectives in order to interrogate and communicate their meanings in my
writing, which, in turn, will contribute to my own and other teachers’ future practices. At the core of what I do as this teacher-artist-philosopher—that includes such interrelated acts as teaching, reflecting, creating, interrogating, writing, etc.—is my act of expression. This act of expression at its completing stage shares the characteristics with the synthetical step of the method of currere. In the final step of writing this dissertation, I will hopefully experience the synthetical moment “in which [my] self-study become reconstructed as public service” (Pinar 2011, p.46) in the field of curriculum and communicated with other teachers and educational scholars beyond my own classroom practices.

Three Modes of Expression as an Embodied Theoretical Framework

With the method of expression as a philosophical and aesthetic mode of my curriculum theorizing, I have arrived at the three modes of expression to convey the embodied theoretical framework of my dissertation. I call this framework “embodied” in order to emphasize that it is a theoretical framework that results from my creative taking-up of my lived curricular experiences. These three modes of expression that are not separate but inherently intertwined with each other include: (a) bodily expression, (b) aesthetic expression, and (c) communal expression.

Bodily Expression

Bodily experiences refers to all lived experiences human beings undergo and create; without our bodies we would cease to exist and, thus, there would be no “human experience, life, knowledge and meaning” on which to reflect (Primozic, 2001, p.17). We
can attend to our lived experiences more closely when we are more sensitive to our senses and emotions in our meaning making, as they reveal our embodied connections to the world and ideas. From my participation in several creative learning communities including my experiences in the AIE course, I learned that such communities encouraged me and other learners to attend to the lived experiences we had had in order to learn from them even before we consciously reflected on them. I was encouraged to believe in what I had experienced with my senses and emotions in order to understand, learn, and interpret meanings, rather than being urged from the beginning to consciously and critically examine the possibility that such feelings and senses were in fact not true or erroneous. By attending to my bodily experiences as they were felt, I could “get farther and farther into [them], see more and more things in terms of [them] or ‘through’ [them], use [them] as a hypothesis to climb higher and higher to a point from which more can be seen and understood” (Elbow, 1998, p.163). In such practices, my bodies and bodily experiences were considered a potential medium of profound knowing rather than an obstacle of learning. 26 When I read Merleau-Ponty, I realized such a perspective was rooted in more fundamental assumptions about the relationships between human consciousness and the body. When I was involved in the creative task of designing and

26 Borrowing Peter Elbow’s (1998) terms, in AIE, we were particularly encouraged to play the “believing game” rather than the “doubting game.” As Elbow (1998) aptly articulates, the “believing game” helps us understand and find the truth by believing all the assertions and thus opening up a possibility to “see more and more” (p.163). Elbow (1998) points out that academia tends to value only learning by doubting, when learning by believing has its own power; he argues that both games should be incorporated in the learning processes in greater balance (See Elbow, 1998). Inspired by Elbow’s essay, I intend to play a “believing game” rather than a “doubting game” when it comes to my own lived experiences. This is not to dismiss the power of critical thinking or to argue that I always make error-free statements about my experiences. Instead, I want to understand what my lived experiences involve more closely and deeply by playing the believing game before I explore their meanings with a more critical perspective.
planning the ME class, I constantly considered these assumptions. I wondered: How do I understand the relationships between my students’ minds and bodies in learning as well as their relationships with others? Would I want to invite only their minds and brains, supposing that it is the conscious mind and working brain through which they know about the world spread in front of them, as though they are there to examine a world that they are not a part of? Or, would I want to assume that my students learn through their bodily engagements with the world and that their learning and knowing cannot be separate from their movements in the world? How does this change my way of teaching and the way of organizing my classroom and educational activities?

In living with these questions, I find especially powerful the fact that Merleau-Ponty challenges the long-standing yet false understanding of “consciousness” as “an ‘I think that’” by rejecting the famous Cartesian axiom *I think therefore I am*. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) suggests, “consciousness is originarily…an ‘I can’” (p.139). Primozic (2001) also articulates the critical role of body in existing as well as learning:

> We are our bodies…and without them we would be impossible. Our consciousness, our experience and identities are found in and through our bodies. …Without the body-subject we would cease to be and so too would cease human experience, life, knowledge and meaning. (p.17)

Understanding human consciousness as a matter of “I can” rejects the previously widespread Cartesian dualism between mind and body and presupposes embodied consciousness present in constantly moving and perceiving bodies. As Primozic (2001) aptly states, “As the body is *motile*, as it moves through, situates and orients itself in the world, the body gives meaning to that world of our human experience” (p.17).
understanding inspired me to ask how I want to invite my students’ motile bodies into their learning experiences.

Furthermore, by critically positioning the bodies at the center of human beings’ conscious lives, Merleau-Ponty also questions the supposedly casual relation between I think and I am, particularly the therefore linking the two. If we take the embodiment of human consciousness into an account, the I think already presupposes the I am. Thus, therefore can have no position in between thinking and being. As Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) puts it, “The fundamental truth is certainly that ‘I think,’ but only on condition of understanding by this that ‘I belong to myself’ in being in the world” (p. 430). He (1945/2012) continues that “The ontological world and body that we uncover at the core of the subject are not the world and the body as ideas: rather, they are the world itself condensed into a comprehensive hold and the body itself as a knowing-body” (p.431). Merleau-Ponty’s understanding of body subjects as knowing bodies that are already being in the world while constantly moving and perceiving shows that his theory of perception and phenomenological ontology is “on the basis of expression” (Lawlor & Toadvine, 2004. p.x). For him, we human beings are born into a world that is already there before us; we perceive what the world is already expressing to us while seeking to express what is yet to be expressed with our bodies. Our bodies amid other “self-moving mover[s]” expressing themselves in the shared world is understood by the others as “primordial expression” (Lawlor & Toadvine, 2004. p.x).

If these ideas regarding primordial expression are taken into educational practices, it changes the way teachers approach their teaching, because teaching and learning in a classroom also starts with the same basic condition. As our bodies always interact with
what surrounds us, there must be room to express our bodies in a classroom.²⁷ Also, teachers’ primordial and phenomenologically ontological inquiries, then, cannot help but start with what it means to express and perceive students’ (as well as the teacher’s) bodies as primordial expressions in a classroom where they gather together in order to learn. In this case, as a teacher, I would want to create a classroom in such a way that it gives students the kinds of expression that are more closely related to the purpose or theme of the class in which they are engaged.

By understanding my students and myself as already expressing-knowing-bodies, I struggled to reflect this philosophical understanding of bodily expression in my classroom environment and throughout the entire curriculum. I constantly asked myself what my classroom as a whole might express to my students, how I wanted them to express themselves to each other, and how I could connect those primordial expressions into more explicit educational activities. This first and most fundamental mode of expression has given me a theoretical language with which to discuss the meanings of practices that value a curricular enactment that invites my students to overcome the

²⁷ Dewey also admits that human beings always seek continuities in our experiences and are in constant interaction with our surroundings (Dewey, 1934; 1997), however, his understanding of expression does not seem to include the expression at the primordial level as Merleau-Ponty (1968; 1945/2012) argues. Dewey’s exploration about the notion of expression is more focused on articulating what is more valuable and educative expression. Thus I make connections to Dewey’s notion of expression more in the second mode of expression: aesthetic expression. It seems that this difference between the two philosophers comes from their different interests and the differing philosophical traditions they belong to. Merleau-Ponty (1968; 1945/2012) is more interested in revealing the fundamental phenomenological and ontological nature of human beings in the world, and he is not necessarily concerned with what way of living should be valued more. Dewey (1934), on the other hand, is concerned more directly with educational practices by suggesting what kinds of experiences are educative ones and should be encouraged in education. Although different, I find their foci both have critical influence in my thinking about expression at both fundamental and practical levels.
dichotomy between their minds and bodies and actively looks for ways to engage their “knowing bodies and moving minds” (Bresler, 2004) to learn through expression.

**Aesthetic Expression**

Alongside this fundamental understanding of human beings as bodily beings, I found myself necessarily engaged in the mode of expression which explores more conscious and cultural human acts of expression on the level of sense and sensibilities, looking for insights particularly in relation to thinking, knowing, and learning. While Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) teaches us that we primordially express our existence to each other and spontaneously perceive those expressions as bodily beings in the world, it is Dewey (1934) who offers pragmatic insights regarding how we experience such expression; he poses questions regarding how education ought to recognize and facilitate our expression. Dewey’s (1934) account of an experience, by which he means an aesthetic, educative experience, is particularly insightful. An experience—which is different from other experiences in which “we start and then we stop, not because the experience has reached the end for the sake of which it was initiated but because of extraneous interruptions or of inner lethargy” (p.36)—is the experience that is “so rounded out that its close is a consummation and not a cessation” (p.37). In such a whole experience, “as one part leads into another…carr[ying] on what went before, each gains distinctness in itself” (p.38). That is, “different [parts]…fuse into unity” with the aesthetic experience without “los[ing] their own character” (p. 38). Understanding these qualities of Dewey’s account of the experiential whole in aesthetic experience empowers us to examine what kinds of expressions are more valuable from an educational
perspective and how such qualities need to be challenged or enhanced in our curricular practices.

Based on Dewey’s insights, I engaged myself in the search for the kinds of expression that I wanted my students to experience in the processes of their learning. What, according to Dewey (1934), does the aesthetic expression that I want to facilitate in my classroom entail? Dewey (1934) warns, “what is sometimes called an act of self-expression might better be termed one of self-exposure” (p.64), making clear that expression is not about purely releasing one’s inner emotions or impulsions. Expression happens only when based on a continuously active interaction between embodied self and experiential world. He (1934) emphasizes, “where there is no administration of objective conditions, no shaping of materials in the interest of embodying the excitement, there is no expression” (p.64). Moreover, Dewey claims that expression is present in the development of experience as an aesthetic one. He (1934) says, “to express is to stay by, to carry forward in development, to work out to completion” while employing a material and making it a medium “in view of its place and role, in its relations, an inclusive situation” (p.66). In aesthetic expression, there is a development through continuous rhythmic movement of doing and undergoing. When a “conclusion is reached,” it is “no separate and independent thing; it is the consummation of a movement” (p.38).

My understanding of aesthetic expression as inspired by Dewey encouraged me to create the kinds of assignments through which my students could express their learning via artistic materials, which were rarely given in traditional non-arts-focused classrooms. Through this way of teaching and learning, I sometimes had to struggle in dealing with my students’ resistance to those kinds of assignments. In such instances, it was crucial
that I myself had a clear idea of what I meant by an aesthetic expression. The expression I was looking for in my students’ creative and expressive work, most importantly, was not the perfect representation of already-presented ideas, which was often the meaning of expression that my students were most familiar with due to their previous experiences in traditional schooling where students were often considered to have achieved successful learning when they represented the ideas from the text correctly.

In this matter, not only Dewey (1934) but also Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012; 1973) provides an account regarding how expression that is not representational can contribute to profound learning. In Western histories, “cognitive processes [such as] thinking, language, and knowing” have long been considered as “fundamentally representational” (Hass, 2008, p147). This assumption has been deeply embodied in traditional educational practices that focus mostly on transmitting so-called “official knowledge” to students (Apple, 2000) and consider students’ written recital of such knowledge as proof of their learning. Merleau-Ponty challenges this perspective, however, with his account of an “expressive cognition” that “uncover[s] the life of the [embodied] mind” (Hass, 2008, p.147) through the examination of expressive acts such as the arts and language.

Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012; 1973) especially challenges the understanding of expression as representational and argues that expression always includes both

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28 Since I was born and raised in S. Korea, some may wonder whether my understanding of learning and creativity is somewhat different from the widespread dualistic understanding longstanding in Western thought. In my experiences in the S. Korean educational system, I was often forced to learn by memorizing pre-organized knowledge and expected to come up with the right answers believed to represent the corresponding, correct ideas. Due to these experiences, I am repulsed by the problematic consequences of such a dualistic understanding of the world and by the limits of considering cognitive processes as representational, rather than resonating with some non-dualistic Eastern thought.
sedimented and creative meanings. As a bodily being who is born to an already-existing world full of sedimented cultural and historical meanings—yet at the same time occupies a particular place of being and gains a unique perspective—what is expressed is always sedimented and at the same time always unique. There is neither pure repetition of what has already existed nor is anything purely creative or new. In what is successfully aesthetic, the sedimented and creative are intertwined in such a way as to express what is yet to be expressed. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) articulates:

To express is not to substitute for the new thought a stable system of signs that can be connected to thoughts that are certain; rather, it is to ensure, through the use of already well-worn words, that the new intention takes up the heritage of the past; it is, in a single gesture, to incorporate the past into the present and to weld this present to a future, to open an entire cycle of time where the “acquired” thought will remain present as a dimension without our needing to ever again summon it or reproduce it. (p.413)

In these terms, what I was seeking by instilling qualities found in aesthetic expression in my students’ learning processes as well as its products was the expression of my students’ thoughts that were the totality of their past experiences, forming and formulating the ideas and unsolved wondering “in a single gesture” present in their artistic expression. In such expressions, although my students do not have to summarize and represent previous ideas in order, those ideas and lived experiences are already present and intermingled with their future wonderings. Throughout the semester, I found myself continuously searching for ways to facilitate the supportive environment and atmosphere in which students were eager to investigate this kind of aesthetic experience.
I also navigated how I could communicate with my students in a way that would inspire them, without intimidating them or imposing my ideas on them, to be engaged in the processes of an arts-mediated aesthetic expression through which they would interact with historically and culturally sedimented meanings as well as uniquely creative ones.

**Communal Expression**

The third mode of expression is intermingled with and folded upon the previous modes of bodily and aesthetic expressions and concerns the ontological meanings of others and creative expressions in a classroom community. In a sense, the problem of a community and communal expression has already been in the periphery of my writing on the previous modes of expressions, because I have taken for granted that there was more than one gesturing and perceiving body engaged in learning and co-creating the curriculum of aesthetic expression in my classroom. I introduce communal expression as the last mode of expression intentionally, since my teaching experience showed that expression at the communal level and my inquiry related to it evolved more deeply as the semester proceeded and especially through the teaching of the course’s last textbook, *The Laramie Project* (Kaufman & Tectonic Theater Project, 2001) (*TLP*). This neither means that my third mode of expression is the last stage of expression nor proposes my embodied theory of expression as a framework of linear development. Rather, it means that communal expression contains both the most fundamental condition of human beings and the resulting expression of their learning and growth in my classroom as a creative learning community.
In articulating the presupposed meaning of self and others in a community, I find it insightful that Merleau-Ponty rejects both dualism and monism and understands the relationship between self and other as intertwining in the “structure of reversibility” of our perception (Dillon, 1997, p.166). According to Merleau-Ponty (1968), others are always already in my perception, and I look at myself as others look at me by “revers[ing] the roles” between others and myself. Specifically, this reversibility in my perception is primarily based upon the fact that both others and myself are bodily beings of “I can” caught up in the same world; yet such a reversible intertwinment is possible because one cannot be an other completely and there is always a space or a gap between the two.

This notion of reversibility helps me see more clearly how my teaching of TLP acknowledged and facilitated a communal expression of intertwining self and others in my students’ learning. In addition to reading the script and having discussions about its main themes, I engaged my students in a collaborative staged-read performance. By taking a few characters from the script and reading their words in a collaborative performance, my students could experience stories of various people beyond the class community. Through this curriculum, I not only acknowledged my students’ fundamental ways of perceptual experience, but I also tried consciously and intentionally to complicate my students’ intertwinment with other people. By letting them learn through encountering various others, they would experience reversible relations in their enactment of TLP based upon the condition of experiencing some degree of gap in between the characters and themselves.

In envisioning this curriculum in the context of a creative learning community, I also found Merleau-Ponty’s (1968) notion of flesh in close relation with that of
reversibility critical and insightful. Flesh is a complicated, profound, and ambiguous word. It indicates three mainly different yet closely interrelated notions—that is, “Flesh as carnality, as reversibility relation, and as a basic element of being” (Hass 2008, p. 140) in human beings’ relations with selves, others and things, and the phenomenal world. These divergent meanings are, nonetheless, not a result of a confused and erroneous conceptualization of the notion of flesh. Rather, they show the critical complexity and profoundly intertwined sub-meanings of the concept. Flesh is the word that reveals our expressive way of being in the world as our bodies perceive ourselves through the reversibility with things and others caught up with the same world; in such reversible relationship, others “functio[n] as [our] mirror” by “de-center[ing]” and “let[ting]” us “see [ourselves] from another vantage” (p. 162). In such reversibility of our primary perceptual experience of self and others, there emerges the “elemental” notion of flesh that helps us “understand sensibility in both ourselves and [others] as ‘the return of the visible upon itself, a carnal adherence of the sentient to the sensed and of the sensed to the sentient’ (VI 142; VI-F 187)” (Dillon, 1997, p.166). The intertwining between self and others through the “structure of reversibility” of our perception (Dillon, 1997, p.166) shows that I cannot be an independent subjective mind separate/separable from objects/others. Rather, to see myself is to see myself seeing and being seen by objects/others (that also see and are seen) in a proximate distance. In this sense, it is difficult to describe my perceptual experience simply as *my* act of seeing objects/others and making sense of them. For Merleau-Ponty, our perceptual experience is better expressed if we understand it as a phenomenon in which the visible—including not only the object/other/world seeing and being seen by me, but also myself seeing and being
seen by them—returns upon itself. In this expression, there is no subjects or objects in a traditionally dualistic sense; instead, there emerges flesh that expresses our “carnality,” “reversibility relation[s]” with self/others/world, and “a basic element of being” (Hass 2008, p. 140).

Although flesh and reversibility is a philosophical and theoretical notion that describes a fundamental way of being, I found that my understanding of flesh as reversibility had a consequence in my understanding of the significance of my curriculum. In teaching TLP by engaging my students through their reading and performing voices (see Chapter Five), I witnessed how their expressive reading involved attentive listening; this intertwining of vocalizing and hearing thickened the flesh of their learning throughout the process. I express learning and growing as “thickening” of the flesh in order to express the students’ (and my own) enhanced perception of the world through the reversibility experienced in the process of performing TLP. That is, learning did not happen separately or linearly in each of my students’ minds or consciousness; rather, learning in my classroom was the whole process of experiencing layers of intertwinnements within which the various reversible mirroring in between self and other was constantly expressed, experienced, and made sense of.29 In such a learning process, a

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29 Imagine how many voices would cry out and, almost concomitantly, be heard through my student’s reading of the character of, for example, Daniel, the father of the hate crime victim in TLP. The student who acts out Daniel’s role cannot just read his words as a plain text without any depth—my student would have to at some level forge connections to Daniel, physically, emotionally and socially engaging with others in relation to his tragic experience of losing his son. Intertwined with Daniel’s words, my student’s (limited) understanding of Daniel will be expressed and heard through his reading performance. In this sense, my student’s reading aloud is also hearing—for the student, it is hearing himself read and hearing Daniel expressed through his own voice; to the other students, it is hearing not only Daniel through their classmate’s voice but also the vocalized meaning of what has come before Daniel’s words and the silent potentials of
community emerges while folding its expressions back upon itself and thickening the meaning of their co-existence and co-growth. The classroom as a creative learning community embraces naturally and culturally intertwining relationships between self and others in a curriculum and celebrates the thickening of the flesh of the expressive community.

**Folds, Folding, and Unfolding: Theorizing Creative Learning Communities**

I have shown, so far, how I came up with the three key modes of expression—bodily, aesthetic, and communal—as the embodied theoretical framework for this dissertation. The three modes resonated with me most deeply and significantly in my effort to build and sustain a creative learning community in my classroom. To briefly summarize, my students as human beings are bodily beings primordially expressing their existence and making sense of the expressing, phenomenal world; for the growth of these bodily beings, I find that aesthetic expression provides a powerful educative experience that facilitates conditions for emerging creativity while connecting to and at the same time overcoming sedimented meanings. Communal expression of the students as bodily beings involved in aesthetic expression brings about possibilities for a thickened flesh of learning that returns learners to the same world in which they have always lived, yet with more complicated understandings and meanings of their lived experiences in the world.

what is going to follow his words. Collectively, it is also hearing how the performers as a team connects, reacts to, and makes sense of their own performance in the making. These acts of reading and listening facilitate my students’ learning through the reversible relations with self and various others. It is in this intertwining and growing sense that I express learning as “thickening” flesh; the flesh of intertwined reading and listening, or self and others, is dynamically touching and being touched through my students’ reflexive voices. I envision the flesh of my students’ expression thickened over the course of learning.
In proposing the potentiality of the embodied theorizing and theorized practicing of curriculum as enveloping this overarching framework characterized through the three relational modes of expression, I find it necessary to employ the expressive word, “folds,” the folds that creates depth in between the previously plain-looking, visible surfaces by generating the invisible open space that embraces a potential for the expression of renewed and more dynamic and richer surfaces. The three modes I have proposed cannot be explored separately because they are folds of the same fabric of my theorizing-practicing experience. As I move reflectively by folding the theorized practices and embodied theories back upon each other and doubling their meanings, I find that these three modes of expression are also folding and, consequently, folded upon one another; each fold responsively emerges from the same fabric of my experiences with the potential for renewed expression beneath the surface and unfolds its curricular meanings necessarily in relation to the others. As Merleau-Ponty (1968) argues, in these continuous and relational folding-unfolding movements, the flesh of my embodied theory and theorized practice regarding what it entails to build and sustain a creative learning community would be thickened with various meaning-full folds, rhythmically folding and unfolding.

In the following chapters, I explore these three interwoven modes of expressions in more detail, making concrete connections to my teaching practices, theorizing the significances of my struggles and successes, and giving them creative expressions through theoretical language drawn from Merleau-Ponty and Dewey.
To prepare for the first day of the 2012 spring semester, I walked around campus, gathering short branches that had fallen to the ground. These branches, along with a ball of multi-colored yarn, were to serve as the materials my Multicultural Education (ME) students would use to create a collective artwork expressing their first-day experiences in class. In the main activity of the day, my students would sit in a big circle and share their multicultural stories; a long strand of colorful yarn would travel across the classroom and create a giant web as students would voluntarily take turns making connections to the previous person’s story. After dissembling the web and reflecting on this activity, I would then provide my students with additional materials (such as the branches) to encourage them to make sense of this connective and interactive introduction activity and to explore and express their lived meanings of entering each other’s first day experiences.

I planned to encourage my students to be present and expressive to each other by weaving an aesthetic and creative curricular experience. I hoped to implicitly encourage students to start imagining the potential of a creative learning community where all learners are acknowledged as “living conscious” bodies (Hass, 2008, p.88) capable of expressing and creating lived meanings of their experiences in relation to self, other, and the world.

In this chapter, I share how I endeavored to initiate a creative learning community in my ME classroom by seeking means of engaging my students in the connective
introduction activity. This exploration first and foremost leads me to consider human beings’ embodied participation within the workings of the class. As discussed in Chapters One and Two, I turn to three modes of expression—bodily, aesthetic, and communal. This chapter chronicles bodily expression as I envisioned it to be present and contributing to the creative learning community in the ME course I describe here. Specifically, this chapter focuses on how I attempted to acknowledge my students’ bodily expression in their learning about self, other, and the world in my class from the first day and throughout the semester. In so doing, however, I do not exclude the other two modes of expressions. I am aware that, along with my interest in the bodily engagement of the students, aesthetic and communal expressions were equally at the core of my concerns in my classroom. Thus, my focus on bodily expression in this chapter will provide the first window through which I explore the three relationally intermingled modes of expressions.  

The Beginning of the Creative and Expressive Curriculum Making

When I began to plan for and imagine my ME course and to engage myself in curriculum making—such as selecting textbooks and writing the course syllabus—it was without hesitation that I marked the first day as an “introduction” day. It seemed a universal norm that the first day of class should be spent on various introductory activities in the classroom—introductions to the instructor, students, and overall course content. The first class of my ME course would not be an exception. A proper

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30 The next two chapters will provide the second and third windows through which I explore further modes of expression present in my classroom as a creative learning community. In these chapters, I will also theorize about the complex intertwinement of the three modes of expression practiced/evident in my teaching.
introduction on the first day seemed critical to set the right tone for the rest of the semester regarding how the students would be engaged in what they would learn. Fortunately, I already had some tentative thoughts about the first day as a result of my reflections on a few memorable introduction activities I had experienced as a student myself\(^{31}\). These memorable experiences involved interactive and connective ways of students introducing themselves. In one particular activity, we used materials such as a ball of yarn as a medium for making a visible web of connections across the classroom during the introductory activity.

Having some initial thoughts about the first day and drawing on reflections of my own past experiences was useful in providing a starting point for what I wanted to do in my own classroom. However, how these introductory activities could be developed in a manner that suited the intensions of my ME course was not a simple task. Just as a painter has infinite potentiality to develop a painting of, for example, an apple, I had endless potentiality to develop my initial thoughts into various introductory activities.

I found myself engaged in a “dramatic rehearsal” (Dewey, 1922, p.190) based on my initial thoughts. Such “a dramatic rehearsal (in imagination) of various competing possible lines of action” is “deliberation” that is “an experiment in making various combinations of selected elements of habits and impulses, to see what the resultant action

\(^{31}\) I was a Masters-level student during my two most memorable first-day experiences: the first was on the first day of the Arts in Education Program in 2005 at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and the second was at the Summer Institute small group sessions at the Project Zero Classroom held in 2006. In both classes, the introduction activities were based on interactions among the participants sitting in a big circle and preceded as they made connections with each other’s introductory stories. One difference was that these activities asked their participants to share personal experiences other than multicultural ones; I later made an adjustment in this part in order to make a closer connection with my course and particularly between the introduction among participants and the topic of the course—multicultural education.
would be like if it were entered upon” (Dewey, 1922, p.190). I started rehearsing various curricular possibilities in my imagination. For the introduction of students (and myself), we could sit in a circle without tables or in another alternative arrangement; I could use a ball of yarn, some other connecting materials, or ask students to imagine potential connections. For the introduction to the overall course content, I could let students write the topics they were already aware of concerning multicultural education on post-its or have them share verbally their experiences of relevant issues directly with their classmates. For closure on the first day, I could just introduce the syllabus and schedule or provide them with an activity to creatively sum up their introductory experiences. Thus, I had several possibilities I could choose from when planning that first day. But why would I want to choose one particular path over other infinite possibilities?

In order to find an answer to my question, I needed to articulate the “goals of action” regarding the first day activity, which, in a Deweyan sense, entails “ways of defining and deepening the meaning of activity” (Dewey, 1922, p.226). Of course, setting goals for instructional acts is a norm for teachers in their planning processes. But, this norm seems often forgotten when it comes to designing the first day’s introduction activity, which is too often regarded as a fun yet nonessential and irrelevant add-on to the main lessons that are taught during a semester. At first, I also found myself trying to come up with “fun” and “engaging” ways of conducting an introduction activity, not yet knowing (or thinking about) what they would “mean” to my students’ overall learning in my course. To best plan that first day of class, I had to know in what ways such a fun and engaging activity would be meaningful in terms of the content and the modes of learning I would want my students to experience in my course—not only on the first day but also
throughout the semester. Dewey (1922) provides insights regarding how important setting a goal of action in teaching is for even the first day:

Having an end or aim is thus characteristic of present activity. It is the means by which an activity becomes adapted when otherwise it would be blind and disorderly, or by which it gets meaning when otherwise it would be mechanical. In a strict sense an end-in-view is a means in present action: present action is not a means to a remote end. A mariner does not sail toward the stars, but by noting the stars he is aided in conducting his present activity of sailing. A port or harbor is his objectives but only in the sense of reaching it not of taking possession of it. The harbor stands in his thought as a significant point at which his activity will need re-direction. Activity will not cease when the port is attained, but merely the present direction of activity. The port is as truly the beginning of another mode of activity as it is the termination of the present one. (P.226)

As Dewey (1922) asserts, I needed to articulate “an end or aim” of my class in order to know what to do even in the very first activity, which demonstrated that the first day was not, in fact, an irrelevant add-on but the critical first “port or harbor” for which I was “reaching” as “a significant point at which” I would then “need re-direction.” Thinking of the introduction activity as the first port to reach in my course, I had to consider “the beginning of another mode of activity” and the ultimate aim of my teaching. That is, I realized I should consider the first day’s activity as a necessary first harbor from which my students and I would begin our journey of creating a creative learning community in class. For this, I had to make sure to articulate the aim of my course in order to seek
“means” to my “present activity” of creating the first day; only then, would I be able to prevent myself from creating an activity in a “blind”, “disorderly”, or “mechanical” way. I needed to find my own “stars,” continuously “noting” and “aided in conducting [my] present activity of” curriculum making, just as the mariner does in his sailing (Dewey, 1922, p.226).

I realized that my hopes to create and sustain a creative learning community should be the “stars” that acts as “the means” of my sailing, guiding me in my attempt to create meaningful first day experiences (Dewey, 1922, p.226). Moreover, in this sailing journey, the ends of building a creative learning community needed to be the ends-in-view, not “a remote end” (p.226). That is, I would have to engage my students in experiencing such ends-in-view, living, learning, and teaching in a creative learning community from the very first day rather than delaying such experiences until later in the semester.

The realization of Dewey’s (1922) ends-in-means reminded me that I wanted my students ultimately to learn what it means to live, learn, and teach multiculturally. That is, I wanted to let them learn about the issues relevant to the field of multicultural education by sensing, feeling, living, and experiencing multicultural living, learning, and teaching in my classroom. By being attuned to this multicultural living, or living multiculturally, I hoped to go beyond teaching sensitivities to diverse cultures categorized in the fixed terms of race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic class, etc. Human experiences and identities are too complex to categorize in those terms. For example, I am more than a Korean; my students are more than typical white Americans. We can truly understand
each other as unique human beings only when we are willing to acknowledge each other beyond those categories.

Moreover, such understanding of others beyond their pre-categorized identities would not be possible if we do not position ourselves as, first and foremost, creators of our lived meanings. As O’Loughlin (2006) says, we “are not only marked by [cultural] discourses but…in turn mark those very laws and codes which effect bodily inscription” (p.4). In this sense, living multiculturally is only possible when we believe that every human being uniquely takes up what he or she naturally and culturally experiences, then creates unique meaning from it, expresses it in a different way, and contributes to a deeper learning of self and other(s) in the community. In a classroom that recognizes the creative potential of human beings, a teacher facilitates student learning by such creative take-ups and communications of lived experiences. *Multi* ways of living and learning are welcome; their possible connections as well as conflicts are explored. That is, difference is valued in learning processes and their products. Diversity is acknowledged and celebrated for the reciprocal learning it provides among the participants. I, as an instructor, seek ways to invest in the potentiality of expressing creativity, communication via expression, and a community in the making amidst multicultural living.

Thinking of all of these issues, I was compelled to ask: in order to create and sustain a creative learning community in my ME class while facilitating educative experiences for my students to experience living, learning, and teaching *multiculturally* what should the first day of the class look like and feel like? How should my first day activities initiate the kind of community I wanted to create in my classroom and resonate with the qualities I wanted to instill in the other learning activities throughout the
semester? How would I be able to do this while still managing to introduce my students not only to their peers but also to the themes and content of the course and the modes of learning expected throughout the semester in class discussions and various assignments?

The modes of learning were articulated in the course principles that I proposed for my ME course. They included: 1. Connect, reflect, and weave; 2. Question and imagine other possibilities; 3. Play and linger in the process; and 4. Create your own experience. I included these on the syllabus (See Appendix A) because I wanted to make sure my students and I were aware of the modes of learning that would be valued in the course throughout the semester. I planned to discuss these principles with my students on the first day (or week, depending on the class schedule) but only after my students had already lived them through the introduction activities I would facilitate. I believed that by first giving the students lived experiences of these principles, they would have a better sense of what these principles meant.

In my purposeful acts of looking for answers to these complicated, practical questions regarding what to do on the first day, however, I found myself turning back to the fundamental meanings of being human. To some, this leap from the first day activity to the meaning of being human might seem too abrupt and irrelevant. However, I believed that fundamental question seemed legitimate, timely, and definitely pertinent in creating the close links between the first day and the remaining days of my ME class. Curriculum inquiry grounded in a non-dualistic understanding of being human builds a firm ground upon which teaching and learning overcomes the separation between mind and body, self and other, and theory and practice. By constantly reminding myself of how human beings exist in the presence of others through the depth of their perceptions in the
expressive world, I could, in my curriculum-making and theorizing, look for the connections between, for example, space and time, vision and touch, the individual and the collective, and so on.

In the following section, I share how I developed my initial thoughts about my ME’s first day activity along with my theoretical exploration of being human—a bodily-conscious being encircling other bodies in the world. I do so in three-folds: setting up a classroom as an open space, using tangible materials, and creating an artwork. They are folds, rather than layers, in that the three are integral parts of the same teaching and learning experience as a whole and work interdependently by folding upon each other. Each of these folds explores how I intended to acknowledge different yet intermingled modes and aspects of bodily expressions and encourage them to emerge as a creative learning community in the curriculum of my ME class. In the first fold, I explore how I created an open space in the classroom that acknowledged my students’ ontological condition of being bodily beings whose bodies were always moving, inhabiting space and time; in the second fold, I reveal how I incorporated tangible materials in order to welcome my students’ multisensory perceptual experiences in their learning processes. In the third fold, I unpack how I engaged my students in a culminating creative activity through which they expressed the collectively as well as individually woven meanings of their first day introductory activity. In exploring these folds of experiences, I necessarily call upon both my past experiences and my future aim of building a creative learning community into my present acts of navigating the dynamics of curriculum-making and the theorization of it.
The Classroom as an Open Space

Having students sit in a big circle on chairs without tables has its benefits. As I have experienced as a student myself, particularly on the first days of classes, such an arrangement often makes students feel vulnerable at first, yet soon helps them feel as though they are being seen, heard, and welcomed by everyone in the circle as they introduce themselves. Because of these previous experiences, I already knew that I wanted to sit my students in a circle on the first day; such a vulnerable yet welcoming atmosphere was what I wanted to instill in my first class. Besides, I was going to require my students to share one of their multicultural experiences—however they defined them—and make connections to their classmates’ stories while introducing themselves and voicing their general curiosity about the course at that moment; in this way, my students would be able to share not only basic information about themselves, but also their embodied understanding of the subject matter and their emotional responses to the situation with their peers. A circle of chairs seemed to work perfectly as a means of encouraging students to be more open in sharing their life experiences with each other.

I am not alone in acknowledging the power of sitting in a big open circle in a classroom. Some educators prefer such a setting because it can help students participate in both social and emotional learning\textsuperscript{32}; others adopt it in order to deal with some behavioral problems of their students in a more restorative manner\textsuperscript{33}. These educators seem passionate about encouraging their students to have a stronger sense of community.


\textsuperscript{33} See http://www.centerforrestorativprocess.com/teaching-restorative-practices-with-classroom-circles.html
by empowering them to discuss their emotional conflicts in a classroom and to become more responsible for their own actions.

However, such programs as the Open Circle and the Restorative Classroom Circles are mostly implemented as a supplement to traditional subject matters rather than incorporated and integrated into the ways in which the academic subjects are taught. That is, their intention to build a sense of a community also lies external to the students’ academic learning. These approaches use the arrangement of a circle as a management tool rather than an instrument for integrated learning. For Open Circle, the underlying assumption seems to be the separation between a social-emotional aspect of learning and an academic and intellectual learning processes. Moreover, in its introduction to the program, the Restorative Classroom Circles writes: “Teachers who use these methods often find that the overall proportion of time dedicated to managing behavior is reduced. This means more instructional time becomes available” (Clifford, 2013, p.1). These remarks sound as if these programs assume that children’s behaviors can be potentially problematic; their behaviors are something that needs to be managed, controlled, and corrected, and their intellectual learning happens outside the circle. These assumptions are very different from my understanding of human beings who are fundamentally expressive and creative in their ways of being and being within the world.

Examining these programs shows that the meaning of the circle in a classroom can differ according to different understandings of the nature of students as human beings, the kinds of favorable learning experiences available to them, and the goal(s) that the activity in a circle reaches toward. In order to understand my own assumptions about my students, the learning experiences I tried to instill, and the goal I was reaching toward, I
realized that I needed to consider my students’ experiences in a more fundamental, pre-linguistic, and primordial sense. I needed to pay attention to their bodily expressions on the first day. Additionally, based upon these insights, I needed to see what the circle setting meant for students on the first day of class and whether this arrangement would be appropriate for the rest of our classes together. When I allowed students to sit in a circle and when I did not could also express my assumptions about teaching and learning.

Searching for meaningful links between the first day activity and the activities I wanted to do throughout the semester, I started to imagine how my students would experience the first day. What would comprise my students’ experiences of their first day, especially upon entering a classroom where the chairs have been arranged in a big circle? Even if I could begin the class exactly on time as scheduled, my students and I would have to take at least a few minutes before the class begins to enter into the classroom and situate ourselves. That meant there would be visible, bodily movements preceding the verbal engagements of our more purposeful introduction activity. These non-verbal yet intentional movements of entering the classroom and finding a place to sit in the circle seemed critical in a pre-linguistic and primordial sense. The introduction of my students to their peers, me, and the course would happen in these first moments and through the movements of their conscious bodies. In such movements as entering the classroom, taking a seat, and glancing at the others and the classroom setting, my students would not only move their bodies in the open space at the center, but they would also actively sense what was around them, intentionally explore the world of classroom, and try to understand the potential meanings of what comprised each of their present moments.
Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) helps me understand what happens in those initial movements of my students. According to Meleau-Ponty, we do not encounter things and others in the world with intellectual minds that are separate from our bodies. Rather, “we are bodily beings,” that is, “we are our bodies” (Carman, 2012, p. xii). As bodily beings, our consciousness cannot be thought of as separate from our embodiment in the world. When a student comes into a classroom, her body, without reminding her of the conceptual meanings of an education, classroom, chairs, tables, peers, instructors, etc., moves into the space, senses and responds to other people’s expressive ways of sitting (or not sitting) and talking (or not talking), and adjusts itself amidst a certain arrangement and to the felt mood in the classroom. Her body expresses her embodied understanding of the educational settings she has experienced; her intention toward a seat is contingent on her every movement and the backgrounds which change accordingly with her moving and exploring body and perception (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012). It is not that she has a conceptual plan to sit on a certain chair in advance, but rather that, while moving in and across the classroom, her knowing body, which is both habitual and spontaneous, brings her to a certain seat. This was probably and at least partially why Andrew, one of my students, wrote in his daily reflection on the first day that he found it interesting that he walked into a classroom where everyone was talking instead of on their phones; he said that this made him also comfortable to start up a conversation with a stranger next to him. He did not mention anything specifically about the classroom setting in his reflection, but I believe it was his knowing body that, immediately upon entering the classroom and in

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34 Composite student characterization derived from teaching experiences of ME.
35 This happened before the first class began; I had neither said a word regarding the class policy on cell phones nor particularly encouraged my students to talk with each other.
the few moments of moving across it, made sense—at least partially—of how the setting encouraged him to respond to his surroundings.

Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) explains this consciousness of “I can” (p. 139), which is closely intertwined and collaboratively at work in our embodied lives, in relation to the concept of intentional arc. The intentional arc projects around us our past, our future, our human milieu, our physical situation, our ideological situation, and our moral situation, or, rather, … ensures that we are situated within all of these relationships. The intentional arc creates the unity of the senses, the unity of the senses with intelligence, and the unity of sensitivity and motricity. (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p. 137)

Any time students walk into a classroom and take their seats, their various experiences are all brought to them in each moment: other classes they have taken in their past, their expectations about the new course in their future, the other students and the instructor(s) they perceive in the classroom, the classroom settings they perceive—a circle of chairs, in this case—and so on. With their knowing bodies and the intentional arc at work, they gain some initial sense of what a class will be like by uniting their “senses [and] intelligence” and their “sensitivity and motricity.” From the first day of our ME course, my students would be able to sense, understand what their senses may indicate, and move around their classmates and the objects in the classroom as they emerge in their perception and as the students move in response to such embodied understanding.

36 According to Jackson’s (1998) understanding of Dewey, “objects and events are always contextualized.” They “both place and origin in a perceived world. They become objects and events as they figure into the ongoing activity of an experience. Prior to
The students’ moving bodies, or their “[m]otricity is thus not, as it were, a servant of consciousness, transporting the body to the point of space that we imagine beforehand” (p.140); rather, my students were consciously determining the meaning of the classroom setting and the people inhabiting that space because of the moving and gesturing of their own bodies and those of the others in the room. With this “medium” of gesturing bodies, we “navigate[d] environments and enact[ed] intentions” and “link[ed] between [our] naturally given body and [our] existential/cultural situation” (Noland, 2009, p.56). As “socialized beings” with others in a classroom, my students’ moving bodies gestured while walking toward and finding seats; in so doing, they were “managing to convey spontaneous, unscripted meanings through sedimented forms” (p.56). That is, while understanding the culturally charged meanings of situating themselves in a classroom, they simultaneously expressed their “spontaneous, unscripted meanings” of inhabiting certain areas. As fellow human beings who also have bodies, we can communicate with others; our body as an expressive medium expresses our intentions and emotions in gestures (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012).

In this sense, to acknowledge the moving, gesturing bodies that enter into a classroom as being already involved in the acts of introduction—not only on the first day but also throughout the rest of the semester—is to recognize the possibility that learning, in a fundamental sense, emerges when bodily movements are allowed to be revealed and their meanings are present for communication. In this respect, what becomes as important as sitting in a circle is sitting in a circle while having an open space in front of and across becoming perceived as objects and as events, they were but brute existences, things whose bearing on the course of behavior was either unperceived or nonexistent” (p.22-23).
from the students. That is, a circular arrangement is educationally significant not so much because everyone is sitting in a circle as because every student is allowed to reveal his or her moving and gesturing body in the open space of the classroom.

This classroom setting itself, while not complete or exhaustive, became a curricular expression of the modes of learning I wanted to value in my class throughout the semester. In this classroom as an open space, I invited my students to sense, gesture, and communicate their lived experiences, personal narratives, and embodied understanding, and to express them through individual and collective creations of various works of art for deeper learning. Creating my classroom as an open space welcomed my students first and foremost as bodies that were “eminently an expressive space,” or “the very movement of expression” because our moving and gesturing bodies are “our general means of having a world” in and beyond a classroom (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p. 147).

Finding the connectable qualities in my students’ experiences of the first day introduction activities and the learning in which I wanted to engage them throughout the course, I decided to keep the circle for the rest of the semester. However, doing so was not without challenge. In the first semester, I was assigned to a room full of tables and chairs set in rows, but I was lucky that the classroom was voluminous enough to create a big circle even after putting the tables behind the chairs. Furthermore, the class schedule allowed me enough time before and after the class to rearrange. In the second semester, however, I was assigned to a room with heavy tables crammed into rows, and a busy classroom schedule in between classes gave me nearly no time to rearrange them. When I

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37 Although tables were sometimes useful when my students had something to write down on papers, I tried to keep the students sitting in a circle without the tables in front of them. This allowed them to travel across the classroom when they had small group discussions or participated in some creative tasks.
requested a classroom change, I felt as if I was making too much trouble for the department. Perhaps others also needed a better arrangement, but they managed to teach in their less favorable classrooms. “Am I just being too picky?” I wondered.

Ultimately, this was the time during which I reflected most vigorously on the educational significance of creating an open space, not only for the first day introduction activity, but also throughout the semester. I had to articulate how keeping a particular classroom setting would help initiate and sustain a creative learning community in my class not only for the administrative staff (so that they would change my room assignment) but also for myself. I reflected again on the fundamental meaning of “introduction,” my students’ bodily movements of entering into a space and locating themselves, and their gesturing and expressing bodies’ (often pre-linguistic and non-verbal) communications.

I finally came to realize that this kind of “introduction” does not happen only on the first day of the semester. In fact, the bodies of my students would be present in each and every class, and with each class, these bodies would have become somehow anew due to the additional experiences gained since their previous entry into the classroom. In this sense, every entry and communication with their gesturing bodies would have different meanings; keeping the classroom as an open space, then, would permit these bodily beings, always in the making, to have room to linger and grow by constantly introducing their new selves and connecting with other new selves. That is, my students in this space would be encouraged to experience reciprocal introductions over and over again, not merely as a “literal repetition” of introducing the same fixed selves, but as aesthetically rhythmic encounters of their ever-renewed “recurring relationships” (Dewey,
1934, p.172) with selves, others, and the world in and beyond the classroom throughout the semester.

For example, one of my minority students, Ethan, seemed very self-conscious in the beginning of the semester, especially when he had to speak up during class. He tended to giggle while speaking, not because what he was trying to say was particularly funny, but because it seemed that he wanted to cover his fear that what he had to say might not be taken well by others. I worried that his awkward expression would reinforce a cultural stereotype some of my students might have had. However, as he got to know his peers through various conversations and interactive activities throughout the semester, I noticed that he began to giggle less and less when he spoke aloud and that he sometimes volunteered to share his cultural experiences. Toward the end of the semester, I witnessed him assertively ask his peers to wait for a moment while he prepared himself to present his work instead of giggling to hide his embarrassment. While I can now only speculate which experiences particularly helped Ethan bloom in this way, I am sure of one thing—that it was the open space that allowed him to express his gradually renewed self throughout the semester and forced me and other students to witness his growth over time. In fact, it was not just his individual growth; it was the growth of the class as a creative learning community that was expressed in Ethan’s gradual change. Even though we neither reflected on nor verbally discussed every moment of our individual-collective growing, we—as our knowing bodies sitting in a circle—could somehow sense and communicate our renewed selves and the growing potential of a community in the making. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) asserts:

38 Composite student characterization derived from teaching experiences of ME.
At each moment in a movement, the preceding instant is not forgotten, but rather is somehow fit into the present, and, in short, the present perception consists in taking up the series of previous positions that envelop each other by relying upon the current position. ...Each moment of the movement embraces its entire expanse and, in particular, its first moment or kinetic initiation inaugurates the link between a here and a there, between a now and a future that the other moments will be limited to developing. (p.141)

Allowing my students to enter into a classroom as changing and growing selves with complicated embodied understandings of the world and to communicate their growth with others initiated the creative learning community I wanted to facilitate in the classroom. This initiation was possible not because my students in such a community would be without puzzles, conflicts, or complex questions or because they would construct positive and new understandings in a magically creative way. In fact, the conflicts, puzzlements, and discomfort that emerged in our class discussion was often already present in my students’ bodily gestures, for example, in the releasing (or suppressing) of their emotional reactions to the assigned readings and their classmates’ comments on them. And, rather than force students to hide the emotions intertwined with their intellectual curiosity, I invited them to reveal these emotions.

I assert that this particular classroom setting has the power to initiate a creative learning community. Opening a space where my students would unfold their lived experiences in relation to their learning assumes that they are capable of creative take-ups
of the assigned readings and relevant lived experiences and of expressing these not only verbally but also through their bodily gestures.

Ultimately, I realized my pedagogical goals were so tied to the physical space of the classroom that I pursued and managed to change classrooms so that I had more flexibility to rearrange chairs and tables. My new classroom was not as spacious as the one from the first semester, and I had to keep some tables in the circle. But my students could sit in a big circle and most of them did not have tables in front of them. I kept the students sitting in a circle and opened the communicative and expressive space in the classroom as much as possible. In this way, I connected the first day with the rest of the course and initiated the creative learning community in my class by orienting “curricular enactment toward space-time experiences” (Macintyre Latta, 2013, p.60)—that is, by engaging my students with the open space over time they could experience “active structuring of what [was] encountered on a continual basis” (Macintyre Latta, 2013, p.55).

According to Dewey (1934), in our lived, perceptual experiences, space and time are inseparably relational—thus, he calls them “space-time” (p.214). Maintaining the open space in the classroom throughout semester, in this regard, was my invitation to students to not only make sense of their interactions with themselves and others by taking time and moving in and across the open space, but also to wonder what such “space-time” as experienced expressed to them about teaching and learning in my ME course. In such “curricular enactment toward space-time experiences” (Macintyre Latta, p.213, p.60), my students were respected as active meaning makers constructing and unfolding the meaning of space-time in my classroom as a creative learning community.
Use of Tangible Materials

For the introduction activity, I wanted to add a tangible component: a ball of multi-colored yarn. I thought it would facilitate a more interactive, emotional, and engaging experience for the students. A student would introduce herself by sharing a multicultural experience while holding an end of the ball of yarn. Whoever found a connection to her story and had not yet effected an introduction would volunteer to go next; the first student would then pass the ball of yarn to the next while continuing to hold her end. The second student would then introduce himself by sharing his multicultural experience and its connection to the first student’s story while holding on to the length of the yarn now spanning himself and the first student, rendering them literally connected. This process would continue until everyone in the classroom introduced himself or herself, and the creation of a web of connectedness was complete.\(^{39}\)

It was interesting to listen to my students’ stories about their multicultural experiences and how they made sense of the acts of connecting those stories. As they later wrote in their daily reflection sheets, most of them were pleasantly amazed by how they could connect to their peers, most of whom they had not known even a few minutes earlier. Some of the students reflected more specifically on how many multicultural experiences they had in common, which included vacation trips to the foreign countries. There were a few students who noticed disparities between the amount of multicultural

\(^{39}\) I also participated in the activity by searching for the right moment to make a connection to one of my students’ story. I tried to pay more attention to the stories of those students who seemed nervous about the activity, unconfident about speaking in front of others, and intimidated by the task of sharing personal experiences. By making a connection to one of these students’ stories, I tried to express that I cared and would continue to do so throughout the semester, about everyone’s experience in my classroom even though a student might not be able to articulate her story skillfully.
experiences among their peers; a few had a lot of experiences and the rest had very few. One of the students even shared her surprise at the fact that many of her peers already had experiences of traveling abroad. These reflections showed me my students’ different understandings of multicultural experiences, the various economic and cultural situations they were in, and the different take-ups of the activity.

I had participated in a similar kind of introduction activity and found it exciting and fun to use such a flexible and playful material as yarn during the activity. I felt that my classmates and I were more relaxed and active, and open to each other. We laughed a lot while moving our bodies and throwing and catching the ball and enjoyed the time of getting to know each other. I was eager to create such a fun and engaging atmosphere in my ME classroom.

However, I had again to make sure I knew why using such a material in my class would be necessary and what its significance would be in my effort to initiate a creative learning community in the classroom. In fact, although I could not find any scholarly articles making specific mention of the use of yarn, my search on the Internet did uncover some teachers who, for different purposes, had used a ball of yarn as a means of creating an interconnected web at the end of a class. Some of the teachers used yarn as a way to check and collect each student’s knowledge regarding a particular subject matter—which is more informational and factual rather than experiential; others used it in order to engage participants in understanding and collaboratively representing the concept of ecosystem and its connected nature; still others used it specifically for community building and in order to demonstrate to students how the web gets weaker when any of its participants fails to take responsibility. Even though all of these activities using string
ended up creating a web of yarn, they seem to facilitate different kinds of learning experiences than I was invested in: others’ use of yarn as a pedagogical tool was centered on having students use it to recite information and facts, represent an abstract concept in a visual form, and enhance a sense of community as a goal in itself, divorced from students’ academic learning. What kinds of learning experience would I want my use of yarn to facilitate for my students? How would such learning experiences be relevant in initiating a creative learning community in my classroom?

When I reflected on my own engagement with the introduction activity as a student and imagined how my students would experience a similar activity, I was first and foremost reminded of the image of a web. I thought that it would be powerful to have the image of a web visualized through the yarn spread across the classroom on the first day. The web could become a representation and symbol of the connectedness among the students and their various multicultural stories. Such a powerful visual image would help my students realize that their various stories are, in the end, all connected one way or another; acknowledging the relationality of people from various backgrounds would be one important lesson to learn in a multicultural education classroom.

However, I believed there should be more to my students’ engagement in the activity. I could have completed the activity without string and discussed the meaning of “web” metaphorically. I could have let my students just imagine a random web in their heads or showed them one version of it on the screen. Instead, I made them actually take the time and space to unreel a ball of yarn, to throw and catch it, to maintain the constant effort of holding an end of it, and so on, in the process of creating a web of their own. In addition, I was not going to let my students go around the room and introduce themselves
in the order of where they happened to be sitting, or to throw the ball randomly to anyone to indicate the next person’s turn to make his or her introduction. Instead, I would ask them to listen to each other’s stories and volunteer to go next by articulating how they are able to relate to the previous person’s story. Thus, they would be participating in the creative process that has its “ends-in-view”—the web of relationship—yet not knowing the exact path toward it (Dewey, 1922, p.226). In this sense, they had to invest themselves in creating the web by attentively seeking the moment to request the ball of yarn and join themselves into the web by taking hold of a section of the yarn. They would also have to wait until someone else acknowledged a connection to their stories before tossing the ball of yarn to another. In their moving, seeing, telling, hearing, sensing, feeling, and responding, the web would emerge. In this sense, the involvement of the yarn does not merely visualize the students’ connectedness in a fixed form or as a final product or abstracted concept. Rather, the use of the tangible material of the yarn in the introduction would facilitate not only the expression of the uniquely resulted form, rhythm, tension, balance, shape, and size of my students’ web, but also the processes they were engaged in while actively perceiving the activity multisensorially. By engaging in the co-creating process of the web while experiencing multiple senses in tandem to make sense of the emerging connections, my students could anticipate the kinds of learning they would be encouraged to experience throughout the semester: learning that is not

40 In the examples I have found from the Internet that are particularly aimed at building a stronger community, I found that a random throwing pattern is common. In this scenario, students would say something about the topic of the day’s conversation and then throw the ball of yarn to someone they thought would be good at continuing the conversation. I thought this way might be fun but not challenging enough in terms of learning; although the students might enjoy the surprise of being picked by their peers, this randomness does not necessarily require attentive listening for making connections that enrich the conversation.
about gaining fixed knowledge, but rather emphasizes lingering in the processes while sensing emerging stories and their potential connections and constantly (re)making sense of them.

In realizing the rich potential meanings in this activity, O’Loughlin (2006) helped me to see why the visual image of the web remained first and foremost in my reflection: the privilege of vision in education. O’Loughlin (2006) asserts that “the visual model of mind has played a central role in the Western intellectual tradition, and seeing and knowing have had the longest association in that tradition, making vision enormously epistemologically significant” (p.21). As revealed in these statements, the reason I so valued the visualization of the web was because I made an immediate association between “seeing and knowing.” I assumed that when the web would be made visible in front of the eyes of my students, they would then know the meaning of the activity: the connectedness. When I imagined only the final image of the completed web, I unconsciously “render[ed] [my students] passive spectators” (O’Loughlin, 2006, p.27), while “distancing” them from the lived experiences (p. 34) of their creative engagements with their other senses in the process of creating such an image. I neglected to consider that my students’ engagement with the activity and the yarn would have encompassed multiple sensible dimensions in addition to the visual. It was only when I realized this oversight in my reflection that I could finally return my students to the position of creators and potential members of the creative learning community I wanted to build in my classroom. By acknowledging my students as creative human beings with their multiple senses already working together, I could better understand the potential meanings of my students’ learning experiences with tangible materials.
I do not, however, deny the power of using visual images in education. There are many useful and insightful images that facilitate profound conversations and learning opportunities for students. It is completely true that vision is a powerful way to “understand and relate to the world” (O’Loughlin, 2006, p.21). However, it is often forgotten that vision never works alone. Rather, “vision—touch and the other sense systems are brought into complex interplay” (p.47) in every experience; our experience always involves multi-senses “translat[ing] each other without the need for an interpreter” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p.244), although “they may remain unacknowledged because of the demands of sight” (O’Loughlin, 2006, p.45).

My students’ experiences in the introduction activity with the string would be no exception to O’Loughlin’s claim. Most importantly, by trying to get inside my students’ experiences, I realized that at the center of their multisensorial engagement with such tangible material as string was primarily a tactile experience. To connect is fundamentally to touch. To connect with something or someone I must touch it or her with my own skin, which is, in turn, itself touched by it or her. As O’Loughlin (2006) says, “While the eye distances us from the world, touch connects us—providing both intimacy and emotion, however much we may choose to ignore this. While the eye fixes and investigates, touch advances and embraces” (p.47). By engaging in creating activities that are primarily tactile experiences—although still in “complex interplay” with the image and other senses—my students would have opportunities to feel intimate with their peers, share their emotions, and embrace peers who were strangers before my ME class. My students might feel vulnerable at times due to this enhanced intimacy. But I believed that experiencing such a vulnerability, fear, and risk of becoming more connected with
others was not a mere impediment. As Dewey (1934) says, such obstacles, “when [they are] overcome and utilized” properly in learning processes, would help my students “become aware of” themselves; they would also allow them to have an experience “that is clothed with meaning” (p62) regarding the potential of teaching and learning in the kinds of communities where other creative learners are present for each other’s growth.

In the introduction activity with string, my students, who are their moving and knowing bodies, would be first engaged in touching the given ball of yarn. By touching the light-soft-warm-somewhat-fluffy-round-long-colorful yarn⁴¹, my students would be able to more deeply feel the growing web across the classroom. They would see the web emerging, but this seeing was not purely a work of their vision; rather, such a vision “is essentially stereoscopic vision, in effect vision requiring the assistance of touch for the apprehension of materiality. Touch already knows what vision thereafter reveals; it simultaneously clarifies and supplements that which is revealed through sight” (O’Loughlin, 2006, p.47). Making connections with something for learning purposes should be, then, to get in touch with that something and to sense its various felt qualities; it means that learning requires opening oneself to the sensible world and perceiving it with multi-senses “translat[ing] each other” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p.244), and that this openness to the world finally requires, or rather most fundamentally and ontologically presupposes, living, perceiving, experiencing, and sensing bodies, the body that, while feeling, is “itself…felt” (Cataldi, 1993, p.126).

⁴¹ Cataldi (1993) explains “Touch is the mother of the senses…Through touch we are also sensitive to pressure; differentiations in shape; variations in weight and thickness; fluctuations in fluidity, aridity, and temperature; and distinguishable styles of movements” (p.125).
In the introduction activity, then, this touching experience of tangible material such as the string included experiencing the presence of others who had already touched or were about to touch the string. Although not directly touching each other’s bodies, during this activity my students would experience touching and being touched by others in the classroom through the tangible medium of the yarn. They would be introduced to each other more fully by being able to sense the connected string’s tension, direction, stretch, slackness, fluctuation, movements, and so on. The string would become the extension of the bodily gestures of the participants through which those who were already connected could not only see but also touch and feel their classmates’ different take-ups of the activity and even that of their first-day experiences. In this way, making the multi-dimensions of senses present in the introduction activity, which is often regarded only as an experience of sight—meeting new faces—provides students opportunities to encounter each other multi-dimensionally. Engagement with the string, in this sense, would help students embrace and connect with each other as moving and gesturing bodies with emotional experiences and expressions. Even though my students would still make mistakes in their understanding of their peers after engaging in the activity, using their various senses to understand each other would help them recognize their peers beyond easy, visually readable categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, etc. Rather than distancing their peers and fixing their identities as nouns—fixed “things”—my students would learn to embrace their peers as actively sensing bodies in constant interaction with others.42

42 My students’ learning through this experience of touching on the first day continued throughout the semester figuratively as well as literally. Not only did I continue to encourage the students to make connections with each other’s stories—touching and
Thus, my students’ experiences on the first day of class were meant not as a means of merely seeing the emerging image of a web across the open space of the classroom; rather, the experiences also included touching a string, the tangible material, as well as touching a string already or about to be touched by others. Providing students with multisensorial experiences that do not value only vision but also the other senses expresses how I as a teacher acknowledge my students’ bodies as the critical medium of complicated sensorial experiences and thus of learning in academic settings. O’Loughlin (2006) articulates that

Since sensory experience is always unstable it is through the body in its totality and all at once, that the world is made accessible to us. …it is only by means of the body that the different sensory experiences…are integrated. In other words it takes a body to effect such integration; the body itself is only constituted through such sensory integration. (p.46)

By using tangible material such as string in a classroom where there is enough open space for material to travel and emerge as something meaningful, the first day activity would have a potential to create a curriculum that initiates a creative learning community. The curriculum that values multisensorially felt experiences for learning assumes that bodies are the medium through which we understand and learn about the world; as such, bodily experiences needed to be valued as critical means and resources for learning. That is, education that facilitates more intentionally the engagements of various senses values embodied knowing. Correspondingly, the creative learning community that I wanted to being touched by others—but I also literally had them touch the hands of the marginalized as part of the curriculum related to learning *The Laramie Project* (Kaufman & Tectonic Theater Project, 2001) toward the end of the semester. See Chapter Five.
initiate valued students’ embodied knowing by creating a curriculum through which my students were actively engaged in multisensorial experiences for learning.

By being able to articulate the deeper meanings of using tangible materials in learning, I could envision my teaching practices for the rest of the semester as a way to engage my students’ various senses. Examples of these—staged reading performances, as well as my students’ various projects incorporating artistic materials such as painting and music—will be explored in detail in the remaining chapters of this dissertation.

Creating an Artwork

In this version of a first day introduction activity, I had my students introduce themselves to each other in an open space and engaged them in creating an emerging web across that space, acknowledging my students as moving, gesturing, and perceiving bodily beings. Since, by the end of the activity, everyone had been introduced, it seemed that the activity had successfully achieved its goal. After only a few more minutes during which the students would share their reflections of their first day experiences, I could have called it a day. However, I was reminded of the sensation of puzzlement I once experienced as a student as the result of an abrupt and disconnected ending to a connective introduction activity.

In this past experience, as the introduction activity with the yarn was concluding, my classmates and I were asked to take a few moments and share what we had noticed and felt during the activity; we identified the excitement of getting know each other in this playful way and reflected on how great it was to see that our lived stories were all connected. I was still mulling over the feeling that something powerful for my learning
was emerging from this particular experience when my classmates and I were told to gather the yarn and shortly thereafter, my instructor dismissively piled the yarn on the ground in a corner of the room. We had to move on to the next, seemingly more important, main discussion activity on the schedule. I remember feeling puzzled, disappointed, and even sad in this moment.

Although I knew that I could not linger on one activity forever simply because I wanted to and that there could be other activities that might be as important as the first one, I felt disturbed. The tangled threads at the corner of the room, ready to be thrown away as soon as the class was over, seemed to insinuate that the connecting activity that I had been deeply engaged in a few moments ago was not worth reflecting on or learning from. I felt that I was given neither enough time nor space in which I could reflect on the meaning of this powerful experience; nor was I provided with a further learning experience to which I could fuse my experiences with the yarn as a meaningful connection. I felt lost.

I did not want to create for my ME class a first day introduction activity that would be separate from the learning afterwards, as the one described above. I felt that my students deserved to have some room to make further connections. I wondered: after engaging my students in a short conversation reflecting on their experiences of creating an emerging web—encouraging them to take time to feel the rhythm, texture, mix of colors, tension, movements, etc. of what they had created—what kind of culminating activity would be meaning-ful for my students’ learning, not only on the first day but also for the rest of the semester?
Trying to create a curriculum that values my students as bodily beings who inhabit space and time and are always engaged in “interaction” with their surroundings and searching for “continuity” in their experiences (Dewey, 1997), I focused my attention on the yarn, the material my students would play with during the activity. At the end of the introduction activity, as I had felt in my previous experience, the yarn would no longer be merely yarn to my students. The yarn would become the media with which they experienced the bodily, linguistic, and communal engagements of introducing one another. My students would have touched the string, held it attentively, used it to be connected with their new peers, and witnessed one of many emerging webs of relationships that would hopefully grow in my ME class. I decided to incorporate the very string my students would hold during the introduction activity into the culminating activity of the day. I would engage them to create something that expressed some aspects of a web by giving them additional materials each could play with and create something from. I also wanted to find a way to collect each individual’s unique expressive piece and create a collective work of art.

In these creating processes, I hoped that my students would be able to reflect on the first day’s overall experiences. Engaged in these processes, they would be encouraged to invest themselves by lingering with tangible materials in their reflection, expressing what they learned from interacting with themselves, others, and the classroom world on that day, and sharing it through their collaborative, aesthetic expression. I believed that generating an artwork expressive of my students’ first day experiences would allow them to access these learning experiences even after they had let go of the string in their hands,

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Aesthetic expression is the theme I will delve into in the next chapter (Chapter Four).
and the web of relationships across the classroom disappeared from the open space. In my effort to articulate the meaning of creating and having an artwork in this sense, I turn to Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) who expresses the ontological meaning of artworks. For example, of that found in poetry, Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) says that a “poem employs language, and even a specialized language, such that the existential modulation, rather than dissolving in the very instant that it is expressed, finds in the poetic apparatus the means to make itself eternal” (p.152). As such, my students would use the yarn, the tangible material full of lived meanings that were once expressed in the web across the classroom, to build a sculpture using “the means to make” the meanings of their experiences “eternal” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p.152).

For days I searched for inspiring images of various webs on the Internet, wandering in craft shops and resource rooms, making the familiar surroundings strange, and constantly imagining what I encountered differently. After days of this search I finally decided to give my students branches that I collected from the grounds of the campus of my university. I was going to task my students with somehow weaving the meaning-full yarn onto or in between the branches and sticking them on a doughnut-shaped Styrofoam base that I would have prepared in advance⁴⁴. In creating this three-

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⁴⁴ I do not attempt to suggest that this particular creative activity was the best culmination of the first day. In my teaching, the culminating activities of the same interactive and connective introduction activity with yarn varied according to the sizes of a class, classroom environments, class schedules, etc. The introduction activities varied slightly with different classes in that they included pinning the strings into a series of small webs on a foam core in one class, building a three-dimensional sculpture with branches as shared in this paper in another class, writing collaborative poems in small groups and reading them aloud to the rest of the class in yet another class, and finally creating a larger installation using various pieces of furniture in the classroom for another class. I needed to be sensitive to the various given conditions—temporal, spatial, and personal—
dimensional sculpture with branches and colorful strings, my students would be invited to express what they had felt and learned from the introduction activity with tangible materials after they had shared their reflections verbally.

Some may wonder how I can know that these artworks represent what my students had learned from the first day and whether I would be able to measure what each uniquely weaved branch indicated about their learning. However, I engaged my students in this kind of artistic and aesthetic culminating activity because I wanted them to express rather than represent their learning, and because I accepted the ambiguity of their expressions in the moment. To represent their learning is to present it as it is experienced and fixed in the past. In contrast, to create an artwork and express the lived meanings allows possibilities for my students to open up to the past and the future as well as to others in the community. Each of my students engaged in this expressive and creative culminating activity would linger on his or her previous (learning) experiences, bring them to the present in their search for ways to express them with the artistic materials at hand, and wonder about their connections to further learning in the rest of the semester; at the same time, students would also look forward to future connections with other pieces of branches and ultimately witness how each of their unique expressions, when collected, builds an interesting, complicated whole—an expression of the potential to grow further as a creative learning community.

By facilitating the time and space for the expression, rather than representation, of their learning, I let my students embrace the ambiguity in their expressions; in this ambiguity lies my students’ spontaneity and creativity. Many of my students said they
were pleasantly surprised by the fact that they could make something successfully expressing their first day experience, even though they could not have anticipated at the beginning what they would create or how they could build it together with others they had just met. Also, by allowing this ambiguity and openness through creative expression at the end of the first day, I, as an instructor, sought ways to connect my students’ first day experience to future learning in the course, particularly in relation to the individual presentation assignments (see Chapter Four) that required expressing learning with artistic media. At the very end of the first class, after reflecting on the co-created artwork in terms of its color, form, rhythm, etc., I engaged my students in reflecting on their learning process of the day as a whole: the processes in which they made connections to their individual experiences, tangible materials, and each other’s stories; reflections on learning through creating those connections; expressions of such experiences with artistic media; and communications of their lived meanings via creative work. In this meta-learning, I tried to guide my students to an embodied understanding about how creating the artwork was not just about creativity and originality or artistic skills. I emphasized that, as they had just experienced, I would value their lingering in the learning processes while they were living, sensing, connecting, reflecting, expressing, and communicating their experiences and expressions in my classroom as a creative learning community throughout the semester.

I enacted this curriculum based on the belief that students, as moving bodies inseparable from their perspectives, are already within a “condition of possibility of all of the expressive operations and all of the acquisitions that constitute the cultural world” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p. 408) regardless of their ability to craft. Each of their
bodies is “a knot of living significations” (Merelau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p.153), actively searching for unique, lived meanings and expressing through the medium of their bodies the creative understanding of their cultural world. This curriculum that encouraged my students’ “act[s] of taking… up together” their various learning activities and creating works of art that aesthetically expressed their lived meanings continued throughout the semester. In this sense, the culminating activity of the first day served as a preview of the modes of learning that students would be engaged in throughout the semester. In the next chapter, I explore the aesthetic expression present in a creative learning community, particularly in relation to an individual presentation project.

An Initiated Creative Learning Community

I have explored how I tried to initiate a creative learning community in my classroom on the first day through the introduction activities. First and foremost I created my classroom as an open space by having my students sit in a big circle with nothing obstructing their view of each other or their ability to move around. This classroom setting was kept throughout the semester, thereby maintaining a space that welcomed my students’ constant re-entering and re-introducing of themselves. I then engaged my students in a multisensorial activity urging connections among each other’s lived experiences by co-creating an emerging web across the classroom. The use of tangible materials in a classroom incorporated with attentive listening and response suggested a profound way of learning while also valuing an embodied understanding of the world through various senses. In addition, as a culminating activity that could give students room to make sense of their experiences and express their creative take-ups of those
experiences, I engaged them in the aesthetic experience of creating an artwork, sharing it, and reflecting on it to express their lived meanings.

All in all, these activities positioned specifically on the first day were meant to initiate the creative learning community that my students would be a part of for the rest of the course. Of course, it was only the first day; I was aware that, even if I was quite successful expressing what it means to teach and learn in a creative learning community through these activities, all of intentions for the course might not be communicated thoroughly in the first class session. However, I was sure that the activities of the first day—sitting in a big circle, weaving together our stories with yarn, and making our experiences manifest in a creative sculpture—would allow for me and my students to have a first shared experience that we could visit and revisit throughout the semester. I tried to create a first day that would serve not merely to break the ice in the classroom in order to proceed to learning; rather, it would be the day my students and I would, for the first time, co-create experiences that we could reflect back on and make countless connections to throughout the semester. If I successfully facilitated meaningful learning experiences for my students throughout the semester in such a way that my instructional practices “appear[ed] as the realization of expression of [the] unique intention” of building a creative learning community in my classroom, then the end of the semester would be when my students would finally reach a fuller “sense” of these first day experiences (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p.452). Hopefully such meanings gleaned from this first day would lay the groundwork for my students to find connections with their experiences beyond our class together and in their lives as teachers.
While allowing students to take a semester to fully understand the meaning of their first day experience and trusting them as active meaning makers, I nonetheless tried to provide them with ongoing opportunities to practice “a contextual responsiveness, valuing the relational complexities unique to learners and learning, seeking out the ensuing interactions as productive elements furthering learning” throughout the semester (Hostetler, Macintyre Latta, & Sarroub, 2007, p. 241). In the next chapter, I explore how this first day experience of connecting, sensing, and expressing in and for learning continued throughout the course. By turning to a curricular enactment that required students to present their individual, arts-mediated expressions to the class, I introduce the next mode of expression—aesthetic expression—and examine how my students and I were able to sustain the creative learning community initiated through the introduction activity explored in this chapter.
CHAPTER 4

CONNECT / QUESTION / PLAY / CREATE:

AESTHETIC EXPRESSION AS CURRICULAR MEDIUM

In this chapter, I articulate my attempts within the Multicultural Education (ME) course to engage my ME students through the development of arts-mediated student presentations. I also try to give expression to how these presentations came to facilitate creative teaching and learning as mediated by our “aesthetic expression” (See Dewey, 1934), which became a “moving force” (Dewey, 1934, p.38) of forming and sustaining a creative learning community throughout the semester. While I have explored the notion of expression as that of embodied human beings existing in the phenomenal world with others in a fundamental way in the previous chapters, the notion of aesthetic expression I deal with in this chapter is more closely related to my effort to embed it in more explicit, educationally significant activities. In doing so, I find it insightful to turn mainly to Dewey’s (1934) pragmatic vision of understanding Art as experience in education.

Dewey (1934) asserts that art originates in a human experience when an experience runs toward its fulfillment and consummation while interacting with the world and seeking continuity over time. That is, the involvements in art making can provide an experience that is exemplary, thereby linking art as experience and education. An experience, which is often found in a fulfilling aesthetic experience, is an educative one. In this sense, students’ engagements in objects of the arts can also be meaningful, not because students attend to perfect representations or externalizations of given ideal images or thoughts, but because they potentially perceive how the works of art can reveal
the history of forming dynamic relations between self and the world and old and new in
the creative processes toward expression (See Alexander, 1987; Jackson, 1998).

The close connection between art as experience and education found in Dewey’s (1934) account of aesthetic expression and the notion of medium in relation to it provided me with theoretical insights. In my ME class, I wanted my students to be wholly engaged in such experiences of creative expression that would help them not only learn the subject matter—multicultural education—but also embody the lived meaning of aesthetic ways of teaching and learning in a creative learning community. In this sense, I created an art-mediated presentation as a course assignment in the hopes that such an assignment would express the kinds of expressions I wanted to acknowledge as educationally significant in creating and sustaining a creative learning community in my classroom. The art-mediated student presentations were to provide “space-time” (Dewey, 1934, p.214) where students’ uniquely varied “knot[s] of relationships” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p.lxxxv) are revealed and communicated; students were to make sense of their learning experiences in constant interactions with self, others, and the world, extending into their life experiences beyond the classroom.

The “connect/ question/ play/ create presentation” was the name I coined for this required assignment. It was my intention to make the assignment explicit in its title. I wanted to make it clear to my students that through this assignment they would have opportunities to make connections, question the taken-for-granted, play with abstract ideas as well as concrete materials, and create their own lived meanings expressed in the processes and products of their works of arts. The name of the presentation assignment also expressed, as I realized upon reflection, the creating processes I went through in my
curriculum making experiences while teaching this course. Building a creative learning community around the creative and expressive presentation necessitated that I as an instructor also engage myself in “artful conduct” that included my habits, imagination, and senses (McClelland, 2005) while fully investing in connecting, questioning, playing, and creating in my learning experiences.

The assignment asked students to give a 15-minute presentation that expressed their educational inquiries regarding the course content. Students could present on whatever topic they found interesting and relevant to the course but were required to express it through artistic media of their choice. They did not have to select art material narrowly interpreted, however; rather, they were required to adopt an attitude of approaching all materials as opportunities to adapt, make, change, and create. In total, over the course of the semester, about forty minutes per week during the three-hour-long classes were dedicated to individual students’ presentations. In addition, the last week of the course was dedicated to a culminating exhibition and performance where the students shared their arts-mediated projects and celebrated their individual as well as collective learning as expressed in their creative works throughout the semester. As I share later in this chapter, I continued to have ongoing conversations with each of my students throughout the semester to foster engagement in the learning experiences.

45 For instance, a student presented a work that looked like a product of a scientific experimentation project in order to express his inquiry regarding how we (ought to) respond to diversity. His work was artistic and aesthetic because its materials were adapted, made, and created so as to engage his peers in an experience through perceiving the qualities of his work and their significances expressed in it as a whole, not so as to provide scientific explanations behind it. (This student is also a composite student characterization from my experience of teaching ME.)

46 Students could decide whether they wanted their second project to be related to their first project or to develop a new one.
The arts-mediated requirement of my ME course was a challenge to many of my students who feared that they might not be creative or artistic enough to make their own artwork and for those who wanted their instructor to provide detailed direction of what exactly to do to get a high score. It was also a risk for me as a teacher because I had to express the meaning and potentiality of this unconventional assignment to the students and guide them to an experience of an aesthetic expression without imposing my own ideas upon them. However, although not without challenges, these creative and expressive presentations became the powerful engine that kept my classroom alive as a creative learning community and rhythmically drove it forward, attentive to process and creatively invigorated by learning. In order to explore the significance of this curriculum, understanding Dewey’s (1934) theory of expression and the notion of medium is important.

According to Dewey (1934), expression is neither a mere exposure of subjective feelings nor a representation of an ideal image; it is “the matter of a new experience in which subjective and objective have so cooperated that neither has any longer an existence by itself” and “they are integrated in a new object” (p.299). In addition, where there is such “a creation” accomplished over time, says Dewey (1934), “the present impulsion gets form and solidity while the old, the ‘stored,’ material is literally revived, given new life and soul through having to meet a new situation. It is this double change which converts an activity into an act of expression” (p.63).

For example, a student created and presented a collage of images symbolizing her identity as it related to her family’s immigration history and current nationality. In creating this artifact, the personal and emotional experiences and the symbolic designs
tied to history were “so cooperated” that “neither has any longer an existence by itself” (p.299); her impulsion to express her complicated identity got “form and solidity while the old, the ‘stored,’ material [was] literally revived, given new life and soul through having to meet [the] new situation” of expressing her complicated, internationalized identity (p.63). She shared in her presentation that the meanings of the images were changed through her act of turning them into a medium of the re-creation of her current identity. I realized that her experience of making the collage had become transformative because she made sense of her identity through the new and unique object. “It [was] this ‘double change’” that I believed should be present in “an act of expression” (Dewey, 1934, p.63) and facilitated in my students’ presentation experiences.

In Dewey’s (1934) sense of expression, in this regard, medium is only possible when human being’s total engagement with materials—physical, habitual, psychological, and phenomenological—is available for his or her task of expression. When such engagement is lacking—with little to no deliberation in regards to temporality, nor attendance to context, sense-making, and the integration of the subjective and objective, old and new—materials cannot be transformed into a medium. To understand a medium, in this regard, is key to understanding the aesthetic expression present in my ME class because the notion of medium mediates the relationships between teaching and learning, doing and undergoing, activity and meaning, not only in artistic-aesthetic expression, but in curricular enactment as well.

In my ME class, the presentation was, first of all, a medium of my curricular expression. By creating a particular curriculum that required my students to participate in the arts-mediated presentation, I intended to communicate not only the meaning of multi-
cultural living but also that of teaching and learning in a creative learning community. In doing so, I specifically had my students employ artistic materials as medium for expressing their lived meanings; I facilitated this by creating a process-centered curriculum for the students’ aesthetic experiences. In addition, I learned that my curricular expression should always be in the making, an ongoing development throughout the semester, in order to ensure the creation of a “space-time” (Dewey, 1934, p.214) where expressive and responsive learning was welcomed. I engaged myself in seeking a rhythmic dialogue with my students, their works, and myself, turning curricular enactment into a medium toward forming a creative learning community.

**Envisioning Curriculum as Medium**

My attempt to express the potential meaning of my students’ involvement in the arts-mediated presentation in ME was initiated through my engagement in the creative process of curriculum making. I did not simply implement the presentation assignment because there was already “evidence” objectively proven that these had worked successfully before and would work well again in other educational situations like my ME course (See Biesta, 2007, for the criticism of evidence-based practice in education). In fact, there was no other class, at least to my knowledge, in the college where I taught, which required students to develop artistic-aesthetic thinking and to give presentations that expressed this during class time on a continuous basis throughout the semester—especially when the students themselves were not seeking specialization in the arts. There was another ME session that required students to submit a portfolio at the end of the semester that encouraged them to include a “creative”—and often artistic—expression.
At one point I seriously considered taking the idea of “portfolio” as a form of encouraging my students to participate in arts-mediated work. However, I found it unsuitable for a course that aimed to build a creative learning community because the exit portfolio would not give students the opportunity to continuously encounter and learn from their classmates’ expressions throughout the semester. Nor did I choose to give this particular presentation assignment to my students because I expected my students to utilize the assignment as an effective teaching tool or as a method they could copy and directly implement in their own future classrooms.

Rather, I considered requiring my students to develop presentations because I thought that they might be an effective medium through which to cultivate teaching purpose and educational philosophy for all participants in the course. The notion of medium that Macintyre Latta (2004) embodies and understood through her experience as a visual artist resonated with my own curriculum making experiences. Macintyre Latta (2004) says:

My artwork is an idea worked out in paint; a process of interacting with materials. My painting process is a constant exchange between self (the personal) and situation (the contextual). This necessitates participation and involvement. I confront boldly the artistic inquiry ahead of me with a willingness to engage in the imaginings of the making process. Artistic purpose is something to be worked toward, rather than something that is necessarily present at the beginning of the making process. Demands are made of me throughout the creating process—the perception, selection, and organization of qualities and responsiveness to them. (p.177)
Her remarks articulate the role of medium in an aesthetic expression where no exact end result could be predicted “at the beginning” (p. 177); it can be actively sought only by engaging the creating self in the process of making by transforming available materials into a medium of the ultimate expression in an ongoing dialogue between “the personal” and “the contextual” (p. 177). Teaching, for me, was an act of expression that should be sought and achieved in this process and would ultimately invite students to join “complicated conversations” (see Pinar, 2004) responding to and recreating the lived curriculum rather than that of transmitting fixed knowledge or imposing upon them certain values. In my curricular expression, as Macintyre Latta (2004) describes, I “confront[ed] boldly the” curricular “inquiry ahead of me,” “worked toward” my teaching “purpose”, and negotiated the “[d]emands [that were] made of me throughout the creating processes” (p. 177). In such processes, I made connections to my past learning experiences, questioned their underlying assumptions and the contextual conditions, played with different and new possibilities, and created renewed assignments that would better fit my ME students’ learning. Hereafter, I share more specific processes I went through in my curriculum making.

My idea of students’ artistic presentations was originally inspired by my experiences in an Arts in Education (AIE) course that I took as a Master’s-level student in 2005. In the AIE course, my classmates and I were encouraged to maintain a notebook which could take any form—either an actual notebook, or a painting, piece of music, dance, etc.—to continuously make sense of and express our individual as well as collective learning in the course throughout the semester. My notebook came to document my inquiries regarding the “space-time” (Dewey, 1934, p.214) I had lived
while interacting with myself and others through my experiences in AIE; it also engaged me in connecting my inquiries in the past and the future by urging me to take reflective “time-space” (p.214) by flipping the pages and making sense of my inquiries not only on each page but in between the pages as well. Based upon the continuous dialogue expressed in the notebook (in whatever form it took for the individual student), each of us was asked to take turns giving class presentations about the weekly course readings a few times through the semester and to participate in the culminating exhibition and performance week. Using artistic media was not a requirement for this presentation, however. My professor was not only open to form, but he also encouraged us to freely connect the theme of the weekly reading with other relevant topics dealt with in the course as well as with personal experiences beyond the classroom.

There were students who led a typical verbal discussion in their presentations, but most of my classmates who were artists—whether amateur or professional—or at least interested in the role of the arts in education gladly took the opportunities to utilize various artistic media to express how they made sense of weekly readings and what they further wondered about. Almost every week, a peer invited me and other classmates to take an unexpected journey, lingering on some educational concepts or problems in aesthetic ways. While the class presentation continued throughout the semester, no one

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47 I was one of them. A few of my classmates and I decided to work together and we led a verbal discussion about the assigned reading of the week of our presentation. We were not particularly specialized in the arts and probably this was why we chose not to use any artistic materials. As the semester proceeded, however, series of my classmates’ presentations that voluntarily utilized artistic materials inspired me deeply. I began to witness the emergence of an actual classroom community that valued multi-ways of learning and to welcome the unexpected yet interesting conversations they spurred in every class. Later in the semester, I also began to express my inquiries in the arts and started to ponder the potential of an act of expression and the sharing of its resulting objects in a learning community.
presentation was a repetition of another in its form and ideas; none merely recited what
the authors said in their articles. Rather, each presentation expressed a classmate’s unique
take on the weekly readings and class conversations in a distinctive, artistic and aesthetic
form expressing “complicated conversations” (Pinar, 2004) he or she had with them
beyond representing what we had already read from the assigned articles.

Several years after this experience, the artistic presentations I experienced in the
AIE and the subsequent learning that I cherished became the key materials with which I
imagined my future teaching. All began with my “impulsion” (Dewey, 1934, p.60) to let
my future ME students have similar experiences that I had in AIE through artistic
presentations. At the time, I did not know how my AIE experience would be relevant to
my ME students. But I had a vague and not-yet-articulated feeling that the artistic
presentations I encountered in AIE might hold significance for my ME students.
According to Dewey (1934), impulsion “designates a movement outward and forward of
the whole organism to which special impulses are auxiliary; it is the movement of the
organism in its entirety, …the initial stage of any complete experience” (p.60). In
retrospect, recognizing my impulsion to include AIE-like presentations in my teaching,
while seeming at first unclear and even unrealistic, was the beginning of my creative act
of curriculum making.

Dewey (1934) explains that although an impulsion “proceed[s] from need,” it
“also meets many things on its outbound course that deflect and oppose it. In the process
of converting these obstacles and neutral conditions into favoring agencies, the live
creature becomes aware of the intent implicit in its impulsion.” (p.61). The impulsion of
giving my ME students similar learning experiences to those I had experienced through
the AIE’s artistic presentations also met “obstacles” due to the different situations and conditions of ME in comparison to the AIE course; most critically, my ME students were not graduate students specialized or particularly interested in the arts as the ME course was not directly about art education. In this situation, even if I asked my students to voluntarily pick any forms of presentation, there would not be the same variety that I experienced in the AIE’s—not because my ME students would be less creative but because they would likely not be accustomed to the idea of artistic presentation in a college class. I anticipated some resistance from students who might fear a lack of artistic skills or creative ideas. I found myself trying to find a way to convert these obstacles “into favoring agencies” (p.61) as a way for me to realize my impulsion from the outset. I found myself continuously asking what I should do in order to make sure that my ME students, even in such challenging conditions, could experience the kind of learning that had been prevalent in my experiences of the AIE’s presentations. How should I remake the AIE’s presentation curriculum? In this creating process, I “be[came] aware of the intent implicit in [my] impulsion” more clearly. This also helped me become more articulate regarding why I felt the AIE’s presentation might be significant to my ME students.

I came to realize that the AIE’s presentation was a curricular medium expressive of two main purposes: artistic and aesthetic experience. On one hand, it expressed the meaning of teaching creative processes of the arts and their significances for education—the main theme of the AIE class content-wise, which my ME course did not share; on the other hand, it was expressive of the values of teaching and learning through aesthetic

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48 How I dealt with these barriers and ended up (re)creating my ME’s presentation curriculum will be shared in the next section.
expression for both individual and collective learning—aesthetic experience in that artistic expression was an emotionally engaged, fulfilling, consummatory experience formed within a work whose parts-to-whole relationship is integral (Dewey, 1934).

Artistic experience and aesthetic experience are surely closely connected. Dewey (1934) said, “To be truly artistic, a work must also be [a]esthetic—that is, framed for enjoyed receptive perception” (p.49); the aesthetic experience can be “seen to be inherently connected with the experience of making” (50). I agree with Dewey (1934) that “the distinction between [a]esthetic and artistic cannot be pressed so far as to become a separation” (p.49). Rather, it would be, and I believe that Dewey would approve of this, a matter of emphasis. Some educational activities, for example, in art education classes, could emphasize the “exploration of the different media” in the art making (Greene, 2001, p.6) while also dealing to a lesser extent with awareness in aesthetic perceptions; other activities, as in those classes like my ME, could be formed in such a way as to emphasize aesthetic experience while still valuing the potentiality of exploring various artistic materials as a medium of developing and concretely expressing an aesthetic experience. The latter was what I finally recognized as the intention hidden in my impulsion to require presentations similar to the AIE’s in my ME class.

Most importantly, I valued the potential of aesthetic experience in the act of expression for learning, but at the same time I still believed that utilizing artistic materials could be crucial in aesthetic expression. After all, the title of Dewey’s (1934) insightful book says it all: Art as Experience. “An experience”, that is, an aesthetic experience in Dewey’s (1934) theory, is often sought and realized in “Art” through artistic objects (or creating acts of them), that Dewey (1934) claims to be eventful, temporal, developmental,
and contextualized, and always in the making in the perception of its makers and appreciators. I began to envision teaching and learning in my ME class through arts-mediated aesthetic expression and to attempt to articulate its educational significances for my students.

Via arts-mediated aesthetic expression, students would have the experience of navigating and playing with various materials with their senses and perceptions; they would experience turning those materials into a medium of their ultimate expressions by consciously and intellectually adapting, adjusting, changing, or rejecting them while referring both to their impulsions at the outset and to their ultimate purposes of expression. Students would constantly make sense of the parts they were creating in relation to their imagined completed work as a whole. Aesthetic form would emerge in such processes of attunement to “a perceptual whole, constituted by related parts” (Dewey, 1934, p.141) and through the effort to “[discover] the means by which are effected the carrying forward of an experience to fulfillment” (p.143).

In addition, when the resulting objects of their arts-mediated aesthetic expression were shared in a classroom community, the students would witness the concrete works of their individualized learning as their “creative response[s] to the world” (Alexander, 1987, p.236). Every student’s work of expression would be able to engage other students in her unique inquiry in that the “expressiveness” of her arts-mediated work would be “the report and celebration of the complete fusion of what [she has] undergo[ne] and what [her] activity of attentive perception [has brought] into what [she has] receive[d] by means of the senses” (Dewey, 1934, p.107). This individualized work would also become an instrument for “further consummatory[—potentially educative—]experiences” (Dewey,
1929, p. 296) for the other students. When successfully formed, such work could have a “capacity to enter into a variety of contexts and powerfully interact so as to generate the consummatory renewal of experience” (Alexander, 1987, p.237). In this way, my students’ arts-mediated works would be able to mediate the private and the public, their individual and collective learning. Moreover, the differences of all kinds among the varied works of art present in a classroom could facilitate further conversation for aesthetic learning since, as Biesta (2004) said, such gaps are actually what “make[s] communication—and hence education—possible” (p13).

Moreover, my students would also experience a classroom wherein an instructor endeavored to be responsive to the multitudes of meanings the students would express via the concrete arts-mediated, aesthetically expressive works of their learning processes. Having experienced a classroom community where students and teacher were positioned as creative meaning makers communicating their inquiries in this aesthetic expression, my ME students, although not specialized in the arts, might find themselves revisiting their experiences in my class one day. I imagined that they might even recreate their experiences in their own creative ways in order to respond to the needs and aims of their future teaching practices, just as I experienced in my own reflection on learning through the AIE’s presentation in reference to teaching ME.

As I came to envision my ME students’ learning through presentation more concretely, my impulsion, once vague, had finally gained its proper name. The purpose, the meaning, of my teaching through the presentations was being articulated and lived: teaching and learning through continuous sharing of an arts-mediated aesthetic expression. In this process, I could position myself more purposefully as a “creato[r],
remaking through seeing, hearing, evaluating, connecting, and selecting” (Macintyre Latta, 2013, p.46) the potential curriculum material, and I could try to “mediate and re-create this material” so that “the meaning(s) of the curriculum is that which is expressed and experienced” (May, 1993, p.211) in my classroom. In the next section, I share how I (re)created the presentation curriculum as a “reflexive medium” for my ME students “assum[ing] all involved enter as creators” (Macintyre Latta, 2013, p. 46). Specifically, I share how I tried to communicate the significances of this curriculum systemically with my students through the conditions and structures of the requirements of the curriculum.

**Operative Ways to Facilitate Arts-Mediated Aesthetic Expression**

As an instructor, I encountered many critical questions in the creative task of curriculum making for my ME students: How could I ensure that my students learned by experiencing and sharing their arts-mediated aesthetic expression when most of them were not familiar with this way of learning in a college classroom? How could I position students to understand that this presentation was designed for them to explore and use artistic materials as a *medium* of expressing their educational inquiries in aesthetic forms? How could I facilitate students’ learning while being attentive to what was unfolding and emerging in their creative learning community?

In my attempt to grapple with these considerations, I came up with a few operative ways to embed the meaning of arts-mediated aesthetic expression in their learning experiences. First, in order to render my students’ activity an act of expression, I gave them freedom to choose any topic broadly related to the theme of the course for their presentation; second, I explicitly mentioned that the presentation should not mimic a
typical PowerPoint presentation; finally, I required that the presentation should employ artistic media of their choice to express their inquiries while being engaged in acts of connecting, questioning, playing, and creating. In addition, in order to make sure that their arts-mediated presentation experiences could become a medium of their individual and collective learning as a whole, I required my students to follow three steps in the process of learning through presentation. These steps included submitting an in-process proposal with supporting documents, giving a class presentation, and writing a reflection paper.

In order to secure the potential of aesthetic expression in my students’ presentation experience, I decided first and foremost to give my students freedom to choose their own topics to present. For this, I urged them to make various connections with, for example, their readings, class conversations, experiences from other course assignments (such as their field work in multicultural sites), and any other experiences beyond the classroom. This was based upon my understanding that “every expression…begins with impulsion” (Dewey, 1934, p.60), although it might seem vague and/or trivial at first. A potentially meaningful impulsion often “burns itself up”(Dewey, 1922, p.255) in schools and universities because a top-down curriculum rarely allows students enough “space-time” (Dewey, 1934, p.214) where their “released impulses are intelligently employed to form harmonious habits adapted to one another in a new situation” (p. 130). I wanted to make sure that my ME students could respond to their impulsions, rather than ignore or discard them, in ways that “intelligently employ[ed]” them in order to create a presentation in which they would “form harmonious habits adapted to one another in [the] new situation” of their artistic expression.
My decision was not made without concerns. Because I allowed my students to pick any topic of their interest—and not necessarily one related to the course’s reading schedule—there was a risk that their presentations might not fall in line with the specific lessons of the week in which they presented. I worried for a moment that this might distract the other students in class from focusing on the content of the weekly readings. Nevertheless, I solidified my initial decision by reexamining my fundamental view of my students as human beings, and human beings as sense makers. As Hostetler, Macintyre Latta, and Sarroub (2007) argue, “Being evokes meaning making, and meaning making evokes Being” (p.232). In this sense, each of my students as human beings is “an essential core around which thinking and action can and should be unified” (p.232). My worry about the students’ potential distraction reflected the doubt I temporarily entertained that they might not be able to make connections between varied presentations, even though they were all broadly related to the theme of the course. This was contrary to the fundamental assumption of my students (and myself) upon which I wanted to build a creative learning community. I reminded myself that all of us, as human beings, were already capable of making sense of our experiences in the world. Otherwise, we would not have been able to be in a college classroom experiencing and exploring potential meanings of teaching and learning.

I realized that my students who had been growing in active interactions with their surroundings and in ongoing search for some continuity in their experiences (Dewey, 1934; 1997) would already be capable enough to find continuities among seemingly unrelated presentations if I let them know that making various connections was welcomed in my class. I realized that creating such an atmosphere in a classroom was
more important than controlling the students’ presentation topics. This, in turn, proved that allowing my students to explore topics of their own interests could be the best way to empower them to actively experience making connections among the varied and sometimes unexpected topics their peers might bring to class. In this way, I would be able to encourage my students to position themselves as capable creators of their lived meanings and their collective learning experiences, both when they were presenting their own arts-mediated expressive works and when perceiving those of their classmates.

Although I gave my students as much freedom as I could give in terms of choosing their topics, I could not do so when it came to choosing the forms of their presentations. Most of them would have rarely experienced the type of learning through aesthetic expression in a college classroom that I was asking them to perform. I had to be more explicit about what I wanted from my students’ forms of presentation and what I didn’t, yet I had to do so in a way that would not superimpose my own specific ideas upon my students. In order to lead my students to work toward expression—that is, to let them experience the transformative development of their medium into an aesthetic form expressive of the meaning they attempted to communicate—I emphasized two specific principles: That they should not think of this presentation as a typical PowerPoint presentation and that, instead, they would have to incorporate artistic materials of their choice in order to express their inquiries.

Some people might be puzzled about my blunt opposition to the use of PowerPoint software in the students’ presentations. It is not as though I thought PowerPoint was ineffective in all circumstances. In fact, I myself have used it in many class presentations; I even utilized it in my ME class and found it an efficient platform
through which to share the tentative flow of the class period and to remind myself of important announcements to make in each class. Rather, what I found problematic was the almost automatic association students make between the word “presentation” and a PowerPoint presentation in academia. In many cases, students were so used to utilizing the PowerPoint software as a tool for their class presentations, they did not consider what kinds of experiences it often mediates and what kinds of presentations it most effectively serves. Typically, PowerPoint mediates the kinds of presentation in which thoughts and ideas are organized and presented as succinctly summarized information in a linear fashion.\(^{49}\)

The reason I found this problematic was first because this almost automatic utilization of the PowerPoint software could lead the students to “discharge” (Dewey, 1934, p.64) their emotions so easily that they might not feel any need to seek a genuine expression and acknowledge the “complexity and depth of [a] situation” (Alexander, 1987, p.201). According to Dewey, emotion\(^{50}\) that “arises as a response to the checking

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\(^{49}\) On one hand, there could be exceptions. I once used PowerPoint software for an art project for AIE’s culminating exhibition. At this time, I am confident in saying that I employed it as a medium for my expression in that I had been consciously searching for a program that could render my series of paintings animated on screen. The function of performing a slideshow in a loop made this animated expression possible. On the other hand, there were still some students in my ME class who brought their work using a PowerPoint software. They tried not to use it in a typical way, that is, for example, instead of typing several key words from textbooks, they instead inserted some photographs to share—which they thought was a kind of an artistic form. I allowed this manner of presentation because my warning regarding the PowerPoint-formatted presentations was not to completely inhibit the use of the software but to challenge the students’ automatic association with it when it came to presenting in a class.

\(^{50}\) Dewey (1934) says there is no such thing as “the emotion of fear, hate, love”. (p.70) Rather, emotion is always “to or from or about something objective” (p.69), because “[t]he unique, unduplicated character of experienced events and situations impregnates the emotion that is evoked” (p.70). We could “only” “speak of” some-emotion-“under-
of the impulsion” (Alexander, 1987, p220) is critical in an act of expression. Emotion is
not, however, a purely subjective feeling “complete in itself within” (Dewey, 1934, p.69);
it is aroused in active interactions between the self and the world, the personal and the
contextual. The act of expression is a process of clarifying and articulating emotion. As
“an organizing force” (Alexander, 1987, p. 221), the emotion of a person engaged in
creative acts often unconsciously, yet effectively, determines whether some materials feel
appropriate for expressing certain intended meanings. Thus, students’ emotional
engagements in their educative experiences mattered, not merely because it would help
them enjoy learning—although this is also important—but because it would be the
students’ arising emotions51 in their learning processes that would guide them to
accomplish an aesthetic expression. In this sense, I worried that having the option of
using the PowerPoint software would cost my students opportunities to experience
complicated emotions that needed to be articulated. As Alexander (1987) cautions, when
“there are easily implemented coordinated responses to a situation,” students’ emotions
could be “readily channeled and released without further care or significance” (p.220).

Moreover, it seriously concerned me that a PowerPoint-formatted presentation
usually urges its users to put their ideas within a given “design” that is “superimposed
upon materials that do not actually share in it” (Dewey, 1934, p.122). If the final format
of my students’ presentation was already “superimposed upon materials” from the start,

51 Dewey (1934) says “emotion…works to effect continuity of movement, singleness of
effect amid variety. It is selective of material and directive of its order and arrangement”
(p.72) “[T]he selective operation of materials so powerfully exercised by a development
emotion in a series of continued acts extracts matter from a multitude of objects,
numerically and spatially separated, and condenses what is abstracted in an object that is
an epitome of the values belonging to them all” (Dewey, 1934, p.70-71).
their activity would rarely become an act of aesthetic expression. In Deweyan (1934) acts of aesthetic expression, every phase and part is conserved in and integral to the whole; because doings and undergoings are relationally perceived in the development of the experience, we can anticipate the next movement and fulfill the development of the eventful experience. However, if there were already fixed templates to be filled in a given format, students would not have to perceive their evolving expression as related to their next possible moves. Although they would think about how they could effectively put their ideas on each slide, this would not include developing an emerging aesthetic form as they articulated the impulsion and the emotion they had felt in the course of their expression. Without the active interactions among abstract ideas and concrete materials, there would be no work of art that expresses its meanings and engages the potential audience in unifying qualitative experiences of the world through artistic expression.

By not allowing students to use PowerPoint in a typical way, I hoped that my students would struggle a little. I believed that students’ fear and unfamiliarity with artistic materials and not having the ready-made set of slides at hand would reveal even greater potential. The very uneasiness and difficulties they might feel toward the material would cause some necessary “turmoil that [would mark] the place where inner impulse and contact with environment, in fact or in idea, [would] meet and create a ferment” for expression (Dewey, 1934, p.69). It would also engage my students emotionally and challenge them to start a new journey to find different and hopefully better ways to express their inquiries. The students, if not totally frustrated and given up on the task, had to work hard to figure out how to express their abstract ideas and interest in the concrete,
sensible materials aesthetically formed. As Dewey, (1934) says, “[t]here is no art… without resistance, tension, and excitement” (p.166).

Having challenged my students by limiting the use of their most familiar tool for classroom presentations, I then had to make sure that they would be engaged in meaningful experiences of arts-mediated expression. However, I did not want to do this by giving my students any specific examples of model presentations. I was intentionally vague in telling my students what form they could choose for the presentation because I worried that providing such external examples would give them the wrong impression that I would prefer certain topics or forms of presentations over others; it might hinder, rather than promote, the students’ active engagements in aesthetic expression. The only example I gave them was that of their own first day experience, which I described in the Chapter Three. I reminded them of their process of creating the collective artwork and helped them to reflect on how they were capable of making a great work of art when they attended to their own experiences of introducing themselves to each other while playing with the materials and allowing the work to emerge in their creatively collaborative process. Referring to their own embodied experiences, I hoped they would begin to see that engaging in the process of connecting, questioning, playing, and creating—as in the title of the presentation requirement—would be the best ways for them to be successful in completing this assignment.

While I did not provide any model presentation examples for my students to refer to, I did create a process-centered assessment system that my students needed to follow to

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52 In a syllabus (See Appendix A), I wrote that they could choose whatever artistic materials they felt comfortable working with when expressing their inquiries—for example, painting, drawing, film, music, singing, playing, theatre, dancing, poetry, creative stories, collage, photography, music videos, etc.
meet their presentation requirement. First, each student needed to submit an in-process proposal by the day before her presentation along with documents that illustrated some of the creation processes of the expression in which she had been engaged. This proposal did not have to be final or neatly organized; requiring this step served to remind her that the presentation was not merely about its resulting product but more critically about the processes of connecting, questioning, playing and creating. The second step was for the student to give a class presentation; she would present her work in such a way as to engage her peers in learning and conversation. After the presentation, I let students write short comments on the presentation for the presenter so that she could refer to them in her reflection, the final step of the presentation process. Within a week of her presentation, the student who had just presented had to write a reflection paper on her experience of creating and presenting her arts-mediated presentation; this served as an opportunity to reflect on her individual as well as collective learning experiences and to consciously turn the various activities in which she had been involved during the creating processes into an aesthetic experience “clothed with meaning” (Dewey, 1934, p.62).

Each step of creating, performing, and reflecting on the presentation was assessed separately, although in close relation with one another. This assured my students that what mattered was not merely their artistic skills or the quality of the artwork demonstrated in their presentations; rather, what mattered was the meaning of their learning experiences through creation, performance, and reflection as a whole mediated with the artistic expression. By creating this three-step system that acknowledged the value of formative teaching and learning in a creative learning community, I wanted to allow my students to create their meanings of the entire process of the presentation
requirement in their own terms and at their own pace. As Alexander (1987) nicely expresses, Dewey’s theory of expression and an experience is not about “how a particular artist at a particular moment creates a particular work” (p.218). When appreciating a work of art, one may “not ‘get’ [its] meaning”; when creating one for herself, one may have hard time “to express [her]self either in a particular artistic medium or in the languages of the culture in general” (p.218). However, “the important fact is that we are trying to learn the work” and that we “can come to master a medium so that one can use it expressively” through our experiences, because “an experience” is “a gradual, developmental, or growing process of articulation” (p.218). The formative design of the assessment system of the presentations, in this sense, was a medium of my expression of acknowledging the potentiality of my students’ gradual growth in and beyond the “space-time” (Dewey, 1934, p.214) of my class—the growth that was mediated by continuous experiences of being expressive of their lived meanings and making sense of what is expressed in the world. I wanted them to see that they would be “constantly learning the sense of the world,” and that “they have an impulsion toward experiencing the world with meaning and value” (Alexander, 1987, p.218).

**Rhythmic Dialogue as a Medium: Curricular Expression in the Making**

The articulated meanings of students’ arts-mediated aesthetic expressions and their demonstration of learning from these expressions were embedded in the process-centered assessment system for this assignment. By creating three phases in the assignment structure, I made it explicit that creating an arts-mediated presentation was not itself a purpose, but a medium through which students would be engaged in a)
expressing their inquiries in concrete materials, b) sharing the resulting works with others for collective learning, and c) making the creating and sharing processes an opportunity to learn about teaching and learning multicultural education in a creative learning community. However, in order to make sure that my students were engaged in the whole process of learning through these multiple presentation requirements, I needed to do more than merely check each student’s presentation schedule and grade the proposals and reflections they turned in. I needed to have constant dialogues with each of my students throughout their engagements in the three-step process. In fact, I had decided not to give specific examples or guidelines in the first place because I thought having individualized conversations with each of my students during the process would be more effective for the kind of learning I wanted to facilitate. Upon reflection, I realized that I had attempted to facilitate my students’ aesthetic experiences by enhancing “rhythms”—which Dewey (1934) says are a critical characteristic of aesthetic experiences and acts and objects of expression—not only in each individual student’s formative learning processes through the requirements but also in the class throughout the semester. In this way, my students and I participated in constantly and rhythmically re-creating the curriculum through various creative presentations.

Dialogues about the presentations thus began early in the semester. In the third week, a week before the first presentation, I had a personal conference with every one of

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The student presentations began in the fourth week of the semester. In the first three weeks, I tried to give my students a sense of the qualities I wanted to see in their presentations by embedding them in class activities and discussions I led—including the first day activity I discussed in Chapter Three. In addition, I tried to embed the principles of the course that were also key to the presentation throughout the semester by requiring my students to post their wonder-full questions (see Appendix A) before class on the online discussion board and asking them to reflect on these inquiries during class
my students. During this ten-minute individual conversation, I had opportunities to learn about each individual student’s initial thoughts and concerns about the presentation requirement along with other general reactions to the course. This initial conversation helped me develop individualized relationships with my students. Additionally, these conferences provided the opportunity for me to answer some of their questions and assure them that I could be consulted when they needed my help in their learning through the presentation experiences. Learning about individual students’ different backgrounds, interests, concerns, etc. early on was also useful in that I came to have a better sense of how and when I might need to check in with them during their presentation processes. After the initial conversation in our personal conference, I followed up with the individual students as their presentations came up throughout the semester. For example, a week before a student’s presentation, I would have her stay after class to discuss how her creating processes had been going and determine if she needed any help from me. If she seemed to be lost, I would try to check in with her more frequently, and we would have had additional conversations via email and/or in person until she submitted the in-process proposal for her presentation.

In these processes, I encountered various challenges my students faced in different phases of their work, and I responded to them in different ways, reflecting their varied needs. Some students struggled in the initial stage, finding it difficult to choose a discussion. Through these various efforts, I attempted to assure them that the class would be a safe place to attend to, share, and pursue their own curiosity. While some students struggled with this assignment and needed a lot of extra guidance from me, there were also those who created great works of creative expression without much help in the process. For example, Iren created a new song from a combination of a selection of songs from different linguistic cultures that expressed her multi-lingual identity; Rena drew realistic portraits of a few multiracial couples among her close
topic of their interest, and expressed their frustration in knowing how and where to start with the project. These students seemed to be more interested in finding out what subjects the instructor (me) might like and approve of as important to present. In response to these concerns, I assured them that any topic would be accepted if they found it worth exploring. In order to get them started, I asked them to think about what their interests were (personal and professional), which textbooks they found interesting to read, whether there were any stories in the book or in class conversation that stood out to them, whether they had any relevant experiences related to the topics of the class, and so on. What I tried to express through these questions was that the freedom I gave to them to choose any topic did not mean that they should start from nowhere; rather it was meant to urge them to pay more attention to their situatedness in the world, make various connections to their experiences and to be more aware of their emotional reactions to their surroundings. In short, the topics of their presentations were to be found in the forms of their impulsions and emotional reactions to the world.

In this sense, what I found lacking in these students was not their creativity or insight; rather it was the trust in themselves as creative sense makers. They seemed to fear that their interests might be seen as inappropriate or trivial. This sense of fear seems relevant when thinking about the top-down curriculum structure in the standardized educational system that they grew up in, and the culture of academia that often urges students to doubt rather than trust their senses and perceptions in learning (Elbow, 1998). By encouraging these students to tell me even the smallest ideas they found interesting or friends; and William performed a monologue expressing his willingness to fight the stereotypes he faced as a minority student; and so on. (Each student in these examples is a composite student characterization from my experience of teaching ME.)
puzzling in class and by acknowledging such interests as legitimate and potentially meaningful impulsions, I tried to help them redeem their trust in their own senses and perceptions\textsuperscript{55} of their lived experiences. Such trust would be the substratum of their act of aesthetic expression.

Other students had a better sense of their interests in the creating stage, yet struggled to embody what it meant to \textit{play} with their ideas as well as with the concrete materials available to them in an act of expression; this made it difficult for them to \textit{create} a unique arts-mediated work and learning experience. Although these students knew which topics they were interested in, they seemed uncomfortable with allowing themselves to take a creative journey and waiting to see where it would lead, allowing their initial impulsion and emotion to be articulated in the creating process. Unfortunately, they rather tended to rush to state the meaning they wanted to deliver in their presentation too quickly, discharging the “energy once aroused” (Dewey, 1934, p.163) too easily. As a result, these students tended to (re)present what they already knew or to introduce to the class what other people had already created, while losing opportunities to create new learning experiences for themselves as well as their peers.

For example, when a student, Susan,\textsuperscript{56} first shared her initial thoughts on her project, she mostly talked about doing an engaging activity which she had experienced

\textsuperscript{55} According to Merelau-Ponty (1968), when perceiving and making sense of what is expressed (always intertwined with what is yet to be expressed), human beings have a perceptual faith that “our vision goes to the things themselves” (p.28) in our perceptual world. Although the perceptual faith is “faith…and not knowledge” (p.28) and such “naive confidence” tends to be “undermine[d]” by “the variance from our own of other perspectives” that “provokes the reflective awareness that one’s own perspective is…somehow inadequate” (Dillon, 1997, p.157), we have to have the perceptual faith in order “to proceed [and] live” (Primozic, 2001, p.48).

\textsuperscript{56} Composite student characterization derived from teaching experiences of ME.
before and found inspiring. I knew that her topic for the presentation—ignorance—was an important one to explore in my class, but her plan did not include her own active engagement in re-making, re-organizing, and/or re-creating the activities. That is, her intended materials for the presentation were not transformed into a medium for expressing what she wanted to communicate through them; rather, she just wanted to deliver the activity she had enjoyed as it was, without adding her unique interpretive response to it.

In the dialogues with Susan over several emails and in person, I reminded her of the title of the assignment and emphasized that she needed to immerse herself in the process of creation by actively playing with relevant materials and creating new experiences/objects. While acknowledging her interest in the activity she had done, I urged her to consider re-creating some of the sentences she was going to read during the activity and to find ways to incorporate some artistic materials in the activity by changing, adapting, playing, and creating to uncover her own version of the activity. At first, she expressed frustration due to her unfamiliarity with this kind of work, but gradually, she began to imagine how she could become more active in expressing her own perspective and identifying the artistic media she wanted to employ in order to do so.

Along the way, Susan decided to change her topic so that her presentation resonated on a more personal level; she also proposed creating a relevant painting, although she expressed her incompetency in artistic expression. Responding to her new plan, I encouraged her to forget, at least for the time being, the fact that she was presenting her painting and to focus on expressing her ideas by playing with artistic materials of her choice, as if no one would see it. In this way, I hoped that she could
“accumulat[e]” the “energy once aroused” at the beginning of her experience throughout the making process in “apposition” to her desire to discharge it without seeking its development into an aesthetic expression (Dewey, 1934, p.163).

Susan ended up presenting on the kind of a teacher she wanted to become along with the life stories that formed her identity as a minority and would affect her ways of teaching her (future) students from diverse cultural backgrounds; she then shared a small painting of the kind of a school she wanted to create. In her new presentation, I could see that Susan had begun to perceive the activity she wanted to present at first in relation to what it truly meant to her. Her initial impulsion seemed to become more articulate in her new presentation plan. That is, the notion of ignorance must be important to her because the discrimination she experienced as a minority with little privilege was what made her more consciously want to become the kind of teacher who was sensitive to diversity in her classroom. I could see the quality of aesthetic perception growing from the creating processes of the presentation. In the end, she created a better developed presentation in which “[t]he consequences undergone because of doing [were] incorporated as the meaning of subsequent doing” (Dewey, 1934, p.65); this was possible because she began to “perceive” the “relation between [her] doing and undergoing”, the “act and its meaning”, and the “activities and their consequences” (p.65).

To be honest, however, hers was not the best presentation; I wished that she would have combined the two aspects of her presentation—her life stories with her envisioning of herself as a future educator and the image of her dream school—more closely in a unifying work of her expression. I also wished that she would have played more with her painting materials so that she could have developed the qualities of her
thoughts by seeking expression in a richer way. But I was glad that she attempted to push herself even that far by taking risks of revealing her own perspectives in an artistic expression, which she had said was not her strong suit.

Facilitating learning for these students like Susan was challenging to me. Some might say that I should have pushed her even further so that she could have created a painting of much better quality. I have sometimes wondered the same. However, being closely engaged in dialogue with her throughout her creating process, I learned to understand that creating and presenting even the poor painting was a truly big challenge to her. As I talked with her and the other students who struggled with the playing and creating aspects of the presentation to various degrees, I realized that I had to admit that perhaps not all the students would be able to perceive the full meaning of aesthetic expression to the extent that I would have liked them to; it would take more time than a single semester for some students to grasp and embody this concept.

Thus, instead of criticizing their processes of creating presentations not aesthetically expressive enough, I chose to start by encouraging my students by pointing out what they were already doing well, for example, connecting to a text, class conversation, and/or their experiences. Even in cases in which students used artistic materials relevant to their topics—such as movie clips, pictures, songs, cultural artifacts, dance, etc.—without re-making the materials into a new unifying object or a performance in which “the qualitative pervasive whole is carried” by its “medium” (p.203), I would first acknowledge their attempts to employ some artistic materials in their projects. Then, while trying not to deliver my comments in such a way that might impose on the students, I tried to prompt their thinking. I intended my questions to help
students develop, complicate, and widen their ideas further and to challenge them to start imagining how they might re-organize and re-create what they already had by changing, adjusting, adding, and combining their ideas as well as materials so as to show more of their own perspectives and lived meanings.

In doing this, I attempted to express the potentiality of each of the student’s work by encouraging and challenging their processes. Having dialogues, instead of directly stating my ideas or reminding them of the kind of ideal work I wanted from them, required more energy from me because I needed to attend to their words and works more closely. I actively tried to make sense of their thinking in progress in order to connect their ideas and question with what would best facilitate the development of their works toward a complete experience. I played with the various possible paths I could suggest them to explore and created sets of questions or comments that I thought would prompt them to further in their acts of expressions. This required me to try to look more deeply at the assumptions students made in their proposed work and those I made when responding to their proposals. I often found myself re-writing an email to my students a few times before sending it because I came to realize that I was unconsciously assuming that I knew how to make their presentations better than they did; I kept reminding myself that I needed to pose questions, rather than answers, through which they could engage themselves in deeper inquiries and expression. I wanted them to use their emotional reactions to these questions to steer themselves to a more complete aesthetic expression. At the same time, I needed to allow them to linger in a creative “space-time” (Dewey, 1934, p.214) where their own ideas and forms of presentation would emerge gradually,
and to be open to what they would bring to the classroom beyond my expectations and imagination.

The conversations with my students that I have described so far often happened before they turned in their in-process proposals, while some, depending on the progress of their creative works, took place even after they submitted the proposals. Most of the students, when submitting their proposals a day—exactly 24 hours—before the class in which their presentations were scheduled, were already in the process of transferring themselves to the next stage of the presentation experience. Because my students were in between two different activities on the final day before the presentation—creating art-mediated works of expression and presenting them in class—the dialogues that I had with my students reflected this in-betweenness. That is, I helped them be ready to release the energies they had conserved in the creating process on the day of their presentations.

In this sense, I found that the dialogues I had with my students in this shifting period could contribute to creating an aesthetic rhythm in their three-stepped presentation experience by serving as a way to create “suspense and pause” in the development of an aesthetic learning experience (Dewey, 1934, p.163). According to Dewey (1934), there is a “rhythm and expression”, when “energy once aroused…move[s] in an ordered relation of accumulation, apposition, suspense and pause, toward final consummation of an experience” (p.163). Such “suspense and pause” in the process seemed critical in that the “succession” of the activities in which students participated—creating the arts-mediated work, presenting it, and writing a reflection paper on such experiences—“[was] punctuated and made a rhythm by the existence of intervals, periods in which one phase is ceasing and the other is inchoate and preparing” (p. 58). Such intervals, required of my
students via the writing of their in-process proposals with supporting documents the day before their presentation, were “where meaning [was] generated” (Macintyre Latta, 2013, p.35)—the meaning of their creating experiences in reference to their presentation as well as their learning through the three-stepped requirement as a whole.

In cases in which students simply listed in their proposal what they were going to do during the presentation, I asked them to share their creating experiences and their meanings in a more articulate way. This served to help them become more aware of their own initial interests and intentions as well as of the joys and challenges they experienced in the creative process, so that they could better communicate the meanings of their creative experiences to their peers during their presentation. In addition, I would also encourage my students to think about some questions they were going to ask their peers during the presentation in order to engage them in more meaningful conversation. I wanted them to be better prepared to move on to the next transformative experience of their presentation, in which they would need to make their own creative work a medium of collective learning with their peers.

In the dialogues with my students throughout this shifting process, I learned that many of my students were unfamiliar with posing questions that could engage their peers in aesthetic learning. Even those students who created great aesthetic expressions often struggled to come up with thought-provoking questions with which to engage their peers in meaningful conversations during the presentations. The questions the students

57 Because of the limited amount of time—24 hours—which we had between the proposal submission and presentation, I particularly required the students to email me the in-process proposal and supporting documents. In this way, I could respond to their proposals quickly and, when necessary, have additional conversations with them regarding the proposal and the presentation.
proposed were often about either checking their peers’ previous expectations and understandings concerning some relevant facts or asking them to simply identify or compare objects of the presentations. For example, a student, April⁵⁸, who created a short video work expressing her multi-cultured identity, proposed asking her peers to guess which culture each sequence of the video represented. While acknowledging her intention to talk about the cultural differences in different scenes, I had to urge her to re-think her question in a way that would allow more than one right answer; I also told her to come up with the kinds of questions that could invite her peers to attend more closely to the presented work and share their own stories and perspectives in relation to the short video. While assisting the students like April, I realized that their difficulties in asking quality aesthetic questions may stem from the learning experiences they had long enacted in schools and universities in which they were often forced to check and identify facts quickly and to provide the right answer to questions instead of taking time to look and listen closely and pose observant and imaginative questions.

After this first reflective experience, individual students moved to another phase of ‘doing’, that is, presenting their work and engaging others in collective learning. During the presentations, I did not interrupt or evaluate the students, although I sometimes urged the rest of the class to come up to the front of the room to better appreciate the work or to ask more questions of the presenter. When time allowed, I asked the presenter few questions so that she could reveal the creative process of her expression and its challenge in more detail, hoping to enhance the rest of the students’

⁵⁸ Composite student characterization derived from teaching experiences of ME.
understanding of her work in progress. Each presenter’s experience of presenting her work concluded with receiving comments on small slips of paper from their peers.

Due to the practical limits of time, experience, and the circumstance each of the students and I had in the process of our dialogues, some of the students still failed to effectively present their creative work and mediate collective learning via engaging their peers in aesthetic experiences. However, even when a student failed to give an ideal presentation, it was not yet a failure; it was only one of many phases of the whole presentation experience and the meaning of the seemingly failed presentation could still be truly explored in the next phase. After all, what mattered in learning was not whether a student succeeded or failed in an activity; it was rather what meaning she would make out of it in reference to the other relevant experiences as well as to her growth through them as a whole. I hoped that reading comments from their fellow classmates could provide my students with the opportunity to linger in the second “resting place in experience” that would work as a time for “an undergoing in which [the consequences of prior doing] is absorbed and taken home” (Dewey, 1934, p.58) by, once again, releasing the energies they conserved during their presentations. In this way, they would be able to rhythmically move forward to writing a reflection paper.

The dialogues between me and my students did not end after their presentations, either. First, their reflection papers helped me learn about the meanings each student came to create throughout the presentation experience. Reading their reflections reminded me repeatedly of the importance of acknowledging learning in a formative sense. As Dewey (1934) says, “[e]very closure is an awakening, and every awakening settles something” (p.176). As I read one of my students’ reflections I came to a deeper
understanding of what this quote meant. Robin had a difficult time engaging his peers in conversation during his presentation due to his unintentional ignorance of class issues. Although his musical composition vividly expressed his unexpectedly surprising experience of traveling across the States, his questions to the class afterwards did not reflect people’s different socio-economical differences; the class conversation became awkward. In a way, I was also responsible for his unsatisfying experience, because I was not sensitive enough to point out the potential risk his work and discussion questions might present in the previous dialogues I had with him. However, this very unsatisfying experience seemed to prompt Robin to seriously reflect on his own background and the cultural, racial, and socio-economical privilege he had had and yet had been previously unaware of. Instead of feeling simply unhappy about his classmates’ unfavorable reactions, he started digging deeper and began to understand what his previous life experiences might mean and how he wanted to move forward with the lesson he learned from this experience. I was very glad to see this self-awareness in his reflection and encouraged him to continue. In addition, I also mentioned the significance of asking the kinds of questions that could facilitate conversations rather than impeding them. For him, the “closure” of his presentation was “an awakening” and such “awakening settles” something, which, for Robin, was an enhanced understanding of diversity.

When crafting my response to the students’ reflection papers, I knew that I would not receive further responses from them after the whole process of the presentation requirement was completed. However, I hoped that my comments would be responded to in the future, when they had another chance to present an arts-mediated work at the end

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59 Composite student characterization derived from teaching experiences of ME.
of the semester, and, ultimately, when they create and enact their own curriculum in their future classrooms. Particularly concerned with extending the potential connection of this presentation experience to my students’ future careers, I responded to each reflection paper in such a way as to help the students reflect not only on their creating experiences but also on the ways they engaged their peers through the presentation.

Writing the reflection paper and receiving my final comments in this sense allowed my students to have “final consummation” (Dewey, 1934, p.163) of the presentation experience as a whole. Throughout the three-phased processes, my students experienced energy that was aroused, conserved, released, and consummated through experiencing and overcoming various resistances in the process. They were immersed in doings while facing “resistance” that “accumulates energy until release and expansion ensue” in the next doings (p.161); in between, the students experienced “the moment of reversal, an intervals, a pause” (p. 161) while making sense of the meanings of the doings and transferring their modes of involvements in a renewed manner for the further development. I tried to maintain continuous dialogues with each student throughout her unique development of an act of aesthetic expression as a way to facilitate an aesthetic rhythm in and in-between the phases she underwent in the whole process of the presentation experience.

Furthermore, I found that such dialogue was also critical for sustaining a creative learning community in my classroom because it was through it that I could make sure that the students’ uniquely individualized presentations offered further collective learning in the classroom. According to Dewey (1934), “rhythm…is ordered variation of changes. When there is a uniformly even flow, with no variations of intensity or speed, there is no
rhythm” (p.160). In this sense, the process-centered assessment system provided me and my students with the necessary order for our experiences; the individualized dialogues I tried to facilitate to intensify my students’ uniquely creative and expressive responses to their learning in my class created the “variation of changes” (p.160) of the systemic order. In our very dynamic relations throughout each student’s presentation experience, there was rhythm.

However, the “ordered variation of changes” would not have mattered much had I been unable to envision a creative learning community in the classroom and to articulate the role and the significance of having continuous arts-mediated presentations in relation to the educational purpose of sustaining such a community throughout the semester. Dewey (1934) emphasizes the relationships of parts and the whole in rhythm stating that there is “rhythm when variations are…placed” and “change…has its definite place in a larger whole” (p.160). In this sense, each of the student presentations was not “a variation in a single feature,” for instance, of a topic or an artistic form; each was “a modulation of the entire pervasive and unifying qualitative substratum” (p.161) that is, in the case of my ME course, “a modulation” of the qualities pervasive in my effort to create and sustain a creative learning community in my classroom.

In terms of the flow of the semester, because every student had an individualized schedule for his or her presentation and thus different due dates for the proposal and follow-up reflection, I was always engaged in individual dialogues with at least a few students throughout the semester. This was also true for the class as a whole. Throughout the semester there were always some students who were actively making connections with their learning in order to find the right topic for their presentation, scratching their
ideas on papers or in other forms to make sense of their own creating processes, expressing their inquiries in public and inviting their peers to have conversations mediated by their creative works, and trying to make sense of their learning process from the beginning to the end of this whole presentation experience. The class as a whole was continuously involved in dialogues at various levels throughout the semester, mediated by the students’ creative expressions. Having experienced this process and witnessed it through the works of others, my students came to better understand that going through this presentation process meant experiencing doings and undergoings in perception and engaging in various dialogues with themselves and others.

All of these processes were constantly and rhythmically forming and informing the learning experiences of the students throughout the semester, folding, unfolding and folding back upon the students’ ongoing meaning making experiences. As a creative learning community, recurring “relationships” were found in each student’s presentation as a whole. Each presentation presented in some degree the relationship created in the students’ transformative experiences where they made the sense making of themselves in continual interaction with others and the world a \textit{medium} of teaching and learning. Each presentation that repeatedly revealed such relationships was “novel as well as a reminder” (Dewey, 1934, p. 176). It was “novel” in the way each student made sense of his or her experience and it was, at the same time, “a reminder” that he or she had been a part of a creative learning community who was already capable of sensing, making sense, and expressing and communicating aesthetically with other creative learners. In such rhythmic movements of individual presentations, each student’s expressive work embodying their connections, questions, playing, and creation contributed to the course’s
ever-renewing curriculum; a creative learning community, in this sense, was always in the making through the rhythmic dialogues among students and the instructor over the course of the constant (re)imagining of the (re)birth of meanings through aesthetic expression, overcoming the separation between old and new, self and the world, theory and practice, and teaching and learning.

**Connect / Question / Play / Create Presentation:**

**Teaching and Learning through Arts-Mediated Aesthetic Expression**

The last week of my ME course was dedicated to an exhibition and performance by all the students in the classroom. The students brought another arts-mediated work that expressed their inquiries and chose either to exhibit their work or to give a 10-minute performance of some sort—similar to the presentations during the semester. Most of class time was spent appreciating each other’s works and performances and having individual conversations about them. The students walked across the classroom, asking questions of their peers about the presented works and sharing their thoughts. The students talked and laughed with each other, but there was an atmosphere of seriousness which I believe was possible because of the semester-long experience of learning from each other’s works of aesthetic expression.

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I did not require my students to follow the same three-stepped process for their final work for the exhibition and performance because of the time limit and their heavy workload toward the end of the semester. But I had them write their initial plans during the class a few weeks before the end of the semester and followed up individually with those who seemed lost. Although they did not have to write a paper specifically on this experience, they could still write about it if they wanted to do so, because they had to turn in a final reflection paper at the end of the semester about their learning in my course as a whole.
During the performance time set aside on the last day of the class, one of my students, Peter⁶¹, came up to the front of the classroom to give a singing performance. I was quite surprised by his decision because he had been a rather quiet student throughout the semester. But I remembered that many of his peers found his class presentation earlier in the semester very interesting. He had created a collage with pictures selected from various women’s magazines; he asked his classmates to examine them closely without offering any explanations. In time, the students realized how the appearances of the women on the collage were adjusted so as to serve as idealized images of female bodies and how the women in the pictures were presented in traditionally fixed female roles. Mediated by his interesting work, the students had a great conversation about sexism, discrimination, and gender privilege and how a society (re)produces them through media and advertisement.

While my students and I were recalling these memorable learning experiences, Peter started to sing a song he had written and composed. His song pleasantly surprised many of us because it was about his experience of creating the presentation he gave during the semester; his lyrics described his journey from the vague impulses felt in relation to the presentation at first, his navigation and exploration of potential materials while at a store, his sense making through playing with the pictures from magazines, and finally to his unexpected yet valuable learning about society in such a creating process. I felt that many of my students who went through similar creative processes for their presentations could relate not only to the song but also to his expressive act of singing.

⁶¹ Composite student characterization derived from teaching experiences of ME.
My students and I smiled even wider while listening to Peter’s singing voice—it turned out that he was not that good at singing, and often sang out of tune! It was evident that he did not choose to sing a song because he wanted to show off his singing talent; rather, he took the risk of singing off key in order to share his poetic expressions about his learning experiences. I was glad because it seemed to indicate that my students and I had gradually built a safe learning community in the classroom where we could allow ourselves to be creative and expressive in front of others in order to learn individually and collectively.

The performance itself in addition to the lyrics he wrote was a reflection of his learning experience. It was also the perfect summary of the semester-long arts-mediated presentations of all the students as a whole—a summary not in the sense of a statement which “lead[s] to an experience”, but in the sense of expression which “constitutes experience” (Dewey, 1934, p.88). That is, through Peter’s performance, a consummation of his aesthetic experience, my students and I could experience the qualities and makings present in the kind of creative learning community we had sought to build together. Peter was implicitly and probably unconsciously expressing the web of the connections which had been initiated at the beginning of the semester across the classroom through a strand of colorful yarn (see Chapter Three) and had been complicated and thickened ever since especially through the arts-mediated aesthetic expressions present in the classroom.

Furthermore, Peter’s singing voice was also “novel”, and, at the same time, a final

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62 Peter’s singing performance—his aesthetic, and concomitantly, bodily and communal, expression—mediated students’ individual and collective learning experiences throughout the semester as those to be folded back upon themselves so as to reflect on the meanings of such experiences. In Chapter Five, I refer to Merleau-Ponty’s (1968) notion of “flesh” in order to describe this phenomenon of complicated and deepened meanings mediated by acts of expression; I give expression to such learning as thickened flesh.
“reminder” (Dewey, 1934, p.176) of the voices of the ME’s creative learning community that had become deeply resonant, especially in the last month of the semester leading up to the exhibition and performance week. In the next chapter, I finally explore the meanings of these resonating and intertwining voices—the voices Peter’s performance creatively reminded me and my students of—in relation to a curriculum of engaging my students in collaboratively performing a staged reading of *The Laramie Project* and experiencing lived meaning of communal expression in the classroom.
CHAPTER 5

COMMUNAL EXPRESSION THROUGH ENACTING THE LARAMIE PROJECT: INTERTWINING VOICES OF CREATIVE LEARNING COMMUNITIES

As the end of the semester approached, my students had entered the ME classroom many times, constantly renewing their understandings of themselves, others, and the world. Students had presented their unique, arts-mediated ways of responding to the world by incorporating and connecting multicultural education to their experiences in and beyond the classroom. They had contributed to the co-creation of the course curriculum through these aesthetic expressions. While I tried to instill within the course experience the presence and manifestation of my students’ bodily expressions intertwined within their aesthetic expressions—as explored in Chapters Three and Four—I was aware that underneath the teaching and learning practices within my course was the students’ (and my own) fundamental phenomenological-ontological condition of being, intertwined with others’ ways of being in a human community. Born into a world where others were always already present in our perception of ourselves and the world, my students and I entered the classroom with our co-existence already working “at the most primordial level,” our entwined perception engaged in “the phenomenal world” that is “a communal world” (Dillon, 1997, p.115). In such a communal world where perception is entwined, the sensible experiences of beings—self and others—were increasingly experienced in non-dualistic ways.
This chapter investigates the potential meanings of the communal expression embedded in my teaching which was already present from the beginning of the semester and yet became more tangible, audible, and visible toward the end of the semester. This deepening awareness occurred most particularly through my curricular enactment drawn from *The Laramie Project (TLP)* (Kaufman & Tectonic Theater Project, 2001), which my students read as the final textbook of the course. *TLP* is a script written based on interviews with the people of Laramie, Wyoming, and journal entries by members of Tectonic Theatre Company and other found texts. These interviews, journal entries, and other texts respond to the tragic death of a young gay man murdered in the town of Laramie in 1998. *TLP* offered me and my students educative opportunities to live the potential meanings of the presence of communal expression in and beyond the classroom. Not only could we have an opportunity to express what it might be like to live in the town of Laramie around the time of such a tragic event, but through *TLP* we could also experience the lived learning community we had been co-creating and substantively developing throughout the semester, making sense of various experiences—connecting individual and collective meanings, bridging the past and the future, and extending to communities in and out of the classroom. Through *TLP*, my students and I could imagine and envision a kind of community where various expressive voices resonate, intertwine, and are listened to while multiplying meanings of living, learning, and communicating these voices through a culminating collaborative performance.

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63 The other three required books included: *We can’t teach what we don’t know* by Garry Howard (2006); *Of borders and dreams* by Chris Carger (1996); and *Kwanzaa and me* by Vivian Paley (1996).
In this chapter, I reflect primarily on the preparation processes and performances presented specifically in the 75-minute, twice-a-week sections I taught in the spring of 2012. While the curriculum created for teaching *TLP* in the fall of 2011 was very similar to that of the spring of 2012, differences in class schedule required a different strategy for grouping students for their culminating performances.\(^{64}\) As I will discuss in more detail later, in the spring 2012 semester, I decided to have *two* performing groups of students so that each group could perform in each session over the course of a week.

In reflecting on my practices and theorizing the meanings of teaching and learning *TLP*, I turn mainly to Merleau-Ponty’s (1968; 1993b) later philosophy of phenomenological ontology. Although Melreau-Ponty does not directly explore learning but rather attempts to express our perceptual experiences as intertwined with others at a primordial level, he offers deep insights with such theoretical notions as *écart*, flesh, and reversibility. I found it particularly crucial to understand that which he calls *écart* in order to understand learning as thickening flesh through reversible relations among self and others in (and beyond) classroom communities.

According to Merleau-Ponty (1968), *écart*—that is “the subtle differentiation in experience that is not an opposition” (Hass, 2008, p.129)—is what makes perception possible through the reversal of our roles as the seer and the seen in a primordial sense. Due to the very existence of *écart* in our way of being and perceiving, subject and object, being in-itself and for-itself, and self and other cannot overlap in our perception with one

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\(^{64}\) The fall section was a three-hour, once-a-week evening class. The fall section allowed me to engage my students in performing *TLP* in one session as a one big group. The sections I taught in spring did not allow me to do the same due to the limited time period in each session. Due to the complex difference among the sessions in between sections in the two semesters, I decide to share my reflections of primarily my spring sections in this chapter.
another completely—for instance, “we cannot see ourselves exactly as Others see us” (Dillon, 1997, p.167); yet they are not in opposition with each other, either. Rather, such “constitutive difference” “is what opens…the seer to the seen” (Hass, 2008, p.129); the difference, or gap, “is an opening that isn’t so severe that the two aspects are divorced from one another”, but rather is subtle to the extent of being in “separation-in-relation” (p.129). This subtle difference offers, rather than hinders, opportunities to learn and express ever-complicating meanings of living together in the in/visible, in/tangible, and silent/sonorous world.

Understanding écart as this “difference-spacing-openness” (Hass, 2008, p.137) helps us to envision the reversibility in our perceptual experience. “Reversibility is the overlapping perceptual relation that folds around écart—the ‘intertwining’ or ‘cohesion’ of what is radically different” (p.137). Around the subtle gap, I perceive by reversing the relations as self and other.65 My understanding of myself and others is inevitably interdependent and intertwined. As my ontological way of being is based upon this intertwined perceptual experience of the phenomenal world, my way of learning, enhanced understanding of the phenomenal world consisting of self and various others, cannot be understood as a purely independently individual matter. Teaching and learning that necessarily includes perceptual experiences of the communal world, then, needs to be understood not as a matter of gaining knowledge or experience of independent self; rather it needs to be considered as consciously enhanced intertwining experiences of thickening

65 This does not make Merleau-Ponty’s (1968) understanding of self and other dualistic. Because I cannot be outside myself and “I am always on the same side of my body” (p.148) our understandings of others are still in our perception and cannot be completely objective.
“flesh” because “the sensual experience of écart and reversibility are lived in the flesh” (p.137).

Flesh is “an element…the concrete emblem of a general manner of being” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.147). While “flesh” is not a clear-cut notion and expresses at least three main aspects of being—“carnality[,]…the reversibility relation, and […] a basic element of being” (Hass, 2008, p.140)—Merleau-Ponty (1968) provides theoretical languages with which to express my efforts to encourage and facilitate students’ learning through the active communal expression and engagements in classrooms enacted by consciously co-creating a curriculum that provided various subtle gaps between self and others and more complicated reversible relations among them. Reversible relations here refers to “the weird intertwining…of [self and others who] are different but not opposite” (Hass, 2008, p.139); or the reflexivity of those who are in the distance, yet, concomitantly, in proximity because “the proximity… folds around” the gap, or écart. (p.139). In my curricular enactment, I envisioned learning as flesh thickened through enhanced perception because “perception is the flesh touching-seeing-feeling itself” (Dillon, 1997, p.170). I envisioned the teaching and learning of TLP as a practice of thickening flesh through its continuous “touching-seeing-feeling [of] itself,” (p.170) that is, enhancing “mutual envelopment of living experience” “ma[de] possible” by écart and the reversibility in interwoven perceptions (Hass, 2008, p.129) among my students and various others in and beyond my classroom.

In retrospect, the genesis of my envisioning of this curricular path is interesting because it was within an educational scholars’ community that I found the seed for my exciting and unexpected journey teaching TLP. In the spring of 2011, as I was actively
envisioning my teaching that would begin the following semester, I happened to attend a conference session entitled “Arts-Based Education Research as Incitement, Invitation, and Action: Research from Anthropology, Educational Philosophy, Theater, and Social Foundations” at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). In the session, I was introduced to an “ethno-drama,” which I had never heard of previously. An ethno-drama, as Saldaña (2005) writes, is “the written script, [and] consists of dramatized, significant selections of narrative collected through interviews, participant observation field notes, journal entries, and/or print and media artifacts such as diaries, television broadcasts, newspaper articles, and court proceedings. Simply put, [it] is dramatizing the data” (p.1-2).

One of the presenters of the AERA session asked for a few volunteers from the audience and had them read selections from an ethno-drama script. I was very impressed by the liveliness of the stories read aloud; even though the volunteer readers might have never read or practiced the scripts out loud before and the reading lasted only a few minutes, their voices immediately gave me some sense of the script. Listening to their reading, I began to feel some of the flowing emotions, rhythms, tensions, and relationships among the characters. As a result, some of the educational concepts and notions dealt with in the script suddenly felt three-dimensional. Although the presenter admitted that these types of texts would not work in every educational and research context, I felt that—if I could find the right script—it might work well within my upcoming ME course because I wanted to create a curriculum with which the meaning of

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66 Other terms found in literature for this type of research include “ethnographic drama,” “narradrama,” “docudrama,” “verbatim theatre,” and others. (Saldaña, 2005, p.34).
living multiculturally could be expressed and communicated with my students emotionally, intellectually, and aesthetically all at once.

Responding to my interest in this genre of research as a potential course textbook, one of my colleagues recommended reading *TLP*, which I had never heard of before. A few days later when the ordered copy of *TLP* arrived, I was, at first, just going to skim through it to get an initial sense of what it was about. However, the script unexpectedly yet completely fascinated me. I could not put it down even for a moment until I had read it from cover to cover. The actual event the text responded to was extremely sad, and some views expressed concerning homosexuality felt repulsive. And yet, powerful voices of hope were also represented.

I decided to read the script with my future ME students for a few reasons. First, I strongly believed that *TLP* would be a great book to read in my course because it touched on the critical issues of hate crimes and discrimination against homosexuals (and other minorities) relevant to the theme of multicultural education. I felt that the fact that the script, a theatrically written form of research, was based on real people’s verbatim words and thoughts regarding their experiences would be effective for my students. The script’s grounding in nonfiction would present my students (who were mostly white, middle-class, and heterosexual) from having the “luxury of ignorance” of the sometimes-horrifying realities of “those people whom [dominant groups] define as ‘the other’” (Howard, 2006, p.59)—the luxury which “is not available to members of marginalized groups” (p.59-60).

Nonetheless, the fact that the script was not a fictional representation of the event and the relevance of its themes to my course were not the only reasons I chose *TLP* over
other textbooks. Rather, and more critically, I valued the way those issues and real life stories were presented, and more precisely, expressed in *TLP*. As a theater script of ethno-drama, *TLP* consists of multiple series of what its playwrights call ‘moments’ (instead of scenes), in which the characters (mostly the real people of Laramie and the members of the Tectonic Theater Company) talked about their unique yet shared experiences of living in Laramie before, during, and after the event unfolded. Their words/voices reveal a wide variety of perspectives and responses. Encountering the diverse views presented in the script regarding the town of Laramie and the tragic event was effective not only because of its variedness but also because of the very way the perspectives were presented and communicated in the form of the theater script.

First, the script chose to show various views in a way that did not impose upon the readers. Instead of forcing readers to accept certain views, it presented various individuals’ perspectives through their interviews. In this way, it created a “space-time” (Dewey, 1934, p.214) throughout the reading where the readers could linger and navigate the meaning of such diversity in sense making, rather than feeling lectured to and directed as to how to respond to the subject being discussed. I believed this approach would be particularly helpful for those students who might consider the topic—homosexuality—against their religious beliefs. While no hate crime should be tolerated for any reason, I believed some students might need more room to safely navigate the issue so that they were not pushed to come up with immediate solutions regarding how to support their future students who may not be heterosexual. They would first need to feel puzzled about their initial positions by empathizing with the experiences of the minority before being pushed to adopt a new perspective. I thought this lingering would also be
beneficial to those students who had a clear sense of right and wrong: a fixed idea of wrongdoers. I hoped these students could also come to wonder about the fact that both a bullying/killer and a bullied/victim could be among their (future) students (or even in themselves), and realize that their educational solutions must be reflective of such complicated situations.

Moreover, the different viewpoints are not expressed in TLP as a mere linear juxtaposition; they are expressed aesthetically, revealing the process of sense-making of the tragic event and its consequences while giving an integral sense of living in Laramie during such a tragic time and considering what Matthew’s death left for others still alive. The script begins with interviews giving a sense of the place and of some of the residents of Laramie so that the unfolding tragedy can be emplaced concretely in readers’ imagination. As the details of the crime come out, the various responses of people in and beyond Laramie are gradually revealed. As the people’s remarks regarding the tragedy are built upon one another, supporting and contrasting each other’s views, there is a sense of sadness, puzzlement, dilemma, anxiety, and so on. The greatest tension is felt especially in those moments of Matthew’s funeral and the protest against homosexuality outside the church; these tense and solemn moments are yet beautifully settled with the humming of “Amazing Grace” by people gathered in support of Matthew and against hatred. Following this climax are the moments of the trials. With deepened emotional understanding of what happened to Matthew, readers finally meet the killers in the courtroom and participate in the beginning moment of “the healing process” of Matthew’s parents who “grant…life” to the killers (p.96). At the end, the readers, now embodying the grace and hope borne out of the tragic loss, are brought back to “the
sparkling lights of Laramie, Wyoming” (p.101), which was probably “The last thing [Matthew] saw on this earth” (p.99) on the night he was murdered in the field.

As Dewey (1934) says, artwork is experienced as a “formed matter” in that “form and matter are connected in a work of art” (p.118). Although “they are legitimately distinguished when reflection sets in” (p. 118), they are closely intertwined when experienced. As I just described above, I felt that TLP was powerful. As a formed matter, I could experience the materials such as the various reactions and perspectives revealed in interviews as “completely and coherently formed” (p.118). Thus, reading the script provided a comprehensively intellectual, aesthetic, and emotional understanding about the lived meaning of a community of diversity; it provided great potential for further discussion in that it posed more questions than answers regarding its significance.

By acknowledging TLP as “formed matter” (Dewey, 1934, p.118), I decided to have my students enact the script by reading and re-reading it aloud as a complete stage-read performance. I believed that the potential meanings of TLP could be made most clear when it was experienced in its intended form: that is, theater. By experiencing the script in continuous attempts of individual and collective expression, I hoped my students would engage more fully with it and embody what it means to live in a community.

However, there were challenges. Neither my students nor I had much experience with theater. While I had (re)created some of the course curriculum—for instance, the first day introduction activity and the students’ arts-mediated presentation assignment discussed in previous chapters—by referring to and reflecting on my own previous learning experiences, I had never performed a complete script such as TLP in any class I had taken. I did not know how successfully I could facilitate my students’ learning
experience. More specifically, I was not yet sure how I could present a performance that had a cast of more than seventy characters with only 27 or 28 students. Moreover, because I taught two twice-a-week sections, I could not let my students perform *TLP* all at once, but had to divide the play into two sessions so as to fit our regular class time. I was not sure whether the performance would still be effective in such a setting.

In addition, I hoped to have some form of audience for the performance; as my students from the fall 2011 section had reflectively shared, having even only a few audience members could be critical in urging students to take this curricular experience more seriously and feel more responsible for their performance. Unfortunately, for the sections I taught in the spring 2012 semester, it would be more complicated to invite people outside the class as they would have had to visit the class during the afternoon and twice in a week in order to watch the whole performance. I would still encourage my students to invite others, but I thought that I would have to divide the class into two performing groups so that the students could have each other as audiences in case they did not have one from outside the course. However, I worried that dividing the students into two groups might let them pay attention to only the half of the script that they were assigned to perform.

A further constraint was the limited time to create a quality performance. I could only dedicate four weeks in total for teaching *TLP*. Considering the short length of the script, it might seem that that was more than enough time. However, after excluding the

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67 In the first semester in fall 2011, because my students performed as a whole group, I encouraged them to invite their families and friends; four people in total visited (my students’ sister, friend, and mother, and my colleague). Inviting people was easy for this section because it was a three-hour-long evening class.

68 This turned out to be the case.
time necessary for the final performance, the already-scheduled, ongoing arts-mediated presentations by students, and the usual housekeeping tasks, only about five hours in total remained for actually teaching the script. That is, within those five hours, I needed to make sure that my students learned about such issues as hate crimes and discrimination against (sexual) minorities, all while figuring out how to enact/read-aloud the characters assigned to them for the culminating performance of the play.

Despite these challenges, as I was developing the course syllabus, I already began to imagine my students’ enactment of the script and to envision their learning through reading and re-reading it out loud, through vocalizing and listening to each other’s creative expressions both in the process of preparing the performance and through experiencing the culminating performance itself as a whole class. Albeit uncertainly, I believed that I would make the assignment work because of the presence of a community, which my students and I would have already experienced by then throughout the semester. Although I realized that enacting TLP might be a new experience for my students, the modes of learning through it would not be unfamiliar to them because the principles I wanted to facilitate in my students’ learning for building a creative learning community would be present throughout the semester. The students would learn, as they would have been encouraged to do so throughout the semester (refer to Chapters Three and Four), by moving, gesturing, voicing, and communicating with others through participating in a form of aesthetic expression.

In a sense, I thought that it would not be my TLP curriculum that would enhance the sense of community in my classroom; rather, the TLP curriculum would mirror the presence of a community already established in my classroom and would allow the ME
community to become closely intertwined with the community of Laramie. Without my students, the experiences of the people from Laramie and the Tectonic Theater Company would not be revived in our classroom; without the words of the various people in the script, my students would not be able to understand not only the depth of the townspeople’s experiences but also their own responses to them. In this sense, enactment through reading aloud and listening facilitated students’ learning by folding the expressive voices of my ME class and intertwining them with those of Laramie, resulting in a doubling of voices and, thus, thickening the lived meanings of communal expression in my classroom.

In attempting to realize this vision, I luckily had an expert to talk to about my pedagogical decisions. My sister had been working in theater as a professional actress for several years by then. Although she was living in Korea and had never read TLP, she enjoyed listening to my curricular and pedagogical plans. She also gave me some important insights for preparing a performance when I struggled with the limited time and resources. Along with the educational scholars and my colleagues who had introduced me to ethno-drama and TLP, my sister was a part of the community who co-created with me my teaching curriculum of TLP.

In the following section, I explore my teaching practices of TLP and seek to express their meanings particularly in relation to the theme of communal expression that is the final—yet most pervasive—aspect of the creative learning community I tried to build and sustain in my classroom. I reflect specifically on my curricular and pedagogical practices; I explore how my curricular effort to engage my students in their first attempts to read TLP aloud came to express the fundamental meaning of community already at
work in the classroom in the intertwined relationship between self and others through the sound of students’ voices and through the attentive listening to those voices. I then reflect on how I helped my students broaden their understanding of sexual minorities such as Matthew from *TLP* by inviting LGBTQA panels. By inviting the students to shake hands with the panelists, I tried to facilitate learning through closely interweaving touching-touched experiences with seemingly distant others. Furthermore, I explore how the *TLP* curriculum engaged the students in opening up and navigating the subtle gap they found with their characters’ diverse voices by exploring conflicts at various levels. In order to do so, I encouraged the students to learn by reversing their roles with their characters and thus enhancing their understanding of the characters as well as of the students themselves.

**The Initial Sound of Students’ Reading Voices and Intertwined Listening**

When teaching my ME students through other readings, I often engaged them in learning through small group discussions in response to some of the wonder-full questions generated based on the readings. In this way, I allowed students to explore some of the course issues with their peers before they were engaged in a whole group discussion. Although I did employ a few other activities, the engagement of students in verbal discussions prompted by the wonder-full questions was the most commonly used pedagogy in my teaching.

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69 I required students to post five “wonder-full questions” (refer to Appendix A) weekly online in response to their reading assignments. These questions were due before class throughout the semester. I checked the questions before each class period in order to use some of them for class discussion. Sometimes I picked a few of them myself in order to lead a whole group discussions; other times—more often as the semester proceeded—I printed every question on a separate slip of paper and randomly gave each group of students several slips, so that they could have an opportunity to benefit from their peers’ curiosity and self-select intriguing questions to talk about.
In the first class devoted to *TLP*, I could have done the same—let the students discuss the themes and contents of the script by sharing their ideas and questions. However, I did not. Instead, after sharing only briefly the general emotional reactions to the script as a whole group, I asked my students to work in a small group and pick a *moment* or two from the script to read aloud. I did not mention anything particular about the text’s themes or theatrical reading skills before the group work session. I told them just to choose any *moment(s)* the group found intriguing, select roles within them, and to begin to read them aloud as a group. While they were trying to read the script aloud with each other, I could see some already trying to figure out how their characters would sound, while others read the lines without expressing any emotion and only to complete the given task. After several minutes, I gathered my students as a whole group and asked each group to perform its reading in front of the rest of the class. I encouraged the remainder of the students to *listen* to their peers’ voices from their staged reading instead of following the words written on the script with their eyes. I wanted us to have more detailed conversations afterwards based on the expressed voices of the characters rather than the text from the script.

I began my teaching of *TLP* in this way because I *felt* it seemed critical to engage my students in reading aloud right from the first class. I wanted my students to begin to understand the work and its potential lessons by embodying the words while vocalizing them and listening to them in each other’s voices. As I had already experienced during the AERA presentation of ethno-dramas, there was something very powerful about

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70 I requested that my students randomly form several small groups; these groups were temporal only for the first day’s activity and did not have anything to do with the two performing groups I later assigned to the students for their culminating performance. I will explain later how I created two groups for the final performance.
listening to reading voices of a script, even if only over a short period of time. I wanted to incorporate this experience in my teaching. Yet, it was through unexpectedly encountering one of my student’s voices during the first attempt of staged reading that I began to explore the significance of resonating voices in a classroom and intertwinement through the voices among the students. This ultimately helped me give expression to the potential meaning of acknowledging and contributing to communal expression.

This realization happened when one of the small groups that included Michael performed its staged reading of a moment from TLP for the first time. Michael had been very shy and silent throughout the semester. He was not reticent when he talked with me personally, but rarely expressed his thoughts or emotions during class. I had wished that my students and I could get to know him better, but he always sat silently next to another quiet student.

To clarify, it was not because he showed something aptly different in his reading than his usual quietness in class that I found myself continuously reflecting on encountering Michael’s voice in his first reading of TLP. He just read aloud the few lines he was assigned to read in his group. Yet strangely, his round and soft, low-pitched voice resonating in the classroom for a few moments felt very powerful to me. I felt as if I found him for the first time, as if he suddenly came close to me and knocked on my ears to urge me to listen to him, or listen to myself being with him in these moments. The “sound” of his voice seemed to “involv[e] me closely [in him whom] I [was seeing]; it pull[ed] the seen towards me as it grasp[ed] me by my ears” (Voegeline, 2010, p.11). I

71 Composite student characterization derived from teaching experiences of ME.
72 I do not know whether he had any previous experience in theater, and yet I am assuming he had not because he never mentioned it in his reflection papers. Moreover, he seemed to read his parts without employing any apparent theatrical skills.
had known him for a few months by then, and I thought I had a good sense of what he was like, yet he suddenly seemed unknown to me. I felt as if I was beginning to know him anew through his resonating voice and through my listening to that voice.

I had a few other similar experiences encountering the voices of those students who had been quiet in verbal discussions—especially in a whole group setting—throughout the semester and who yet suddenly became confidently expressive persons during their staged-reading in the classroom. Most of these students revealed their great talent for using apt, entertaining voices, tones, accents, and intonations for their characters and pleasantly surprised me and their fellow classmates. It was a great pleasure as a teacher to allow them to show their strength by incorporating theater in my teaching. I would have never known this aspect of my students had I not included an enactment of TLP as a medium for their learning in my classroom. I realized how unfair it was to label those quiet students as non-contributors to the class’s learning while never allowing them to explore the world in their preferred ways and to express their learning in the mode in which they felt most confident.

However, while acknowledging the importance of providing different modes of teaching and learning through the emergence of these usually quiet yet talented students, my reflection on hearing Michael’s voice, and those unskilled voices of other students like him, prompted me to think about communal expression in an expressive community at a more fundamental level. As described previously, Michael did not show a new, surprising talent for the theater; yet, the sound of his voice was still remarkable. Later, I realized Michael’s reading voice stood out to me not because it contrasted with or outshone others’ but because his voice reminded me of the characteristic potentiality of a
creative learning community which I had been trying to express through teaching *TLP* and whose meaning I hoped to articulate in this writing.

Here, I recall a typical verbal discussion in an educational setting to draw distinctions between the conversation following the initial reading of *TLP* and that of a typical discussion. In the latter context, we often listen to students’ ideas (or we believe we do). This makes us tend to give more credit to those who express their ideas more persuasively verbally. I do not say that this is wrong; it is critical to articulate ideas in educational discussions and conversations. But I want to note that this focus on verbalized ideas sometimes leaves out those students who are not talkative or familiar with such communication. Along the same line, even though I employ theater in my teaching, if I recognized only those students who were already talented at enacting their characters, and if I understood the emergence of such kinds of students as the most critical benefit of my pedagogy, that would again leave out students like Michael who read aloud his parts but did not show any particular talent.

The purpose of the *TLP* curriculum requiring my students’ staged-reading performance, in this sense, was not limited to creating a great performance or providing various modes of expression for different students. Rather, it was to give my students, through the aesthetic engagement with the script, an opportunity to learn what it meant to live and grow in the world where their perceptual experiences are always intertwined with those of others’. Michael’s nothing-special voice revealed such an intersubjective moment of learning through the intertwinement between expressive voices and attentive listening. Through this experience of intertwinement in learning, I hoped that my students could dwell in a “space-time” (Dewey, 1934, p.214) where the (co-)existence of each of
them, including students like Michael, could be perceived as potentiality for living and learning. In such a community, students were to be listened to, not because of their ideas or their enactment technique, but because of their attempts of expression through the sound of their voice, the *senses* they created within their voice. In such a community, these expressing students were also to become listeners—listeners of themselves and others “caught up in the fabric of [the same sonorous] world” (Merleau-Ponty, 1993b, p. 125).

In this sense, my *TLP* curriculum and especially my pedagogical choice of engaging my students in reading the script aloud in a staged reading from the very first class are critical. They expressed my understanding of communal expression as essential in a creative learning community. By letting my students begin to read aloud even before our discussions about the content of the script—to take up the lines of the script in their own way, although they might not yet feel fully prepared to perform—I communicated that learning would happen in between the interpretive reading and attentive listening of the lively, sonorous community. Through this curricular enactment as pedagogy, I expressed my understanding of the critical need of others for learning, regardless of their theatrical skills or relevant background knowledge. Later, I did allow time for the students to discuss critical issues such as hate crimes and discrimination against minorities when teaching *TLP*. However, this was not a prerequisite for their initial expression. As sonorous and auditory beings, my students were already capable of giving voice and listening to each other; in such a relationship of becoming a person who was both vocalizing and listening, learning as a community was possible.
In understanding and articulating the complicated intertwinement of my students’ voicing/listening experiences and its significance in their learning, Merleau-Ponty’s (1968) notion of flesh was insightful. According to his non-dualistic ontology, students’ experience of voicing does not exclude listening and vice versa. For instance, a student voicing listens to his own voice in his own ears as if it was from another; the other students listen to his voice as if it was resonating and vibrating in their own bodies—as Dillon (1997) says, even though “the being of my body as subject and that of my body as object…do not and cannot coincide…they are nonetheless reversible and that reversibility places them within the same ontological category:…flesh which is reversibly seeing and seen” and voicing and voiced. In this sense, the TLP curriculum facilitated my students’ learning by having them first and foremost experience a “mutual encroachment of self and other” (Philips, 1999, p.79) in their perceptual experiences in a community. In such experiences of intertwinement in between the expressive voices and creative listening to them, students tried to grasp the sense of the spoken words by (unconsciously) taking reverse roles between performers and listeners; in such “reversibility,” there emerged what Merleau-Ponty (1968) terms “flesh as expression” (p.145).

As I also mentioned briefly earlier in this chapter, I found that flesh could be adapted as an insightful term to express the kind of learning I wanted to facilitate in my ME community via my TLP curriculum. That is, by asking my students to read the script aloud from the very beginning, I engaged my students in actively reversing their roles in their encroached sonorous/auditory experiences of intersubjective selves and others. When more consciously facilitating such reversibility in the curriculum through aesthetic expression, such as that through my teaching of TLP, learning can be understood as the
growing thickness of the community’s flesh. Instead of understanding learning as a subjective digestion of externally-given knowledge by completely detached and, thus, unknowable others, I presupposed learning as the thickening/thickened flesh of the community. Consequently, I could express that learning was possible through the sense-making/grasping of the intersubjective movements of my students’ encroached experiences of reading-aloud and listening in the classroom community. The voices bursting forth while reading *TLP* aloud were heard again and again by the community itself. In such expressive folding back of the community upon itself, the “flesh as expression” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.145), through the reversibility of and the intertwinment in between the voices bursting and the voices being heard, was thickened as learning happened.

As an instructor, I was not excluded from participating in such a communal expression. By letting the students perform before moving on to discuss details about the characters and relevant issues, I indicated that I would also learn in the intersubjective creative “space-time” (Dewey, 1934, p.214) that would emerge in the classroom and unfold as the students read aloud. I had to listen to others (students) first in order to know what I was going teach regarding *TLP*. I had to *be* in the community and engaged in the intertwined experience by listening to my students’ voices as they were resonating and unfolding through my body, always intertwined with others and constantly growing as a community. Voegelin (2010) expresses generative listening confirming the verb-ness of the sound. He says:

> Sound, when it is…listened to generatively…is to be in motion, to produce. …It is an invisible act, a dynamic of production that
is...perpetually on the move, making time and tenses rather than following them. ... In this appreciation of verb-ness the listener confirms the reciprocity of his active engagement and the trembling life of the world can be heard. (p.14)

In creating this curriculum, I had to understand my students as producing “sound” that was always “dynamic” and “perpetually on the move” (p.14). My students’ first attempt at reading aloud would be incomplete in terms of the depth of their expression of their characters. However, my students would begin, by expressing such seemingly incomplete emotions and by listening to each other’s “active engagement” in “the trembling life of the world”, the journey of continuously “making time and tenses” in the ongoing learning processes (p.14). The moment of intertwining I witnessed between the students like Michael’s, whose voices were unskilled, and the others’ (and his own) active listening was expressing the very possibility of a creative learning community. My curricular enactment acknowledged this possibility by expressing that “auditory [selves are] part of the heard in reciprocal intersubjectivity” and that these selves learn by being intertwined with expressive and attentive others (Voegelin, 2010, p.10).

After this initial performance where my students could begin to learn through the intertwinement of self and others as sonorous/auditory beings, I further engaged my students in a generative conversation. I did not ask them how effectively the performers expressed their characters because this question would presuppose the characters as already fixed and complete, rather than that which was enfleshing and enfolding through the read-aloud. Instead, I encouraged my students to imagine various possibilities of who the characters might be as they were expressed in students’ voices, by accepting and
attending to various vocal/bodily expressions of characters as they were heard. That is, I encouraged my students to “grasp [the] sense” of what the each student-character said by “lending [their] ears or eyes to the thought that [was] coming into the world as the sense of these sonorous phenomena” (Landes, 2013, p.8) in order to understand the character and his perspective through the vocalized words.\footnote{As I initiated the creative learning community in my classroom from the very first day by acknowledging my students’ bodily encounters with each other through constant (re)entering the classroom and their multi-sensorially weaved perceptual experiences of such movements in learning (see Chapter Three), the curriculum mediated by TLP toward the end of the semester continued to value these bodily expressions perceived by the students multisensorially from the enacted characters.} For example, when two groups happened to perform the same moment, I did not ask my students to pick who expressed the same character better. Instead, I encouraged the students to imagine and accept different possibilities for the characters by attending to the different tones, rhythms, and emotions expressed by the two students’ reading voices and to sense the different poses and gestures each student employed while reading the same lines. In doing so, we as a class began to imagine multitudes of possibilities for interpreting the character and his/her community—the community s/he was a part of and we in the classroom were also now a part of via the students’ reading voices.

**Extending Voices through Shaking Hands with a Broader Community**

After this initial reading and discussion, I invited a few guest speakers to my classroom. They were trained educational panelists from the LGBTQA+ Resource Center\footnote{LGBTQA stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Ally.} at my university. Two to five panelists presented in each section. The panelists included those who identified themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual, female to male
transgender, and queer. Some of them were undergraduate or graduate students at my university; others were members of the local community in which my university was located. My planning of the panelists’ visit was made possible by one of my colleagues who, upon hearing my plan to teach TLP in my ME class, shared his experience of inviting the panelists to his ME class. He said that he received great responses from his students and recommended that I contact the center to request their visit.

I loved the idea of inviting people to my classroom to share their own lived experiences of what it means to live as sexual minorities in our current society. Although it would not be impossible for a heterosexual instructor like me to teach the issues surrounding homosexuality, I thought that meeting the panelists in person would be beneficial to my students most of whom seemed to have little, if any, experience with having a conversation on the topic with others who had lived as sexual minorities.

Additionally, it seemed more effective to have the panelists visit class before engaging my students more actively in understanding the characters that they would have to enact in the culminating performance of TLP. As discussed in the previous section, teaching TLP by engaging my students in enactment necessarily presupposed the intertwinement among students who were reading the script aloud and those listening to it in the classroom. I envisioned this intertwinement to be extended to the experiences of the students and their characters—which I will explore in the next section. However, most of my students lacked real-life experiences of meeting people like Matthew from TLP, a sexual minority (and a victim of a hate crime), and those around him; I believed this lack of experience might make it difficult for these students to imagine Matthew’s life as a gay man and those of his acquaintance. Meeting and listening to the LGBTQA
panelists in this context seemed to be timely in that it would allow my students to visualize the lived stories of the panelists as relative to their learning from the script.

As one of my students also mentioned, while *TLP* included the voices of more than seventy people responding to what happened in Laramie, the script lacked the voice of Matthew himself, although he was the reason why the script was written in the first place. While the void of Matthew’s voice might have felt frustrating to some students, I did not think it was a mistake or failure. Instead, I found that the silence of Matthew’s voice, surrounded by the loud voices of various others heard through the interviews in *TLP* in and around the Laramie community, was rather expressively speaking to the significance of allowing people to have a “space-time” (Dewey, 1934, p. 214) for their varied expressive responses to the missing voice of Matthew. What mattered was not merely what exactly happened to Matthew or how he would have told this story; rather, it was how the community wanted to make sense of this tragic event as they *heard* the tragic news unfolding. The script embodies the community’s attempt to grapple with how to respond to the tragedy, give expression to their thoughts and emotions, and move forward with the collective responsive expressions heard in and resonated through the community; my students’ commitment to enacting this story co-creating the *TLP* curriculum with me was itself meaningful in this sense because their enactment of the story would enable them to mirror creatively the experiences of the Laramie community and participate actively in responding to the tragedy with their own expressive ways.

Yet, the lack of experiences of my students (mostly white, middle-class, and heterosexual) in meeting many others who might have faced similar difficulties as Matthew needed to be recognized, for it could keep the students from imagining the lives
of Matthew, or those of other sexual minorities like him, in and beyond the Laramie community then and through the present day. The deeper my students could empathize with the lives of other Matthews, the better they could hear Matthew’s silent voice in their reading and performing of the script not as a failure, but as a great potentiality of not only the multiple stories of other Matthews but those of other minorities as well.

Once I could clarify the significance of meeting the panelists and having generative conversations with them in person, I contacted the resource center and informed them of the purpose of my class and the context of my teaching. The center arranged educational panelists that were available to visit my classroom for an hour-long conversation with my students. I specifically mentioned that my students were going to meet the panelists in the processes of preparing for their performance of TLP and expressed my hope that the panelists could answer some potential questions my students might have regarding their perspectives on TLP or the tragedy itself. Fortunately, most of the panelists were already familiar with the tragic event and had watched TLP as a play or movie and thankfully the panelist who had neither read nor watched the play was willing to read the script before visiting my classroom.

The panelists and I agreed that it would be better if I let the students ask their questions directly to the panelists and lead the conversation themselves. The panelists were trained and experienced in leading conversations in various classrooms, and I did not worry that my students would fail to ask any questions during the conversation. By that point in the semester, the students had already had much experience sitting in a circle, asking questions, and sharing their thoughts and emotions. I trusted them. What I
needed to do in advance was to make sure to encourage my students to bring their questions.

As the day of the guest speakers’ classroom visit approached, however, I began to worry. Even though the panelists were well trained and experienced, my students and the panelists would still be complete strangers to each other. Thus, in addition to assisting the panelists in understanding the purpose and the context of my class, I needed to make sure to create the right collegial atmosphere on the day of the event to effectively facilitate my students’ learning. This seemed especially critical because many of my students did not have much experience meeting LGBTQA people; a few of the students seemed to feel uncomfortable even with the idea of having to listen to their stories in a classroom.

Considering the very limited time we had for the discussion, I realized that a proper introduction between the panelists and the students could contribute to creating a more comfortable and collegial atmosphere by building rapport as quickly as possible.

I ended up planning to invite each of my students to come up to the front of the classroom, shake hands with the panelists, and briefly introduce themselves. I intended to have them move rather quickly so that the introduction could be done in about four minutes while I played “Just the Way You Are,” a cheerful song from the TV show Glee that was familiar to many of my students and whose lyrics celebrated, in a broad sense, the beauty of a person being herself. While this manner of introduction might sound simplistic, I had to try to articulate to myself many times beforehand why I wanted to effect the introductions this way, because I worried that there might be some students who would be very shy in such active bodily interaction with the guest speakers. By

75 I also printed out the weekly “Wonder-Full Questions” students had posted online before the visit and handed them to the panelists in case they ran out of questions.
forcing every student to encounter the panelists in this one way I might end up creating a rather awkward atmosphere to begin with. In truth, the panelists did not even have to know my students’ names in order to share their stories. Did I want to do this activity just for fun? What would the educational significance of such an activity be?

After asking myself to clarify my own intentions behind this activity, I decided to proceed with my original idea of handshaking. I believed that this activity could express the kind of intertwinement I hoped might facilitate in my students’ encounter with the panelists, even though this meant pushing some of the students (who were either introverted or objected to homosexuality) out of their comfort zone. Just as my students experienced learning through intertwinement as reading and listening bodies in the initial read-aloud of TLP, in order to learn from the panelists, the students needed to allow themselves to weave their experiences with those of the panelists. I wanted to create a curriculum through which my students could become the bodies that rather unconsciously would embody what it meant to welcome others and their stories, even before being more consciously engaged in the verbal conversation with the panelists. For those students who objected to homosexuality and thought that the guest speakers were very different from themselves to the extent to which their perspectives and lifestyles were in opposition from each other, I wanted to challenge this assumption from the very first moment of their encounters with the panelists by making the perceived severe gap the students might have felt between themselves and sexual minorities subtler through the shaking of hands.

When designing this introduction activity, I imagined the movements of my students. In order to participate in the activity, they would literally move and come closer to the panelists, and they would have to be “lending [their] ears or eyes” in order to
“grasp [the] sense” of the resonating voices of the panelists in their brief conversations with them (Landes, 2013, p.8). In addition, upon their encounter, the students would be looking at the eyes of the panelists, saying their names, extending their arms, touching the hands of the panelists, and shaking them; while doing so, the students would also feel themselves being looked at, heard, approached, and touched by the panelists. Their experiences would be intertwined at every moment of these movements. In these moments, there would be no right/wrong or good/bad thoughts about a person or his/her lifestyle.

I hoped that this encroaching experience of shaking each other’s hands and feeling themselves through another’s seeing, touching, and moving could help the students begin to see the panelists as people just like themselves—as human beings with their sensible/sentient bodies exploring the world, interacting with others physically, emotionally, intellectually, etc., and trying to make sense of the world. Yet, acknowledging each other as similar human beings in the world would not mean that they could or should erase all differences. As Merleau-Ponty says (1968) about the intertwinement between the touching and the touched hands of “two bodies” (p.163) that necessarily have a gap in between them,

neither body need be reduced to what becomes manifest to one at the moment of contact. Phenomenal bodies—fleshly things—transcend their apprehension…the phenomenon is the thing we perceive, but we perceive that we do not perceive the entirety of its being. To touch something is not to coincide with it. (p.163-164)
In touching each other’s hands, my students and the panelists would not be able to perceive or accept each other completely; this would not be possible even at the primordial level as Merleau-Ponty (1968) expressed above, not to mention the reflective level. Yet, I hoped that such fleshly contact with each other through handshaking could express to my students the potentiality of making seemingly severe differences perceived as opposition become subtler; I wanted to let them live the potentiality through this process of touching and being touched with different others—not only the LGBTAQ panelists but ultimately other minorities and marginalized people as well.

These articulated meanings of what it meant to shake hands with the panelists, however, was not to be explained to my students; rather, it needed to be lived by them implicitly. On the day of the panelists’ visit to my classroom, I began the class by saying that I wanted to invite the students to welcome the guest speakers with handshakes, just as we would do upon meeting new people. I did not inform the panelists of this plan in advance because I did not think this was necessarily a separate activity; rather, it was a gesture to welcome them in my classroom. My students seemed to be slightly embarrassed when they were asked to stand up and move to shake hands with the panelists. I assumed that they did not expect this kind of participation because having guest speakers in universities often meant sitting back and listening to their stories. I felt that the song I played in the background helped to create an atmosphere that was less awkward for the activity because the familiarity of the song seemed to relax the students and the panelists, and the limited length of the song with its not-too-slow tempo and jolly beats also worked well in keeping students moving rhythmically while lessening the burden of having to talk to strangers at length.
After the handshaking, the class had a great conversation. Students asked not only a few questions regarding *TLP* but also other general questions regarding sexualities and the life experiences of the panelists as sexual minorities. For their part, the panelists were more than willing to answer any questions brought up by the students. Most of my students said later that they were very inspired by the panelists’ openness, passion, and bravery in sharing their life experiences with the class; this made them emotionally more engaged in the stories of *TLP*. Many students were surprised by the discrimination the panelists had to experience just for their sexuality and for being themselves, such as that of teachers being fired just for being gay. The students also empathized deeply with the pain many of the panelists had to go through (and were still going through) because their parents did not accept them and cut them out from their families. In particular, many of my students began to wonder about the difference between acceptance and tolerance, and whether they would want to accept or tolerate their future students who may be sexual minorities.

I did not get a chance to talk with my students specifically about their handshaking experiences, although I got a glimpse from reading their brief daily reflections and reflection papers afterwards. From reading my students’ reflections, I learned that the experience of meeting and shaking hands with those who identified as LGBTQA and the generative conversation that followed was a new and memorable experience for many of my students. More importantly, I believe that these experiences of intertwining with the community of LGBTQA beyond the classroom and beyond the time and space of Matthew’s death in Laramie mediated the experience of enacting *TLP* at some critical level, because the students had now had the experience of meeting
potential Matthews in person intertwined with their own experiences of hearing the stories from the panelists, touching their hands, and feeling and being felt by them. The students would carry these experiences, consciously or not, in the enactment experience that would follow. As Landes (2013) says, this is because

The expressive body is subject to the weight of the past that it itself bears and sustains by carrying it forward in its metastable structure…Out of all the language [a speaker] knows, out of all the life she has lived, she speaks. Her expression crystalizes as a response, a creation, and an institution. (p.35)

In this sense, the students’ experiences shaking hands and conversing with the LGBTQA panelists would in some way be embedded in their expression of their characters and their understanding of the meaning of the performance they would collaboratively create and hear. In this intertwining process, the flesh as expression and learning in my classroom was thickening.

Intertwining with Characters’ Voices from The Laramie Project

During the second week of reading *TLP*, my students finally received the roles they needed to play for the final performance and began to engage in the activities and discussions through which they could develop their understanding of their characters.76

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76 In the casting process for the sections I taught in spring, 2012, there were many things to consider at once—creating similar group dynamics between the two groups, having a gender balance among the performers in each group, and allowing all the students equal participation. Because of such complications, I chose not to engage my students in the casting process. (With one exception: I accepted a special request by a student who wanted to participate as a narrator due to her fear of acting in front of others.) To share the casting process in more detail, first, I tried to have similar number of out-going
What was unique in this process was that each of my students (except the one who played a narrator) had to enact more than one character due to the fact that there were more characters in *TLP* than there were students. That is, the few characters each student had to play presented different and even conflicting (and sometimes almost opposite) views on homosexuality and what had happened to Matthew. Some of my students immediately expressed their discomfort playing their characters due to their homosexual lifestyles, while others were uncomfortable due to their characters’ violent and condemning words against homosexuality.

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students in each group so that each group had similar dynamics during their preparation. I am confident that I had a fairly good sense of which students would be more active in their group work because I had observed the students engaged in various (group) activities throughout the semester. Also, in the first week of teaching *TLP*, I had also learned that some previously quiet students became surprisingly active in the enacting curriculum, while a few others who had been active in discussions became uncomfortable expressing themselves in the enacting activities. Keeping this in mind, I tried to place similar number of those active and quiet students in each group. Second, in forming two groups with similar dynamics, I also tried to create a gender balance in each group. Because I did not have many male students to enact male characters in *TLP*, I ensured that main male characters were given to the male students, although some female students still needed to play male characters. Last but not least, I tried to make every student participate in the performance fairly equally without much confusion. For instance, I was careful not to give one student multiple characters appearing in the same moment in order to prevent potential confusion during the performance; I also tried to give each student a similar length of lines to read in order to give everyone as equal opportunity to participate in the performance as possible. Consequently, it is with confidence that I assert that the two groups’ uniquely different performance was created upon the qualitatively comparable conditions in terms of their group dynamic, gender balance, and students’ equal participation.

For example, the same student had to be Harry Woods, a fifty-two-year-old gay Laramie resident, and at the same time Reverend Fred Phelps, a minister from Kansas protesting against homosexuality. Harry Woods, on one hand, shared his experience of watching hundreds of people “marching for Matthew” in the University of Wyoming “homecoming parade” (Kaufman & Tectonic Theater Project, 2001, p.60). He said, “I started to cry… I thought, ‘Thank God that I got to see this in my lifetime’… ‘thank you, Matthew’” (63-64). On the other hand, Reverend Fred Phelps, protesting in front of the church that was holding Matthew’s funeral, preached loudly “God’s hatred is pure… If God doesn’t hate fags, why does he put’em in hell?” (p.79).
Aware of this dynamic while casting, I tried to create a curriculum that acknowledged the fact that most of the students had to enact at least one character that presented a different view than their own regarding such issues as homosexuality and hate crimes as they are described in TLP. In particular, I wanted to create a curriculum that could facilitate my students’ intetwinement even with those characters presenting seemingly opposite views from their own. I hoped to help my students have a similar experience with their unfavorable characters as they did upon their encountering and shaking hands with the LGBTQA panelists, so that the gap students saw between themselves and their characters might be subtler than they initially perceived.

In helping my students close the seemingly severe gap with their particular character(s), I realized that their attempts of reading aloud what a character had to say mattered. In the students’ expressive attempts, the character gained a voice; that is, it gained a body that could sense and make sense, move around, and interact with the world as a sonorous/auditory being. It seemed that hearing the character’s words through the students’ own voices could urge the students themselves to realize that the character was also a bodily being with emotions and relationships to others and inhabiting the world. This realization also seemed to make students hear their own (mis)understanding of certain groups of people of which their characters were a part.

For example, quite a few of my students who played gay/lesbian characters shared that they were embarrassed to hear their own voices expressing the characters because they realized how stereotypical their voices sounded. Reading my students’ reflection papers, I could imagine them attempting to read the script aloud by using high-pitched, sassy voices for gay men and low-pitched and manly voices for lesbians, even though
there was no description regarding the characters’ tones of voices in the script. Although
the students did not consciously plan to read those characters’ words in such ways, their
reading voices of the characters expressed the prejudices they had unconsciously
embodied toward homosexuals. Finding their own stereotypical voices of the characters
somewhat embarrassing and misguided, these students said that they began to question
whether all homosexuals would actually speak and act in such a stereotypical way. They
also began to imagine other aspects of the lives of homosexuals—for instance, being
young and passionate university students just like themselves—and other possibilities of
the characters’ interactions with various others in different occasions.

While my students’ attempts of creative and aesthetic expressions were critical in
making the gap they felt with their characters subtler, I did not believe they would
suffice; without further exploration of the complicated emotions of the characters,
continuously reading aloud the characters’ words could have become a mere repetition
without thickening the meaning. In order to help my students continue to find new,
deepened meanings in their continuous expressive attempts to read their characters aloud,
I needed to facilitate other opportunities to help them make more conscious connections
to the experiences of the characters.

When I revisited the script with this hope in mind, I found the theme of ‘conflict’
emerging and telling. It seemed to permeate the life experiences of all the characters.
Even though I could not agree with some of the characters’ perspectives, I felt that I
could easily relate to the conflicting emotions they might have felt in their responses to
the tragic event when imagining the kind of society they had been living in and the kinds
of interactions they had with others in that society. One of the benefits of having a script
for theater performance serve as a course textbook was that such a text would not directly
give students answers or solutions, yet it would express profound complexities of
emotions in various relationships among characters without reducing them into an
abstract summary of a theme.

I also found that conversations focused on the theme of ‘conflict,’ rather than
homosexuality or hate crimes, would engage my students more effectively in connecting
with their characters (even if the characters had seemingly opposite views from the
students) without erasing the complexities of the characters’ emotions. The students
would not have to feel forced to pick a side (i.e. pro- or anti-homosexuality) and defend
it. As social beings, all people have some conflicts in their relationships with others;
exploring characters in terms of their conflicts would necessarily lead students to pay
more attention to the relationships the characters had with others and intertwine with the
characters more deeply regardless of the extent to which they may have disagreed with
their characters on certain issues.

In order to facilitate a conversation on conflict in a more generative way, I first
had a group perform a moment of silence in TLP and engaged my students’ imaginations.
In the moment, an out lesbian professor at the University of Wyoming described the day
Laramie people gathered in a courtroom for arraignment to hear “the essential facts”
(Kaufman & Tectonic Theater Project, 2001, p.44) of what had happened to Matthew.
According to her, “two hundred people” were gathered there, yet it was so silent that they
“could have heard a pin drop” (p. 44?). “[L]ots of people were teary” after the accused
killers, who were also Laramie kids, “walked in” (p. 44); all of the people “left...crying at
the end of” (p.45) the arraignment.
This moment seemed fitting for the purpose of engaging my students in imaginatively seeing various conflicts; silence was not an opposition to resonating voices, but a potentiality for an emerging expression. As Landes (2013) says, the silence “that permeates our experience of speaking must be the felt presence of so many possibilities that are never made explicit” (p.8). I invited my students to explore “the felt presence of…possibilities” that had not yet been “made explicit” (p.8) by asking them to imagine their characters in relation to the silent moment. I asked: “If your characters were included in these two hundred people in the courtroom, what would they have been thinking and feeling in silence? What would have been the reasons they left crying at the end, and how would different characters have reacted to this occasion differently? What could such a silent moment express about your characters?”

When asking these questions, I did not expect that my students could immediately come up with various profound answers; rather, I hoped that it would help them begin to imagine various possibilities of understanding their characters. Drawing on this exercise, my students and I also discussed how some of the social discourses and institutional practices that implicitly reinforced discrimination could be embedded in our emotional conflicts with others and ourselves and how they could even cause us to commit a potential hate crime. Along with this discussion, I provided a worksheet which helped students gather basic information about their characters and suggested various questions they could ask in order to connect their own emotional experiences with those of their characters. I encouraged my students to use this worksheet individually as well as in their small group conversations in order to further explore their characters more specifically.
In facilitating the conversations around the theme of conflict, I found it critical not to push my students, at least for the time being, to see conflicts as something problematic and, thus, necessary to overcome. I found that as education majors, my students seemed more familiar with being asked to come up with solutions of unharmonious situations rather than being allowed to observe and explore the complicated conflicts as they were presented. During the discussion, a student immediately made connections to her future practice and began to wonder what she could do about the potential conflicts among her future students. While I admired her passion as a future teacher and I did believe that asking how best to resolve serious conflicts in classrooms was a critical question, I encouraged her and other students to focus more on imagining their characters’ conflicting feelings and reactions as they were in order to prevent the students from rushing to hurriedly close the gap they found with their characters’ feelings and reactions. If the gap was (believed to be) closed completely, there would be no room in which students could reverse their position in order to take on another’s perspective necessary for understanding themselves and vice versa. Only when the gap was still subtly open as a “separation-in-relation” (Hass, 2008, p.129) could they begin navigating the differences and attempting to express them in their reading aloud. By not rushing my students to come up with resolutions to erase the conflicts present in between characters from *TLP* as well as in between the students and their characters, I also wanted to let my students know that they were allowed to take time to see what was there to be noticed from their imagination of their characters’ conflicting feelings without being pushed to know immediately how to resolve such conflicts.
To clarify, I did not intend to let my students justify violent acts perpetrated by some of the characters in the name of conflict; rather, I wanted my students to begin understanding the characters as bodily, social, and emotional beings in their relationships and interactions with others who were not “mute” even in the moment of silence (Voegelin, 2010, p.11). That is, regardless of good/bad or right/wrong actions and beliefs, I urged my students to accept that each and every character was a human being trying to navigate the world, often with conflicting emotions just as the students were themselves.

By exploring and imagining hidden conflicts with respect to their characters as fellow human beings and without being rushed to creating reconciling solutions, I hoped that my students could overcome the dualistic view of what was right/wrong or good/bad about their characters and make seemingly “severe” gaps in between the characters and the students themselves subtler. Otherwise, the students would keep themselves detached from the emotions and experiences of their characters rather than allowing themselves to come closer to the characters and, figuratively speaking, touch and shake their hands, or allow the characters to touch the hands of the students themselves.

In addition to this discussion on the theme of conflict, I also engaged students in other activities. I had another conversation regarding the issue of bullying so that they could begin to make connections to relevant issues in the contexts of elementary, middle, and high schools. I also (re)created some theater activities in consultation with my sister. Through these activities, I encouraged the students to imagine themselves as one of their characters and improvisationally respond to given situations and interact with other characters on a temporary stage created in a classroom. This was to encourage my students to embody and imagine the characters as a whole rather than merely practicing
how to technically read their lines from the script. Although I was not able to give students time to rehearse the whole performance, during the last week of preparation, I managed to give the students some time to rehearse a few moments that particularly needed collaboration among the performers.

Throughout these processes of my students’ intertwining with their characters, I did not follow up with every student in order to gain a better sense of their development regarding their understanding of their characters as I had done with their arts-mediated presentations. Rather, I let the students have conversations with their peers in small groups as much as possible so that they could help each other in the process. I sometimes felt nervous because I was uncertain whether the performance would succeed, but I needed to accept such insecurity on my part in order to trust the potentiality of my students having already learned in their communal engagements with their peers, characters, and contemporaries from the broader community.

In this sense, my curricular practice for helping my students understand their characters better was not created in such a way as to give each student an exact direction to follow. Rather, through various activities, I created the condition that allowed my students to see possibilities of connection with their characters and to take time within a community to navigate the gap they found in relation to the characters’ conflicting emotions; I envisioned this gap not as a failure but as a potentiality for communication and learning (See Biesta, 2004).

What I wanted to express through this curriculum of opening the gap where my students could linger and entwine with their characters was, in a sense, this very potentiality—the potentiality emerging and present in a “reversibility of…the touching
and the touched…[that] is…always imminent and never realized in fact” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.147). Just as my students had shaken hands with the LGBTQA panelists, I wanted them to have similar experiences in their attempts to understand and better express their characters from TLP. At the same time, I accepted that the students might never perfectly understand the experiences of their characters and might never wholly express what the characters said in their own words. The reversibility students might have experienced in expressing the words of their characters would be “always imminent and never realized in fact”; yet only in such efforts to give expression to an ever-coming understanding of interweaved self and others, would a community in which participants learn creatively through communal expressions be possible.

**Thickening Flesh through Communal Expression in a Culminating Performance**

Finally on the fourth week of TLP curriculum, my students presented their performances. As I briefly sketched in the beginning of this chapter, I divided the students into two performing groups in order to overcome the limited class time and the lack of audiences during the performance. By having each group enact the first and second half of the play over a week, I could give each group enough time not only to play its part but also to participate in a proper warming-up activity before each performance and brief reflection time afterwards. I could also provide the students with the opportunity to become audiences of the other half of their performance. Although short, the rehearsal time I gave the students in the third week worked to effectively allow for each group to create a distinctive performance with unique stage arrangements and movements and an interesting use of props with which to better describe their characters.
This enabled the students to enjoy both of their experiences of performing and appreciating the play. I was relieved that students’ participation as performers in only half of the performance did not merely mean having only half of the experience; most of the students expressed the joy of appreciating the other half of the play through the other group’s unique performance and learning from its different interpretations of the (overlapping) characters and the unfolding events.

Although my students and I had already read the script several times and knew its plot well, we found performing the script and appreciating the play as a whole a totally new experience. In their reflections, many of my students shared that they felt they were literally in the moments of TLP—in the moments of various people’s sense making and interactions with and responses to the surroundings of the tragic death of Matthew and the folding and unfolding of its consequences. In particular, most of the students—whether they were previously pro- or anti-homosexuals—said that they were unexpectedly engaged in deep emotional experiences through their participation in the play both as performers as well as audience members.

Many students mentioned that they felt some emotions with much greater intensity during the performance than they did when reading the script to themselves and practicing their parts separately. Such intensified emotions through some of their peers’ powerfully expressive voices even made some students realize totally new meanings to the remarks and actions of several of TLP’s characters. Additionally, hearing the script through different tones of voices as a whole seemed to help students be engaged more emotionally; the difference provided students with more voluminous room for their emerging emotions while hearing each other’s distinctive voices. Some students even
suddenly grasped the deeper meaning of what their own character was about to say during their performance through having listened to others’ voices in their performing group; these students found themselves expressing their characters’ words more genuinely than ever, responding to the emotional expressions created through their group’s performance.\textsuperscript{78}

Because of these silent accumulations of the relational emotions having built upon each other’s expression, some students said they experienced goosebumps during the performance—for instance, as the soft humming voices of \textit{Amazing Grace} were resonating in the classroom expressing the \textit{moment} where some Laramie people became angels with big wings to peacefully counter the anti-homosexual protest outside the church hosting Matthew’s funeral. Also, students found it especially powerful and inspiring to perform and hear the \textit{moment} when Matthew’s father made a statement granting life to the killers in their trial. While such \textit{moments} as these were meant to serve as the climax of the script, without the sincere voices of my students resonating and intertwining in these \textit{moments}, such deep emotional engagement would have not been felt by the community.

Having had a profound emotional experience myself during my students’ performance, I felt that the experience mediated by the performing curriculum was a

\textsuperscript{78} As Dewey (1934) says, having “ordered use of objective conditions in order to give objective fulfillment to the emotion…is expression and the emotion that attaches itself to, or is interpenetrated by, the resulting object is [a]esthetic”; the “emotion as thus ‘objectified’ [by the artist] is [a]esthetic (p.81). In the case of my ME course, if a student’s “original emotions” about his character “has been ordered by” the voice he has given to the character for the performance, the student’s resulted vocal expression “reflects back to him the change that has taken place in himself” throughout the process of creating the performance (p.81). This not only gives the student “emotionally fulfilling” experience, but also shows him the transformative learning experience he has undergone in the process (p.81).
manifestation of the potentiality of teaching and learning in a creative learning community—the community where students learn through creative expression and the expressive creation that necessitated their communal engagements with various others in and beyond their immediate community at present. That is, in case of the TLP curriculum, students learned through expressing their creative taking-up of the given words of others in and beyond TLP and, concomitantly, through newly creating the characters with the expressive voices of the students and intertwining others.

In particular, I found that the TLP curriculum—built around the students’ own enactment of the script—expressed the potentiality of learning through intertwinement between parts and the whole of various aspects of the curriculum. Different parts of the teaching and learning practices throughout the preparing processes—various activities and discussions with diverse others through which my students tried to understand and express each of their characters—were folding back upon the students’ aesthetic experiences during the culminating performance. Through conducting and appreciating the performance by the students themselves, the meanings of their learning through TLP now became doubled; that is, by unifying the various learning experiences undergone, integrating them in creating the performance as an aesthetic whole, and carrying forward the doubled meanings (re)created through this emotional engagement into a complete experience\textsuperscript{79}, flesh as expression and learning, in this doubling process, had been thickened.

Through this unifying, emotional experience of integrative parts that linked closely to the whole meaning of the curriculum, my students had opportunities to

\textsuperscript{79} For accounts of the development of an aesthetic expression, refer to Chapter Four and Dewey, 1934
aesthetically and creatively express their communal engagements with various others in and beyond their present classroom community. As Dewey (1934) insightfully suggests in his exploration of the communication among different civilizations and their learning of one another through the arts, “works of art are means by which we enter, through imagination and the emotions they evoke, into other forms of relationship and participation than our own” (p.347). This communal engagement was what I hoped the TLP curriculum could mediate for my students. Through the enacting experience, I believed that “the art of another culture [could enter] into attitudes that [would] determine [their] experience” so that “genuine continuity [could be] effected” (p349) in their future experiences with those of others from different cultures and communities. My students’ “own experience [would] not thereby lose its individuality but it [would take] unto itself and [wed] elements that expand its significance. A community and continuity that do not exist physically [would be] created” (p. 349-350).

The intertwinements between my students and various others they had encountered and heard within the TLP curricular enactment included those with their peers in the classroom, people in Laramie many years ago, and the LGBTQA community in their current local/university community. Through these intertwinements, I hoped that my students began to ponder what it would mean to live in a community where diverse others including those marginalized from and discriminated against by the main society are present. As my students had experienced in their encounters with their characters in their attempts to express them,

80 Dewey (1934) says: “Just because art…is expressive of a deep-seated attitude of adjustment, of an underlying idea and ideal of generic human attitude, the art characteristic of a civilization is the means for entering sympathetically into the deepest elements in the experience of remote and foreign civilizations” (p.346).
it is when the desires and aims, the interests and modes of response of
another become an expansion of our own being that we understand him.

We learn to see with his eyes, hear with his ears, and their results give true
instruction, for they are built into our own structure. (Dewey, 1934, p.350)

In this sense, my curricular practice of teaching TLP, although without urging students
directly to come up with practical solutions of how to deal with serious conflicts in a
classroom, engaged my students in imagining a better possibility of teaching and learning
alongside various others with different experiences and perspectives. In this process, I
invited my students to co-create and thicken meanings of the TLP curriculum by
including the complicated intertwining of diverse experiences between the students
and the various others the students had encountered in reading TLP.

For example, most of my students who had firm disagreement with homosexuality
mainly due to their religious beliefs did not change their position. Yet, they all expressed
how they were moved and touched by the performing experience and how it made them
have a deeper sympathy for the pain such a violent hate could cause people like Matthew
and their families and friends; they also came to empathize more profoundly with people
who struggle to determine their sexual orientations. I believe that their response did not
stem from the performing experience itself; instead, this learning was made possible
because the culminating performance unified all the different stages and aspects of the
students’ learning experiences during the preparing processes, allowing the culminating
performance to serve as a fulfilling aesthetic expression—one of the key expressions
present in a creative learning community as I shared previously in Chapter Four. In their
efforts to express the community lived through TLP in which the voices of various others
were present through its numerous characters, my students had embraced the lives of non-heterosexuals by listening to their first-person accounts and by shaking hands with them to touch and be touched by their lives. All of these experiences were re-expressed aesthetically and folded back upon the students themselves during the performance, awakening them to realize once again that there would always be hidden and potentially profound emotions in the lives of sexual minorities and their stories than the widespread yet often negatively simplified and absurdly stereotyped account that many of the students had unconsciously embodied.

Although still against homosexuality, these students said that they came to feel more comfortable talking with others about the relevant issues and hopefully with their future students. Although I wished that I could change their mind more radically and that they would decide to accept, rather than tolerate, their future students who may be sexual minorities, I found hope in their willingness to begin to navigate the gap between sexual minorities and themselves and their willingness to try to make that gap a little bit subtler by connecting with those others emotionally. What I hoped for these students was many more opportunities to teach and learn in creative learning communities where they could continue exploring other possibilities of living in a community where they could weave together their experiences with those of seemingly distant others. As Dewey (1934) says,

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Goodman (1995) says that “Hearing first-hand about the pain and struggle to live with dignity can hardly leave the listener untouched” (p.49). According to her, her students who had a dialogue with “a panel of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals…[were] often profoundly struck by how ‘normal’ the people on the panel [were], and how much oppression they face” (p.49-50). After this experience, her students were “generally…moved to attitudes of greater understanding and acceptance of our common humanity” (p.49-50).
“[t]he remaking of the material of experience in the act of expression…is also a remaking of the experience of the community in the direction of greater order and unity” (p.84).
CHAPTER 6
CULMINATION AND MOVING FORWARD

As I am about to write this final chapter, I find myself engaged in the transformative moments in which I made tangible connections between my past experience of teaching ME in the U.S. and my future practice as a teacher educator and curriculum theorist. Connections to South Korea (S. Korea) where I plan to work after my graduation are particularly significant. Revisiting these moments or “intervals” (Dewey, 1934, p.189), I find myself in the “resting place in experience”—discussed in Chapter Four—that serves as a space-time for “an undergoing in which [the consequence of prior doing] is absorbed and taken home” (Dewey, 1934, p.58), and thus is “where meaning is generated” (Macintyre Latta, 2013, p.35).

I begin this chapter within this generative space-time with hopes that it can open up possibilities to converse with teachers, teacher educators, curriculum theorists, educational scholars, and policy makers, with my expressive work serving as a medium for potential co-learning and further scholarly communication. In order to do this, I first attempt to summarize and synthesize for readers and myself what I have attempted to express in the previous five chapters. I then articulate what it would mean to relate my work in the current educational contexts and the field of curriculum studies in both the U.S. and S. Korea. I hope that this final chapter successfully transforms the expressive work of this dissertation, particularly the concrete lived examples within Chapters Three, Four, and Five, into a contemplative medium for teachers, teacher educators, and curriculum theorists (including my future self) to consider various contexts through
which we can create lively forms of creative learning communities in our classrooms and articulate the significances of such practices in curriculum studies as lived expression. After all, it is the embodied implications of my study that I continue to grapple with and explore, convinced of their importance to learners and learning. I wish others to locate these too.

Summary

My journey of writing this dissertation began with an understanding that, while creativity is one of the buzzwords of 21st century education the world over, its application as a fundamental basis of human experience, expression, and learning in the communal world of the classroom and beyond is understudied. This gap in curriculum and pedagogy calls for theoretical studies grounded in practice that enable educators to imagine the possibilities of various forms of creativity in their practices and to articulate their potential significances for learning.

Creativity is often understood as evaluable and achievable in educational practice. These assumptions hold unintentional yet negative consequences such as postponing acknowledging students as creative, making “present action” in education merely “a means to a remote end” that may be achieved someday in the future (Dewey, 1992, p.226). Based on this critique, I proposed the need to understand creativity from a phenomenological-ontological perspective, referring mainly to the philosophical thoughts of Merleau-Ponty and Dewey. That is, creativity, when understood from this perspective, is not something that can be developed as a result of educational practice; rather, it is always and already working in human beings’ expressive ways of existence in the
perceptual and communal world. Creativity that is made present through our various acts of expression as living-conscious intersubjective bodies in the world, in this sense, is the very substratum that makes living, knowing, and learning possible in the first place.

In giving expression to the consequences reclaimed creativity has in a teacher educator’s curriculum making and pedagogical practices, I chose to reflect on my own practice of building and sustaining a creative learning community in teaching a Multicultural Education (ME) course to undergraduate pre-service teachers at a Midwest research university in the U.S. In so doing, I positioned myself as a teacher-artist-philosopher at the core of whose acts—including teaching, reflecting, creating, interrogating, writing, etc.—were those of expression. As a teacher-artist-philosopher, I employed expression as a philosophical mode of my curriculum theorizing. By adopting such a mode, I proposed to write my dissertation in order to express my practicing-theorizing in a non-dualistic sense and communicate its significances self-reflectively as well as autobiographically. I thereby suggested that theorization of my curricular enactment means that I philosophize my practicing, theorizing, and expressing without “losing contact with what gave depth, movement, and life to [my] ideas” (Lefort, 1968, p.xxviii) in my classroom practices. In order to write my dissertation in this manner, I tried to create an expressive work that could prompt readers to “constitute [their own] experience[s]” (Dewey, 1934, p.88) rather than be led to one.

While taking expression as a philosophical mode of curriculum theorizing, I proposed that expression is also a keyword for the embodied theoretical framework of my dissertation. My playing with concrete materials from my teaching experiences and focused sense of inquiry regarding creative learning communities suggested that
creativity be understood in relation to expression present in a classroom community. Specifically, I found in my classrooms serving as creative learning communities three intermingled modes of expression—bodily, aesthetic, and communal. These different yet interdependent modes of expression were presented as a theoretical framework of my dissertation. I called this an embodied theoretical framework because it was not imposed upon my writing as a purely abstract idea or a fixed theory. Instead, this framework emerged from my lived experiences of teaching and learning, and I had embodied it in such concrete experiences.

In Chapters Three, Four, and Five, I explored bodily, aesthetic, and communal expression respectively while navigating how each mode of expression was facilitated through my efforts to build and sustain creative learning communities in my classrooms through the engagement of my students in co-creating the curriculum. In Chapter Three, I explored the first day of my course and how I initiated a creative learning community by acknowledging, encouraging, celebrating, and facilitating students’ learning through bodily expressions and how I created, from the beginning of the semester, the open space for their multisensorial experiences. In Chapter Four, I introduced the arts-mediated student presentations through which my students were invited to attend to their own interests, develop them into aesthetic forms of expression, communicate their lived meanings with others in the class, and learn from constant reflections on their own creating processes. In this chapter, I articulated the significance of students’ involvement in aesthetic expressions as a curricular medium of learning in sustaining creative learning communities in my classrooms. In Chapter Five, I explored communal expression, which is a fundamental condition of education and was made most tangible in my students’
experiences of a staged reading of *The Laramie Project* (Kaufman & Tectonic Theater Project, 2001) toward the end of the semester. I explored how the voices of my students and those of others often considered the Other were intertwined and resonated with each other through this theatrical experience and how “[t]he remaking of the material of experience in the act of expression…is also a remaking of the experience of the community in the direction of greater order and unity” (Dewey, 1934, p. 84).

In short, this dissertation is my lived curricular expression as a teacher-artist-philosopher of creating and sustaining creative learning communities in my ME course. I welcomed my students as already creative, knowing bodies, expressive meaning makers, and interdependent co-creators of curricular experiences. I taught multicultural education by allowing my students to linger, not as failures but as imbued with potentiality for communication, expression, and (re)creation. I invited them to introduce and reintroduce their individually-collectively growing selves mediated by their ongoing aesthetic expressions of their lived meanings of teaching and learning.

**Synthesis**

Searching for the words to express the permeating threads running through my dissertation as a whole, I find myself revisiting Merleau-Ponty’s (1945/2012) remarks in describing a human (body) in a phenomenological world. He says, “We witness at each moment, this marvel that is the connection of experiences, and no one knows how it is accomplished better than we do, since we are this very knot of relations” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p. lxxxv). I believe “this marvel” that Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) describes expresses the fundamental creativity each and every human being who is a “knot of
relations” practices in his or her expressive gestures and relational perceptions of expressed others in the communal world.

This metaphor of a “knot” was present in my mind throughout my teaching in the image of the giant web of relationships my students created with colorful yarn in the introduction activity on the very first day of class. The web was not visible once the activity concluded, but I could feel the initial web of connections continuing to grow throughout the semester, getting more multi-colored, complicated, enlarged, and thickened, as I witnessed my students constantly renewing their understanding of the world. My students’ various works of arts-mediated presentations and performances helped me and my students to sense the emergence of a variety of knotted connections continuously created and recreated from the fabric of our learning community.

My dissertation is an expression of the concrete and theoretical understanding of how to build and sustain creative learning communities—that is, how teachers can facilitate space-time to celebrate various “knot[s] of relations” that students continue to create and express individually and collectively, and how they can make such growing and thickening connections a tangible medium for learning in classrooms. Furthermore, my dissertation as a lived curricular expression attempts to engage readers in seeing how teachers, when philosophizing and theorizing their curricular experiences, are also participating in the complicating, enriching, and thickening of their own connections of experiences and significations. Through my work, I urge teachers to join me in transforming our previously indistinct knots of relations into tangible media so as to invite not only ourselves but also other educational practitioners and theorists to imagine further possibilities of forming creative learning communities in various contexts.
Envisioning Future Directions

In what follows, I contextualize my exploration of creative learning communities more firmly in current, encompassing educational contexts. In doing so, I particularly attend to the present circumstances in which the discourse of creativity is taking place. This serves to better situate the meaning of my curricular work through what Pinar (2007) calls “horizontality”, which is the “analysis of present circumstances…refer[ring] not only to the field’s present set of intellectual circumstances…but as well to the social and political milieus which influence and, all too often, structure this set” (Pinar, 2007, p.xiv).  

As I pointed out earlier, while creativity can have various meanings, today’s discussions on creativity are more often than not related to the skills or competencies considered as critical for the economical success of living in 21st century. In the U.S., “creativity has become increasingly prominent in policy” (Aprill et al., 2011, p.363). While emerging from different cultural contexts and histories, S. Korea and the U.S. have a lot in common in terms of the discourse of creativity in a globalized, neoliberal world. In S. Korea, President Park has continued to emphasize creativity for the future of the nation since her 2012 election campaign (See Cha & Yu, 2013). However, this creativity emerges from the context of her proposed creative economy or a creative society that can yield economic benefits through the labors of people with creativity.

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82 Pinar (2007) advises that in order to understand meanings of curriculum work better, we need to be more sensitive to “horizontality”—as described in the text above—as well as “verticality”—that is “the intellectual history of the discipline” (p. xiii)—of the field. What I present mostly in this section is the horizontality of the field today.
This rhetoric of creativity is not irrelevant to the vocationalism currently more prevalent than ever in (higher) education in the U.S. (See Pinar, 2004; Pinar, 2007; Grubb and Lazerson, 2005) as well as in S. Korea (Park, 2009; Jung, 2013). That is, although the concept of creativity now appears more often than before in educational discourses, it does so in a way that emphasizes its utilitarian value and responds to the needs of the marketplace rather than celebrating humanities and the intellectual freedom that can facilitate students’ constant “self-formation within society and the world” through education (Pinar, 2010, p.268). Harris (2014) articulates this phenomenon:

Ironically, the rhetoric of creativity is increasing in relation to schools and education. Yet the conflation of creativity with innovation is a form of ideological gentrification, in that while appearing to value the arts and creative endeavor it is really redirecting and narrowing the discourse of creativity into productive innovation and marketplace measures of value. And this more than anything signals the death knell of ‘arts education,’ which remains tainted by its relationship to risk, un-productivity (time-wasting, daydreaming) and ‘failure’—all of which are increasingly impossible in a marketplace economy. (p.19)

While I am mindful that not every kind of arts education or creative endeavor must always be good (See also Gaztambide-Fernández, 2010), I strongly agree with Harris (2014). We live in societies where only those activities that can present their utilitarian values calculated with standardized measures are considered as effectively educational; in such societies, the kinds of curriculum (often including that of arts and aesthetic education) that allow students to take lingering time, embrace risks and failure, and create
something for the sake of expressing their lived meanings, not necessarily for that of having immediate use value, are often unwelcomed.

This rhetoric that acknowledges only limited, utilitarian values of creativity hinder teachers’ and teacher educators’ envisioning of their students as well as themselves as already fundamentally creative human beings. Moreover, when this widespread vocationalism in education goes hand-in-hand with the ideology of standardization in education, teaching becomes a task of managing students, urging them to follow instructions that are proven universally effective, instead of the task of empowering them to be creative meaning-makers and engaging them in actions of expression. Such a system “tend[s] to demote teachers” and teacher educators “from scholars and intellectuals to technicians in service to the state” (Pinar, 2010, p. 268) and often measures the accountability of teachers based on students’ achievement in standardized examinations created by outside test companies (See Miller, 2014).83

The impact of partnering vocationalism with standardization is not trivial. In S. Korea, it is not only young students who suffer from such a partnering, so do pre-service teachers and teacher educators. Since 199184, those who have completed teaching programs in public/national education colleges could become teachers upon their graduations without taking any additional exams. In contrast, those who gained the certificate from private colleges needed to take exams in order to get ranked in case schools needed to hire more teachers even after they employed those public/national

83 Autio (2014) points out how the emphasis on “accountability and standardization” has been prevalent in American education system regardless of changes in government. He says:

the last 10 years have experienced a continuity of highly instrumental education and curriculum policy that even the change in the U.S. governmental education policy from the Republican No Child Left Behind to the Democratic Race to the Top policy programs has left education policy in the same if not a worsening state. (p.17).

84 Before 1991, in S. Korea, those students who had completed teaching certificate programs in public/national education colleges could become teachers upon their graduations without taking any additional exams. In contrast, those who gained the certificate from private colleges needed to take exams in order to get ranked in case schools needed to hire more teachers even after they employed those public/national
certificate programs in education colleges (or their equivalent) have been required to take a yearly national examination if they want to become teachers in S. Korean public schools. This recruiting system with the national teacher employment examination has benefits. For instance, S. Korean public schools are constantly provided with new teachers who are high academic achievers.\textsuperscript{85} However, there have also been many criticisms and efforts to reform the current system (Kim, 2004; Kang, 2008; Choi et al., 2010; Cheong, 2011). As the government has failed to control the number of colleges with teacher certificate programs (Song, 2015), the examination has become extremely competitive, especially for secondary teacher candidates. For example, in 2010, only one out of about 23 candidates who took the teacher employment exams could become a teacher (Korean Ministry of Education, 2009); in 2013, only about 10\% of the year’s graduates from public/national secondary education colleges were employed by public schools (Ha, 2013). The fact that some colleges that ‘teach to the test’ tended to show higher rates of student employment in public schools (See Lee, 2014) sadly shows how this national standardized exam has become the gauge, at least partially, which the curriculum of some education colleges is determined.

Although teacher applicants in S. Korea are given the opportunity to provide teaching demonstrations and to be interviewed in the later process of the recruitment, it is still true that those who do not achieve high enough scores in the standardized tests do not get the opportunity to demonstrate their teaching skills or personality. There have

\textsuperscript{85} Troen & Boles (2004) point out that high academic achievers in the U.S. do not tend to enter the field of teaching and that this tendency is one of the reasons for the “shortage of good teachers” in American public education.
been efforts to reform this examination and, as a result, the multiple-choice questions in the area of foundations of education (i.e. educational philosophy, curriculum studies, educational psychology, educational sociology, etc.) has recently been replaced with essay questions. Yet those new testing types do not contextualize their questions but rather ask students to simply explain general ideas regarding educational theories. This does not allow students to analyze, interpret, critique, or express their opinions, but rather urges them to memorize those theories in general terms.

As a future teacher educator and curricular theorist who will be working in the S. Korean educational system, I am expected to deal with this ironic circumstance in which S. Korean teachers—while expected to be creative in teaching future generations—are selected via standardized tests. While I will have to work together with other educational scholars and policy makers in reforming this system in the future, I believe that the act of sharing my curriculum theorizing through presenting this dissertation is also significant—not only because educators need to better envision creativity in our practices, but also because the act of expression for teachers and teacher educators, that of theorizing our own curricular practices, is to practice our creative power of engaging our students and ourselves in more meaningful educational experiences, regardless of the vocationalism and standardization that surrounds us. By giving theoretical expression to how a classroom can look differently when creativity is taken as a basis of education instead of the result of it, I contribute to imagining a different and hopefully better state of affairs in education. Also, by presenting this work as a lived curricular expression in the field of education, I hope to engage other pre- and in-service teachers in similar creative projects—not only practicing creativity as the substratum of their curriculum making but
also articulating expressively what they have lived through via their curriculum theorizing. Collectively, this would contribute to extending our imagination regarding creativity in education even further.

In imagining my future practices as a teacher educator and curriculum theorist in S. Korea, I find Miller’s (2014) inquiry extremely relevant:

I pose what might seem now to be a totally untenable question in these hyper-high-stakes and standardized times: how might we curriculum theorists, who also are teachers, teacher educators…attend to our autobiographically situated and interpreted daily processes of teaching, learning and understanding curriculum as \textit{that which we have yet—or maybe ever—to fully know}? And how might we hold this “unknowingness”—with/in these historical moments in U.S. education that overwhelmingly demand certainty—in association with differing knowledges and subjectivities constantly produced, rejected, morphed, and created anew within the everyday relationality called education? (p.24)\textsuperscript{86}

\textsuperscript{86} Miller’s (2014) understanding of the roles of curriculum theorists comes from her engagement in specific, historical movements of curriculum studies in the U.S.—particularly in the reconceptualization and, more recently, the internationalization of curriculum studies (See Pinar, 2007; Pinar, 2010; Miller, 2014; Malewski, 2010; Pacheco, 2012). Being cognizant of this specific meaning of the words “curriculum theorist” is critical as Pinar (2007) also emphasized that “verticality”—“the intellectual history of the discipline”—needs to be taken into consideration to better understand the work of curriculum (p.xiii). In the context of S. Korean curriculum studies, I have learned that “many researchers still think that curriculum involves only developing curriculum” and these scholars “influence most of the decisions made by the Association of Korean Society [sic] for Curriculum Studies” (Kim et al., 2014, p.300) (Also, see Kim, 2010). While the reconceptualist movement originated in North America has been influential in S. Korea and has resulted in Koreans exploring “more complex approaches to curriculum” (p.300), the S. Korean field of curriculum studies still needs more creative and diverse perspectives on and modes of understanding curriculum (See Kim, 2012).
Miller (2014) does not directly mention creativity or teacher education (in S. Korea). Nevertheless, from my perspective, her inquiry regarding curriculum theorizing seems to express much about creativity and teacher education. As teachers and teacher educators, we are asked to embrace what she calls “unknowingness” in our everyday acts of teaching and theorizing. To attend this “unknowingness,” in the most fundamental sense, is to accept ourselves “[a]s human beings [who] are fundamentally creative [emphasis added]” (Macintyre Latta, 2013, p.105). Such unknowingness regarding the meaning of the curricular experience that educators try to facilitate in their classrooms is not a failure, although societies that “overwhelmingly demand certainty” may view it as such. Considering that Miller (2014) associates such “unknowingness” with “differing knowledges and subjectivities constantly produced, rejected, morphed, and created anew within…education”, the fact that curriculum is something that “we have yet—or maybe ever—to fully know” (p.24) rather opens up the necessary gap, the third-space, the generative potentiality for creating meanings. It calls for the engagement of teachers and teacher educators in acts of expression regarding their curricular experiences in classrooms as a way to demonstrate responsibility.

In particular, my dissertation urges us to consider that teachers’ participation in curriculum theorizing as an act of expression in the Deweyan sense is a critical means of being responsible for their practices. Teachers’ giving theoretical expression to students’ such circumstances, my curriculum theorizing as lived expression by philosophizing my teaching practices and practicing embodied theories provides a different possibility through which to understand the curricular experiences of teachers. While curricular experiences in the reconceptualist discourse are often conducted with qualitative research methodologies, autobiographic and self-reflective studies, particularly those with a philosophical perspective, are rare in the field of curriculum in S. Korea. I hope that my philosophical inquiry into my practicing-theorizing further enriches the qualitative, lived curricular accounts having emerged in the field.
as well as their own curricular experiences does not mean that they should or could know the final and complete meanings of their practices. However, as I myself have experienced and shared in the previous chapters, I believe that teachers’ engagements in curriculum theorizing as lived expression give them opportunities to seek relational wholeness out of their seemingly disconnected experiences and to transform themselves by transforming their personal and professional experiences into the autobiographic medium of theorizing their practices. Creating a time and space for teachers to be teacher-artist-philosophers and to share their concrete-theoretical expression will empower teachers to be responsible and accountable for their practices by being awakened to the potential meanings of what they do. Empowering teachers to be creative and expressive as they already fundamentally are as human beings is one way to reject the notion of teachers’ accountability based on the results of students’ standardized test scores.

**Expressive Consummation**

As I complete this journey of curriculum theorizing as lived expression, which has empowered me to create, express, and imagine “what is not yet” (see Greene, 1995) through being with many other fellow creators in and beyond my classrooms, I find myself in the state of “consummation” (See Dewey, 1934). Nonetheless, I am mindful that this consummation is not the end in itself; it will be another “initial poin[t] of new processes of [my] development” (Dewey, 1934, p.24) as a teacher educator and curriculum theorist particularly contextualized in S. Korea while being still connected with various educational scholars in the U.S. as well as other countries around the world. Dewey (1934) reminds me:
In the process of living, attainment of a period of equilibrium is at the same time the initiation of a new relation to the environment, one that brings with it potency of new adjustments to be made through struggle. The time of consummation is also one of beginning anew. Any attempt to perpetuate beyond its term the enjoyment attending the time of fulfillment and harmony constitutes withdrawal from the world. Hence it marks the lowering and loss of vitality. But, through the phases of perturbation and conflict, there abides the deep-seated memory of an underlying harmony, the sense of which haunts life like the sense of being founded on a rock.

(p.16)

As Dewey (1934) articulates, as I contemplate this work, I am ready to live in “the [time] of beginning anew” and to welcome the necessary next “phases of perturbation and conflict” (p.16) I will encounter in new environments of my future career.

Moreover, in undergoing another transformative moment, I feel like composing imagery, a song, a poem that pictures and sings the world in which I have lived over the last few years. How my study can be applied in my future career should not be determined now when I do not yet know what my future holds. I need to leave open the space in which I can play with the given in the future. What I need to carry with me (and share with others) is, in this sense, rather a work of aesthetic expression that does not summarize my experiences in complete terms but opens them up so that my future self can make new sense of them over and over again.

Thus, in the following, I engage myself in the final act of expression, the act of singing the world of creative learning communities that I have envisioned, lived, and co-
created with my fellow students. I particularly want to invite other teachers, teacher
educators, and curriculum theorists who have read my work this far to join me in reading
this poem while contextualizing their own practices of teaching and theorizing and asking
more questions for themselves.

Creative Learning Communities—A Lived Curricular Expression

I enter a classroom
imagining yet-to-be-expressed
flesh of a thick, textured fabric
of being, living, learning (with).
Gradually, of the fabric, creative
folds are to emerge, folding and unfolding.
Flesh to be thickened.
Webs of sense making to begin dancing across bodies.

I enter a classroom
celebrating embodied, expressive beings to be with.
Textured hands are shaking and shaken
senses are made to be heard
lively voices of beings and wonders
to entwine, intertwine the others of others.
I re-enter and enter again

dialoguing on the rhythms of poems, songs, collages, and dance movements
throughout the tides of playful processes.

Enfleshed are lived meanings

into a unified whole of revealing means grooved ends.

I open up an ever-renewing curricular space to enter

I wonder, linger, and ponder in the making

All the way through while

creating, re-creating, co-creating lived experiences

of running, of learning.

with fellow students in a creative learning community

I am

teacher-

artist-

philosopher.
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APPENDIX A: COURSE SYLLABUS

TEAC 330 Multicultural Education Section 005
Spring 2012
Syllabus (Ver.1)

Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30PM – 1:45PM
H Hall Room 201

Instructor: Soon Ye Hwang (soonyehwang@huskers.unl.edu)
Office: Room 23 H Hall
Office Hours: 11:00-12:00 on Tuesdays/Thursdays & by appointment

Course Overview and Objectives
TEAC 330 is an Achievement-Centered Education (ACE) course. The purpose of this course is to provide a basic introduction to the historical, sociological, and philosophical foundations of Multicultural Education. The course will engage students in a dialogue that fosters the analysis and evaluation of educational practices effective for teaching diverse learners and for teaching about the pluralism of North America as it impacts upon teaching and learning.

Course Outcomes
In this course, students will:
1. Examine from different theoretical perspectives the nature of intergroup relations in U.S. society in order to shed light on the causes and complex dynamics of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression and intergroup conflict.
2. Study the historical and contemporary schooling experiences and contributions of marginalized and under-represented groups.
3. Analyze the influence on learning of such social identities as race, class, gender, ethnicity, and language, and to understand how discrimination based on these factors translates into school structures, policies, and practices that perpetuate inequality.
4. Develop a sound philosophical rationale for Multicultural Education, and to critically examine the role it plays in areas such as school reform, the professional development of educators, and social change.

In addition, this course is designed to help you develop the Human Relations Training skills set forth by the…Department of Education. Specifically, the skills include:
- “an awareness and understanding of the values, lifestyles, contributions, and history of a pluralistic society;
- the ability to recognize and deal with dehumanizing biases, including but not limited to sexism, racism, prejudice, and discrimination, and an awareness of the impact such biases have on interpersonal relations;
• the ability to translate knowledge of human relations into attitudes, skills, and techniques which result in favorable experiences for students;
• the ability to recognize the ways in which dehumanizing biases may be reflected in instructional materials;
• respect for human dignity and individual rights;
• the ability to relate effectively to other individuals and groups in a pluralistic society other than the teacher’s own.”
• exhibit global awareness or knowledge of human diversity through analysis of an issue.

Required Texts

* Additional articles will be assigned and uploaded on the blackboard. It is your responsibility to download the articles from the blackboard and read them according to the course schedule. I will also remind you of the additional readings in class.

Course Principles
1. Connect, Reflect, and Weave!
2. Question and Imagine Other Possibilities!
3. Play and Linger in the Process!
4. Create Your Own Experience!

Course Requirements, Expectations, and Grading Percentages
If at any time you have a question about your standing in the course, or a concern about your grade, please come to my office during the office hours or make an appointment to discuss your concerns. I fully expect everyone to pass this course, provided that the following is accomplished in a satisfactory manner:

1. Attendance & Participation (150+50=200 points)
2. Connect/Question/Play/Create Presentation 20%
3. Reflective Narrative Papers 20%
4. Search for Multiple Stories 20%
5. Collaborative Performances 10%
6. Final Work/ Reflections 10%

- Attendance (150 points)
Your consistent attendance and active participation are crucial to building a lively learning community in this course. You are expected to *arrive on time* in every class fully prepared to contribute to in-depth discussions based on the assigned readings.
Because I understand that things happen in life, I will excuse up to four absences due to an illness, personal crisis, or family emergency. However, if you want your absence to be considered an excused one you must inform me before the class via email and explain why you think the absence should be excused. When asked, you must also give me written documentation (such as doctor’s note), in the following class.  15 points will be deducted in case you are absent without notifying me in advance. Two unexcused absences will drop you one letter grade (ex. AèA-). And, if you accumulate 20% of the course (six absences), you will fail the course. If you arrive after attendance has been taken, you may be marked absent. Repeated late arrivals and early departures can also cause your grade to be reduced.

- Participation (5x10=50 points)
For the participation points, you are expected to upload your “Wonder-full Questions” based on the reading of the day.
For your “Wonder-full Questions,” you will write five (or more if you want) questions about the assigned readings of the week. Each question should consist of two parts: summary of the point the author is making and your question(s) related to that. For example, “I found interesting that Howard’s suggestion that there were certain assumptions behind the strategies that Europeans used to enhance their dominance. I’m wondering if these assumptions are related to current relationships between America and other countries.” I am encouraging you to ask various kinds of questions. You can ask questions that are reflective, imaginative, comparative, empathetic, critical, expansive, etc.
Your “Wonder-full Questions” should be posted on blackboard before class begins for 10 weeks. Among the 12 weeks you are given reading assignments, you can choose 10 weeks to post your questions on blackboards. Write down your questions directly in the content box on blackboard rather than attaching as a document file so that your classmates can access your questions more easily and give feedback to each other. Read your classmates’ questions, as I will bring some of them into our class discussions. Also, the wonder-full questions posted by your classmates can work as rich resources for you and give you insights for your presentation. Play with each other’s wonder-full questions and make connections!

2. Connect/Question/Play/Create Presentation (50+100+50=200 points)
This presentation is a key component of this course and an invitation for each student to actively participate and contribute to the mutual learning of multicultural education in class. Through this presentation, you will have a chance to express your own understandings and inquiries of multicultural issues in creative ways.

Note that this presentation is NOT a typical power-point presentation. Rather, I encourage you to encounter, wonder, and ponder about ideas and issues in multicultural education with artistic media of your choice. You can choose whatever you are comfortable to work with: for example, painting, drawing, filming, music, singing, playing, theatre, dancing, poetry, creative stories, collage, photography, music video, etc.
However, this is NOT to see if you have great artistic skills and techniques. The artistic medium is a tool to help not only you but also the class as a whole render mutual learning “visible” to each other. You should not be worried about your lack of artistic skills. What I am looking for in this assignment is the *playful* *process* of your learning. Try to make sense of the theories, ideas, and stories from your readings, actively making *connections* with your own lived experiences and our various conversations in class; *play* with the ideas and the relations across and beyond; reflect upon and *question* the obvious and the taken-for-granted; and *create* something through which you can express your ideas and experiences. I care much more about your playful processes and depth of your inquiry than your artistic skills.

Along the same line, this presentation is not to show off your artistic talent but to engage your classmates to think further and have more interesting and deeper conversations. So, in your presentation, you do not just “present” your ideas or work and describe merely what you have done. You will share with your classmates how you have made connections with the readings, how you have played with some ideas mediated by the artistic materials, and what you are wondering further about. In this way, you can invite your peers to be engaged not only in your creative processes and products but also some issues and concepts in multicultural educations in more creative ways. If you want to, you can also design some activities to invite your classmates to actively participate in lively experiences.

The presentations will begin January 31st. In each class, two students will present. After about 20 minutes of presentations (10 minutes each), we will have time for giving feedback to each other and questioning about the presentations. It is your responsibility to be well prepared to present your work and invite your classmates to share your experience for mutual learning. Remember that this presentation is not to present for the sake of presentation, but to create a lively learning community in our classroom together. Your playing and expressions matter for others’ learning.

This assignment has three steps:

**STEP 1. Submit your in-process proposal with in-process documents (50 points)**

As I emphasized above, one of the most important aspects of this presentation is the *process*. I encourage you to keep any document that can show how your ideas have been developed in the process. For example, doodling, scribbling, quotes from books, series of photos of your work in progress, journal entries, scrapped newspaper, a picture from a magazine, video clips, music links or music score, memos from dialogues, etc. Along with the documents, briefly describe what those documents are and propose what you want to present in the presentation. It is an in-process proposal. You don’t have to write an academic paper about your preparation or bring documents that are neatly arranged. Just roughly describe about the working processes you have been through in relation to your presentation format and topic.

Submit this in-process proposal with documents at least **24 hours** before your presentation by e-mail. If you need to submit in person, contact me.
Also, if you feel lost in your process, do not wait until the last minute; feel free to contact me as early as possible and share your challenges with me. I cannot give you the answer, but I will try my best to help you keep going.

* I strongly recommend that you keep a notebook for this course and particularly for this presentation. For your notebook, you can utilize whatever forms, genres, and “languages” you choose. It can be a written work, a virtual site, a series of three-dimensional works, or a performance. Keeping the notebook will help you keep your in-process documents and develop ideas along the course. This will also help for developing your final work.

STEP 2. Presentations in class (100 points)
You will sign up for the date of your presentation at the beginning of the semester. It is your responsibility to be aware of your presentation schedule and prepare in advance. You will have about 10 minutes to present your work. At the end, you will have a question and comment section. Although this is designed to be an individual presentation, your presentation can be done as a group in case you prefer. (For example, you may want to develop a skit or collaborative dance performance.) If this is the case, consult with me in advance so that we can come up with an alternative way.
If you need to re-arrange tables and chairs in the classroom for your presentation, also inform me in advance.

STEP 3. Submit a presentation reflection paper (50 points)
After your presentation, you will write a reflection paper about the whole process. This is one-page single-spaced reflection paper due on the following week of your presentation. I want you to reflect mostly on what you have experienced and learned in your presentation. You are encouraged to write about how you made connections among the ideas from the assigned book(s) and your own experiences for the artistically mediated presentation. Also, reflect on what you have learned from the conversations after the presentation with your classmates. Is there anything you found new, interesting, challenging, troubling, etc.? What are your remaining questions? How you want to explore the issues further?

3. Reflective Narrative Papers (4x50=200 points)
Based on the required books, you will be asked to write four 1-page single-spaced reflective narrative papers throughout the semester (no more than 2 pages at the most for each paper). Submit your paper on blackboard before class.

Keep in mind that you should write one reflective narrative paper for each book, but you can pick the day to submit it. I will remind you of this paper in class. However, it is your responsibility to keep up with the reading schedule and submit each paper in time. Late papers will not be accepted.

The papers will be written according to the following three framework factors, based on Adler & Van Doren (1972). How to read a book. New York: Simon and Schuster:
1. Recovery of Meaning

This framework factor requires careful textual analysis. Readers are expected, when first reading a text, to accept it at face value and to understand it in its own terms. The text is not to be argued with from a personal point of view, psychologized, historicized, socialized, or any of the other perspectives that permit alternative reading and interpretation of a text.

2. Reconstruction of Meaning and Personal Practical Knowledge

This framework factor requires the opposite of the one above. Readers have reactions, insights, and interpretive questions of texts they are reading. These reactions constitute links with personal practical knowledge related to learning, teaching, and research. **Readers have an experiential history, and multiple biographies and multiple stories to tell, which relate to reading.**

3. Reading at the Boundaries: Linking Meaning of Texts and Personal Understanding of Texts to a Broader Context

This framework factor requires making meaning out of readings by linking the meaning of texts, and personal understanding of texts, to a broader social, political, economic, cultural, linguistic, and disciplinary context. Readers may reconstruct the meaning of specific events by looking at change in the classroom, school, and society.

This framework permeates various orientations of the foundation of education, student reflections upon their educational experiences, student observations of teachers in field placements, and teacher reflections upon their experiences of teaching and being taught. This framework provides a means of acknowledging research texts as they are presented, as well as personal and professional experiences of schooling as they relate to these texts.

* Please make sure to keep the first part (Recovery of Meaning) succinct (no more than about 7 lines). You don’t have to summarize the whole story of the book. Just go straight to the key point(s) you want to explore in the following sections. Focus more on the second part (Reconstruction) of the paper and tell your own narratives in relation to the theme. Connect, reflect, and play with the ideas you have found from the book.

4. Search for Multiple Stories (50+50+100=200 points)

Search for Multiple Stories project is to encourage you to have some “multicultural” experiences and learn from the stories and lived experiences of the students you are working with and/or interviewing and observing. For this assignment, you will find a place to work with student(s) who are from a different background than yours (in terms of race, language, socio economic status, gender, culture, nation, etc.). You will find multiple stories about the student(s) intermingled with your stories and share them with your classmates throughout the semester. You will also write a paper about your experience with the student(s) you have worked with and what you have learned from the experience, making connections to the course readings, activities and discussions in class.
There are three steps for this assignment.

STEP 1. Submit a single-spaced one-page proposal on January 26th (50 points) on blackboard. The proposal should include:
- General information about the place/context you will visit (name of the institution/organization, title of the program/course/class, website address, schedule of your visit, etc.)
- General information of the student(s) you will be working with (race, class, gender, ethnicity, language, etc.)
- General plan for your search for multiple stories (Why did you pick this place? What are your expectations and assumptions about the place and the students? What do you want to experience/learn? What are you curious about? How do you want to work with your student(s)? etc.)

* When you have difficulties in finding the right place, you should consult with me as soon as possible. Please feel free to email me or visit me during my office hour. You can also make an appointment via email if you prefer to meet other times. I will upload the list of some possible places you can visit and their contact information on blackboard. It is your responsibility to contact the people, explain about this project, make arrangements for your visit and negotiate the task you will do when visiting. But if there are some difficulties and problems, I will do my best to help you.

STEP 2. Go search for multiple stories of your student(s) and write in-process journals (5x10=50 points)
- Work with the students at least five hours throughout the semester. (You can work with the same students as a group, if you want to. Please consult with me. This is designed as an individual project. However, if you want to work as a group, we can come up with some alternative ideas.)
- Keep a journal that shows what you have done with your student(s), what you have found new, interesting, and puzzling from the day, and what you want to know more next time. Each journal (at least single-spaced one-page paper; you can write more, if you want) counts as 10 points. In total, you will hand in five journals worth 50 points, due on March 15th. I encourage you to write the journals after each of your fieldworks and revisit and develop them as necessary. These journals will help your learning in process when you are given in-class time to share your experience and inquiries with your peers in a small group throughout the semester.
- When you search for multiple stories, keep in mind that you are in the midst of your as well as your student(s)’ “three dimensional narrative inquiry space” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50): personal and social (interaction), the past, present, and future (continuity) coalesced with the notion of place (situation). In a small group discussion, this also can guide you and your peers more fully understand you and your student’s intermingled stories.
- You are expected to actively make sense of your experiences making connections with your readings and connecting/playing/making presentations and share them with your peers in class. This will help you develop your ideas for your final paper.
STEP 3. Final paper (100 points)
Your final paper for this assignment is due on March 29th. Write a 6-page double-spaced paper about what you have learned from your working with the students to search for multiple stories, making connections to readings, activities, and conversations in class. Rather than explaining all the observations and stories gathered, write a final paper around a theme or two in depth referring to some literatures. At the end of the paper, write down three or more remaining questions that you want to explore more.

5. Collaborative Performances (50+50=100 points)

STEP 1: Performance (50 points)
You will work as a group for this project and present parts of The Laramie project as a theater team. As a group, you will discuss and analyze the stories and characters of the play. The performance day is April 17th and 19th. You will be graded as a group.

STEP 2: Reflection paper (50 points)
After the performance, you will write a one-page single-spaced reflection paper about your collaborative performing presentation experience. It is due in the following week of the performance. The exact due date will be announced later.
* More detailed guidelines for this collaborative performance will be given later.

6. Final Work & Reflections (50+50=100 points)

- Final Work for Exhibition/Performances of the course (50 points)
On the last two days of the course (April 24th and 26th), we will have a culminating exhibitions and performances in class. You will bring your final works for exhibition and/or performances. You can either develop your final work from the work you have created for your presentation or create a totally different one.

- Final Reflection Paper (50 points)
For the final reflection paper, you will write a three-page double-spaced paper about your learning experiences in this course throughout the semester. When writing the paper, reflect upon the following questions:
  ✓ What were the experiences in this class that you found interesting/ challenged/ puzzling/ confused/ helpful/ etc.? Why do you think you feel that way?
  ✓ What have you learned about multicultural education, if any?
  ✓ What have you learned about teaching and learning ‘multiculturally,’ if any?
  ✓ What have you learned from your peers and/or instructor, if any?
  ✓ As a future teacher, how do you want to apply what you have learned in this course to your own future class?
  ✓ What are some remaining questions and inquiries you want to explore after this class and in your career?
  ✓ And your own questions.

You don’t have to answer all the questions above. But, first reflect on various aspects of the course and your learning experiences. Then write the reflection paper around a few themes you want. This last paper is due on May 1st.
## Course Grading System

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<th>Notes</th>
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**Total** 1000

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<td>C+</td>
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Personal Conference
In the first few weeks, you will sign up for the personal conference with me. This personal conference is scheduled for me to understand your needs and inquiries for the course better as well as to give you chances to ask any questions about the course. I will try my best to answer your questions and help you prepare for your learning experiences in this course. When necessary, I may have another personal conference scheduled toward the end of the semester. In addition to this conference, remember that you can always visit me in my office hours or you can meet me at my office after making a schedule with me via email.

Academic Honesty/Dishonesty Statement
“Academic honesty is essential to the existence and integrity of an academic institution. The responsibility for maintaining that integrity is shared by all members of the academic community. To further serve this end, the University supports a Student Code of Conduct which addresses the issue of academic dishonesty.”

Diversity Statement
“The University…is committed to a pluralistic campus community through Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. We assure reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act.
“Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact me for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University …to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office…”

Statement on Academic Freedom and Creating a Viable Learning Community
Over the course of this semester we will address a variety of topics that some consider controversial, including issues of race, gender, culture, religion, morality, sexuality, and violence. You have a right to your personal beliefs about such issues and are encouraged to express your opinions, as they are relevant to the course, even if others in the class may be offended by or in disagreement with those perspectives. You also have a right to express your disagreement with various views expressed in class, whether by me, guest speakers, or other students in the class. Finally, you have a right (and I would suggest a responsibility) to decide whether or not to modify your views as the course progresses. Particularly since this course is offered under the auspices of the College of Education and Human Sciences, class participants are expected to be cognizant of how to help
create a viable learning community that leads to a positive educational experience for all. At a minimum, the values of respect, civility, and tolerance—so necessary to our pluralistic democracy—will be practiced in this class. Failure to do so can result in disciplinary action.

Text Messages/Beepers/Cell Phone Policy
Please make sure your cellular phone or other electronic communication device is TURNED OFF or set to silent mode during class. Reading or responding to text messages and taking phone calls and voice mails should happen on your own time, that is, before and after—but not during—class. However, if for some reason you feel you must maintain contact with the outside world, please discuss your needs with me (for example, if you serve as a volunteer fire fighter and must be on call). Your engagement with scheduled course activities should take priority while class is in session.