The Teacher Monologues
Exploring the Identities and Experiences of Artist-Teachers

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The Teacher Monologues
The play’s the thing all right, as this startlingly original work—the very cutting edge of a/r/tography—demonstrates. Welcome to a performance you won’t forget.

—William F. Pinar, Canada Research Chair in Curriculum Studies, University of British Columbia

Carter’s book invites readers to immerse themselves in a rich tapestry of theoretical and artistic work. Her a/r/tographical approach sheds light on the complex world of theatre artists transitioning to the teaching profession. Her writing, deeply anchored in current literature, cuts across multiple disciplines making this book relevant to any scholar interested in arts-based research.

—Dr. George Belliveau, Professor, University of British Columbia

Mindy Carter shares her compelling study of theatre specialists using a/r/tography as a way to examine the sometimes conflicting and sometimes complementary identities of artist and pedagogue engaged in inquiry. She does this brilliantly through theatrical monologues—bringing theory to life and life to theory. This is a must read for all theatre specialists interested in education!

—Rita Irwin, Professor & Associate Dean of Teacher Education, The University of British Columbia
DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to Kevin Paul John Hayes, Benjamin Francis Carter-Hayes, Harrison Howard Carter-Hayes, Debra Ann Cunningham and Leslie Blake Carter. Thank-you all for your patience, understanding, support and love.
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FOREWORD

What are the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves as teachers? As teaching artists? As artists becoming teachers? These are some of the intriguing questions Mindy Carter addresses in this study that resonate with me at both personal and professional levels. I, too, have a background in theatre and a degree in acting, along with Carter and her participants. I, too, experienced the challenging shift in moving away from the theatre world and entering into the world of education. I, too, rediscovered the joy of performance in the act of teaching.

None of these tasks are simple, and I appreciate how Carter both honors the complexity of this identity change and theorizes in innovative ways around how theatre theory and praxis inform curriculum studies. At one level, when a theatre artist moves into the public education system, there is a systemic transfer that occurs. The theatre world is a small one, and most often artists will be working in organizations with anywhere from a few people to (at the most) a few dozen in total. Even if working at large theatre festivals such as Canada’s Stratford or Shaw Festivals that may employ some hundreds of artists and support staff, these organizations are tiny when compared to the size and scale of the institution of public education. A single urban high school may house some thousands of people each day, an elementary school some hundreds, with well-established and maintained power-based bureaucracies in place. This systemic alteration in the working life of a theatre artist becoming a teacher takes some time to get used to, I know from my own lived experience. At another level, this new teacher must also negotiate her way into a large system with many built-in constraints, curriculum and assessment being two of the central ones. The artworld continues to struggle in a neo-liberal First World culture and society that underfunds and undervalues the arts, but at the same time artists ideally enjoy a lot of freedom in how they go about doing their work. The world of Western public education was historically constructed on a factory model during the Industrial Revolution and as such has systems of surveillance, efficiency and control built in at every level (attendance, reports, testing, supervision, accountability, etc.). Many teaching artists understandably resist these constraints, yet are made increasingly aware that these are the realities of the spaces they will occupy and live in with their students. The question then becomes how to not just survive but to thrive in a new professional life that to artists may feel oppressive?

Carter suggests that we employ a theatre-based strategy to support this process in the form of crafting teaching monologues as a component of a teacher education program. I see the monologues shared in her study sitting quite closely to soliloquies in that they feature a person talking to herself rather than to another person. In the monologues presented here, one participant faces the challenge of teaching elementary math for the first time and we witness her thinking in the moment (as does every actor) about how to make the lesson work. In a second monologue, a participant considers how her audience of bored teenagers is receiving her as she tries to ignite their passion for Shakespeare. In both of these
pieces, I made immediate sense memory connections to the one and only time I had to teach a math lesson on my first practicum 25 years ago, and to the great risks and rewards I experienced in allowing my performer self out to play when teaching secondary English classes. As a side note, it has always puzzled me how I never felt my actor self had a role to play in my drama classes; I considered acting for or with my students to be inappropriate somehow, and that my role had to shift into a more directorial one as a teacher. Yet more constraints to encounter and improvise within!

I heartily agree with Carter’s thesis that assisting theatre artists (or indeed artists in all disciplines) in the process of becoming teacher—by inviting them to explore the inner dialogue their active “I” is engaging in with their reflective “Me” as they teach—may be an effective way to support this difficult transition (Prendergast, 2003). I have invited post-degree secondary level education students, in a course on drama and cultural diversity, to look at the work of American theatre artist Anna Deavere-Smith. Deavere-Smith conducts hundreds of interviews on a chosen socio-political topic or event and then performs excerpts of selected interviews that survey the topic from every perspective, without judgment (Deavere-Smith, 2006). My students write three-voiced monologues that explore an educational diversity issue from three distinct perspectives (teacher-student-administrator; student-teacher-parent; teacher-administrator-listening wall of the office or classroom, etc.). The empathy that can be acquired, for both self and others, in the process of creating and sharing monologues/soliloquies on multiple aspects of teaching practice appears to me to be a more than worthwhile curriculum event.

Stepping comfortably and fluidly into multiple roles is a skill that theatre artists bring to the teaching profession. Teaching and learning is a performance, always, and the more that pre-service teachers can enter into this performative task with confidence and creativity the better off they and their future students will be (Prendergast, 2008). Carter’s study reinforces with empirical and arts-based research my felt intuition that theatre-based approaches are needed in teacher education. The attention she pays to mindfulness and the positive long-lasting effects of intensive ensemble-based theatre training lead our thinking in the right direction.

To conclude, I wish to redirect my focus within Carter’s study to her intriguing and innovative use of the theatre theories of Antonin Artaud as applied to curriculum. As Carter correctly notes, theatre has been under-studied in the field of curriculum. The theories of Bertolt Brecht and Augusto Boal seem the most common defaults in terms of acknowledging the work of artists who were interested in liberatory pedagogy through theatre. To view the scandalous, troubling yet fecund works of Artaud in this way feels radical to me, and is therefore a valuable contribution and model for those, like Carter and like me, who straddle the worlds of theatre and curriculum.

REFERENCES


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NOTE

This book required the approval of the University of British Columbia’s Behavioral Research Ethics Board. Ethics was obtained for this research and renewed each year that this book and study were in progress.
CHAPTER I

POSITIONINGS, PLACEMENTS AND POSTULATIONS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Either we will be ... capable of recovering within ourselves those energies that ultimately create order and increase the value of life, or else we might as well abandon ourselves now, without protest, and recognize that we are no longer good for anything but disorder, famine, blood, war, and epidemics. (Artaud, 1938/1958, p. 80)

There is no way out of this predicament except for an individual to take things in hand personally. If values and institutions no longer provide as supportive a framework as they once did, each person must use whatever tools are available to carve out a meaningful, enjoyable life. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990/2008, p. 16)

The Play within the Play

What follows in this book can be understood through the theatrical convention of metatheatre, a play within a play, like Pyramus and Thisbe in Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Also called stories within stories, outer texts often give information from the real world before framing an inner story that may be entertaining or used as an alternative way to reveal the truth of the outer story. These nested stories can utilize multiple forms of information such as theoretical ideas, artistic representations or emergent understandings to deepen, complicate and satirize unquestioned ways of knowing, living and thinking. Darrell Dobson (2005), George Belliveau (2006) and Johnny Saldanda (2003, 2005) have all used their own versions of this technique in their research as a way to articulate their qualitative projects while simultaneously questioning and exploring what it means to do arts-based research or create an aesthetic epistemology within an educational culture. This approach to arts based educational research also allows for “the meaning making that happens within the moment of action, within an artistic activity or upon reflection and sharing with others” (Belliveau, 2006, p.11) to take place.

In this book, the chapters theoretically and methodologically situate the research within the field of curriculum studies and discuss: Conservatory-style actor training programs, teacher education programs, the transition from pursuing a career in the professional theater to one as an educator and participant interviews. Between
these chapters are Interludes that share my a/r/tographical experiences working with the monologues written by participants and referred to as The Teacher Monologues. The Interludes also highlight through dialogue and theoretical exposition my search to articulate, experience and use in-between spaces, a/r/tography and ideas about the field of curriculum rhizomatically.

A/r/tography is an arts based research methodology that offers the artist/teacher/researcher a way to postulate and write about the multiple positions that they embody. By using the structure of chapters and interludes, I am attempting to weave artistic and theoretical work to simultaneously embrace and resist bifurcation by separating art from scholarship and then bringing them together as a way of making meaning and deepening understandings.

**The Power of Identity and Subjectivities**

The multiplicity of identities that a/r/tographic approaches allow for presupposes that an individual view identity as something other than fixed. This means that we “… categorize ourselves in a range of ways and these (ways) may have conflicting and/or diverse ideologies and/or positions—for instance, a teacher might (be) a feminist, environmental activist, wife and mother and identify herself within all these groupings” (Wales, 2009, p. 263). In this way, identity can be seen as multiple; constantly shifting, realigning and reforming (Gergen & Gergen, 1997).

Since identity can be thought of as evolving, questions about how one thinks about themselves, categorizes who they are, or the way they react emotionally etc. to various experiences, links subjectivity to identity. Subjectivity means that although a group of people such as teachers may link a part of their identity to being a teacher, each individual will have a different emotional, physical etc. reaction to various life experiences. Ellis & Flaherty (1992, p. 75) suggest that subjectivities are the “human lived experience and the physical, political, and historical context of that experience”. This means that “… thoughts, feelings, opinions and reactions are subjective (and) subjectivities can be regarded as the ways in which we perceive, feel and express ourselves” (Wales, 2009, p. 264).

For example, one of the participants in this study, who in part identifies, and has had others identify her as an actor, found that when she was in front of a classroom of students on practicum she felt like she should still be performing as she would perform a role. When discussing this occurrence during an interview, this individual said that she felt between the identities of actor on stage and in role and teacher struggling to teach a classroom of grade five students. Conversely, another participant with similar acting and teaching experiences found that her identity as a teacher in the school setting was informed but separate from her identity as an actor. Thus, although both individuals conceive of their identities as actor and teacher, their reactions, or subjectivities, in similar situations differ.

Numerous pedagogical studies highlight the link between how teachers see themselves and present their personalities in the classroom to the ways they have been influenced by past experiences and practices (Chapman, 2002; Davies, 1996; Klein, 1998; Pendergast & McWilliam, 1999). Results of such studies suggest that
teachers need to look at their experiences and subjectivities in order to then exercise agency in their teaching and lives. It is only once teachers develop this ability, to exercise and act upon their own thoughts in particular situations, or agency, that they can empower their students to do the same.

This sentiment, that we must care or make positive personal changes before trying to improve the lives of others, speaks to the growing research in teacher education that questions the merit of placing students in the center of all learning situations. Alternately, research suggests placing teachers at the core of teacher education studies as a way of examining their subjectivities and abilities to resist, subvert and change the very discourses that they may hold about themselves (Chapman, 2002; Davies, 1996; McWilliam, 1999; Pendergast & McWilliam, 1999; Wales, 2009). Part of the importance of examining teacher’s experiences in teacher education in this way is that much of “… teachers’ feelings are an important aspect of their work because much of the work of teachers is about how they express their identities and personalities in the classroom” (Wales, 2009, p. 263).

Since acting is sometimes described as an altered state of consciousness or heightened awareness (Scheiffele, 1995) and the participants in this research all studied in a Canadian Conservatory style actor training program and then worked or pursued a career as a theatre professional in Canada before transitioning to an education related field; the affects of actor training on their knowledge construction, teaching, identities and subjectivities is important to consider. Recognizing the unique impact of acting programs on learners and a description of the acting and education programs that participants attended are explained in Chapter 2. These descriptions are provided to help the reader understand the shift in identity from artist to teacher that participants experienced and why the 2004 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report points to arts teachers possibly being at the greatest risk for leaving the teaching profession (Luekens, Lyter, Fox, & Chandler, 2004).

**Arts Teacher Retention**

Since the 2004 NCES report was released, additional research on arts teacher retention and job satisfaction has identified that “arts teachers, perhaps more so than other subject area teachers, are especially prone to alienation and isolation due in no small part to the specialized nature of their subject area that results in fewer, if any, colleagues with matching backgrounds, experiences and interests” (Scheib, 2006, p. 6). While initially many fine arts teachers may come to teaching through their active involvement with their subject matter and an interest in creating and sharing this art with students, the support for these new artist-teachers who have in part constructed their identities during their undergraduate fine arts training as performers, find that their artist identities are not supported in the school system (Roberts, 1990). This identity conflict leads to what research has named role stress (Beehr, 1987; Scheib, 2003). This role stress “occurs as a result of conflicting, overwhelming, or unsatisfactory expectations identified by the person holding an
occupational role within an organization ... occupations that hold positions between organizations or systems (are called) boundary positions and are even more susceptible to role stress” (Scheib, 2006, pp. 6–7). Role stress, boundary positions and identity socialization are, as one might infer, factors that lead many teachers to leave the profession within the first few years of teaching.

Because artist-teachers often have roles as artists in various organizations outside of the school setting, they can be classified as holding the boundary positions that research indicates contribute to higher than normal attrition rates for this subset of teachers. The term boundary positions that Scheib uses to describe the artist-teacher in his research, also brings to mind the multiple identities found in a/r/tography. Particular to a/r/tography is its attention and commitment to embracing the liminal spaces between identities. In a/r/tography this attention to the in-between allows one to consider how various identities impact the others through processes of inquiry and self-awareness. This approach is different than viewing the shift from being an artist to becoming a teacher as represented by the term boundary position because while the artist-teacher in a boundary position struggles with their new identity as this an artist-teacher and not this and that an artist and a teacher and an artist-teacher, a/r/tography embraces the multiplicity and complexity of an individuals experiences, subjectivities and evolving identities. Thus, finding ways to support new artist-teachers who can view their identities as multiple, in order to help them to develop agency and a sense of subjectification that allows them to exercise their agency, is at the heart of *The Teacher Monologues: Exploring the Experiences and Identities of Artist-Teachers*.

This work builds on John Scheib’s (2006) findings about retention and boundary identities for music and visual arts teachers by questioning the classification of artist-teacher and extending his work to consider the experiences of individuals trained in Conservatory acting programs who pursue teaching.

Specifically, Scheib makes policy recommendations to: provide music and visual arts teachers with professional development opportunities to make art and to support these teachers with mentors as early as possible in their careers. In Scheib’s research, arts teacher refers to teachers with fine arts training who then teach a fine art. These particular artist-teachers may feel isolated because they are frequently the only person teaching in their subject area and physically their classroom space is often separate from other subject-area classrooms. This is the situation because physically visual arts rooms require special ventilation, music rooms have acoustical needs and theatre spaces require larger rehearsal and workshop spaces than what can be accommodated in a traditional classroom. While such concerns are part of Scheib’s research and writings on the artist-teacher, I contend that teachers who are/were artists before pursuing teaching, but who do not teach in the arts, face the same adjustment to teaching issues that new arts-teachers do simply because they have also developed their identities and subjectivities around being an artist and then becoming a teacher.

Adjustment to teaching issues may include adapting to the regular schedule that teaching requires over the irregular hours that are often equated with the artist’s intensive rehearsals and evening performances, changing the way that they dress.
and groom themselves in accordance with the professional workplace environment required by many schools or possibly realigning their actions/behavior to fit in with the increasingly conservative profession of teaching. It may even be that the non-art teaching artist-teacher may find it more difficult to teach than the arts teacher because these individuals do not even have a teaching identity that links them to their art making on a daily basis. Such concerns such as the identity shift that appears to be experienced by the artist who is also becoming a teacher have led to the following research question: What are the lived experiences of individuals with Conservatory style actor training who pursue teaching?

In addition to this research question, I have also chosen to explore one of Scheib’s policy recommendations that says that having new arts teachers make art helps them to adapt to their new role as a teacher. Because I am considering the experiences of actors who pursue teaching and monologues offer both a dramatic and reflective experience for those who write them, an additional question guiding this inquiry is: Did writing a monologue about a problematic educational moment help participants in their pedagogical development? How?

While these research questions guide and help to frame the research study, I am also cognizant of the emergent nature of the a/r/tographic methodology that I am choosing to use. This means that although I explore these questions in the chapters and interludes, I am also open to the possibility that the questions will evolve as the study unfolds.

1.2 THE RESEARCH STUDY

This being said, I began by trying to answer these research questions by learning about and using autobiographical, arts-based and a/r/tographical methods during my doctoral course-work within the field of curriculum studies, in order to examine some of my own experiences as a new teacher who once trained and worked full time as an actor. These opportunities allowed for self-reflection framed by the previously mentioned research methods and led me to write about some moments during my first three years of teaching that surprised me. Issues such as counseling students who cut themselves, spoke about suicide, brought knives to school or came to class high on marijuana were written using free associative scripted dialogue from my personal and practical experiences. Writing about these issues through scripted dialogue became a way for me to reflect and reframe the experiences. Associated with the concept of personal, practical knowledge is narrative inquiry, developed and pioneered by Connelly and Clandinin (Clandinin, 1985, 1989; Connelly & Clandinin, 2000). In this arts-informed form of qualitative research, narratives are studied as a means of conveying findings. This research project uses the monologue as a storied, narrative form. Narrative monologue writing allows participants to enter into a currere-like process described in greater detail later in this chapter by providing them with the opportunity to revisit an educational issue that is in some way holding them back in their pedagogical development. This process offers the participants the opportunity to re-enter a moment as a character and then eventually work through the moments in role, in
the hopes of reframing a past problematic experience. For the actor-teacher, being in role and writing as if compliments their actor training, discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

The second research question, that asks if writing a monologue helps participants come to terms with a difficult educational problem, explores the potential importance of using the monologue form rather than another free-associative form of narrative inquiry for the actor-teacher. This is done by developing the idea that by creating a character based upon one’s own experiences in a monologue, the author is provided with an opportunity to partially distance him/herself from an uncomfortable issue that might more easily be articulated through another voice rather than the author’s own.

Thus, in the first phase of the research project four participants wrote a monologue about their teaching experiences. These monologues can be found in the second Interlude and in Appendix one. They are entitled: *Gallop Apace, On Stage on Both, Reflections on Teaching* and *If We Shadows have Offended*.

Selected participant feedback 1 handed in with the monologues included:

– Thanks for this opportunity. Writing this monologue was a great outlet for me during my practicum! I didn’t realize that I was still thinking about some of the issues that came through in my piece and that they needed to “come out”.

– It has taken me a long time to think and move through feeling self-doubt when teaching but when I sat down to write my monologue it was like I was right back in that moment and it poured out of me. It felt like it only took me 5 minutes to write and I didn’t make any revisions.

In addition to eliciting promising feedback from participants, such as the way that one participant was able to work through feelings of self-doubt, the first phase of the project also provided valuable information as to who would most benefit from writing a reflective monologue (i.e. new teachers with acting backgrounds who were doubting their abilities as teachers). This data made me wonder how, for example, issues of self-doubt might be related to the isolation described in the research on artist-teachers. It also led me to construct the second phase of the research project for new teachers and educators from Canada who had taken a Conservatory actor training program.

In addition to the rationale of teacher retention for this study, the first phase of the project and my own experience writing a reflective monologue about teaching, I also examined in depth the life and works of Antonin Artaud because he exemplifies a theatre artist who lived in a boundary position. Artaud was an artist who in addition to acting, directing and drawing wrote extensively about not feeling as though he or his work fit into the society within which he lived. Because Artaud chose to try and articulate these feelings of disconnect with himself, his society and others through writing and art, Artaud’s life and works offer an important perspective to the participant’s experiences. In addition to the perspective Artaud brings to the participant’s boundary positions, the French artist is discussed in this book because of some of the theatrical concepts he developed in

1 All participants have pseudonyms.
his lifetime. These concepts include the Body without Organs (BwO) and Theatre of Cruelty which have since his death been theorized and explored by prolific theatre director Peter Brooks and philosophers such as Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. By tracing their expansion of his work to the actor training programs that participants spent time studying in, additional support for using Artaud as the chosen figure for understanding the lived experiences of actor-teachers with Conservatory style acting programs is provided. Finally, I feel that because Artaud continually struggled to act subjectively and exert his agency, despite the mental illness and drug addictions that plagued his life and forced him into asylums, that Artaud is an exceptional example of someone who tried against all odds to live life authentically. In relation to the earlier discussion on fixed and multiple identities, allowing oneself to be this and that complicates the way that Artaud was viewed by some as insane and by others as a prophet, artist, madman, writer, actor, director. In order to deepen and then expand upon the life and works of Artaud in relation to the study and research questions, time will now be spent describing his life and works.

1.3 ANTONIN ARTAUD

Antoine Marie Joseph Artaud, called Antonin (little Antoine) was born on September 4th, 1896, in Marseilles, France. Antonin was one of nine children, only three of whom survived. From an early age, ailments such as meningitis began to plague Artaud. These physical ailments were coupled with psychic troubles that appeared at the age of 19 and home-remedies concocted by his father such as attaching a machine that produced static electricity to his son’s head at the age of 5. In 1914, right before graduating high school Artaud had a nervous breakdown. As a result of this he destroyed all of his poems, began praying incessantly and was determined to become a priest. His family responded to this behavior by arranging rest cures for him over the next 5 years. After he recovered from this particular episode, Artaud claimed that during his breakdown someone who wanted to keep him from fulfilling his life’s destiny had attacked him. These attacks are said to have recurred numerous times throughout the rest of his life. Antonin’s family spent a lot of money to move him from one clinic to another, finally ending up in a Swiss clinic near Neuchatel where he was prescribed opium and encouraged to draw and write. After a few years in this clinic Artaud was given over to the care of Dr. and Mme. Toulouse and allowed to move to Paris.

During the next 16 years (1920–1936) in Paris Artaud dedicated himself to the theatre, film and writing. Though finding some success as a film actor, Artaud was chronically broke after the death of his father in 1924. Poverty coupled with his addiction to drugs such as laudanum, opium and heroin meant he occasionally had to move in with his mother, who had moved to Paris after his father’s death, and that many of his personal relationships and theatre projects were unrealized. Also

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2 References for background information on Artaud are taken from Barker (2008), Bermel (1977), Costich (1978), Esbelleman and Bador (1995), and Goodall (1994).
in the mid 1920s, Artaud attempted to have some of his poetry published in *The French Review*. Although the poetic attempts that Artaud offered to Jacques Rivieré were continuously turned down for publication, the letters that Rivieré and Artaud began writing back and forth were eventually published. This series of letters provides an example of how conscious Artaud was of the restrictions he felt his mind was having on his ability to fully express what he wanted to do artistically, whereas previously the editor thought that it was simply a matter of Artaud’s underdeveloped writing abilities that held him back.

… Thinking means something more to me than not being completely dead. It means being in touch with oneself at every moment; it means not ceasing for a single moment to feel oneself in one’s inmost being, in the unformulated mass of one’s life, in the substance of one’s reality; it means not feeling in oneself an enormous hole, a crucial absence; it means always feeling one’s thought equal to one’s thought, however inadequate the form one is able to give it. (Sontag, 1976, p. 70)

This quotation exemplifies the way that Artaud feels thinking and being aware of his inner thoughts, before trying to express this interiority through writing, is part of how he believes all people should live (i.e. learning to be present or aware/conscious in the actual moments that one is living). It is this lifelong dedication to try and articulate his own inner experience and compel others to do the same through his work in the theatre that led Artaud to feel that he was continually unsuccessful. I think that Artaud’s dedication to attempting to put into words what most people would say are things that transcend the boundaries of language is often disregarded as trivial in many academic circles especially when Artaud later resorted to try and awaken these dormant metaphysical parts of man through sounds and movement when he found that language was too limiting for him. As one might guess, his dedication to writing poems, essays, letters, chants and manifestos was constantly underscored by the frustration that he also records about being unable to express in these forms what he wanted to. This reality led him to feelings of inadequacy and despair. Yet despite these frustrations, he continued to act in Surrealist films and express inspiration about possibilities for a revitalized form of theatre, as influenced by the Balinese Dance Theatre’s visit to Paris that focused on subtle and ritualistic gestures.

Published in 1938, *The Theatre and its Double* (1938/1958) is thought to be Antonin Artaud’s most well known work. In this series of essays or manifestos, he lays out a new kind of theatre that is to help people live life in a more authentic way. Central to this argument are the ideas of the double and The Theatre of Cruelty. The double signifies life itself and the bubonic plague. The metaphor of the plague, which reduces a person’s body physically to one of liquefied organs and forces a society into some sort of process of renewal, was not simply used as a theoretical idea. Rather, it was used as a way to continue a conversation about societal change. As described by Anaïs Nin (in Eshleman & Bador, 1995), when asked to speak at The Sorbonne on the topic of The Theatre and the Plague, he was said to have:
... let go of the thread we were following and began to act out dying by plague. No one quite knew when it began...His face was contorted with anguish, one could see the perspiration dampening his hair. His eyes dilated, his muscles became cramped, his fingers struggled to retain their flexibility. He made one feel the parched and burning throat, the pains, the fever, the fire in the guts. He was in agony. He was screaming. He was delirious. He was enacting his own death, his own crucifixion. At first people gasped. And then they began to laugh. Everyone was laughing! They hissed. Then one by one, they began to leave ... Artaud went on, until the last gasp. And stayed on the floor. Then when the hall had emptied of all but his small group of friends, he walked straight up to me and kissed my hand. He asked me to go to a café with him ... He spat out his anger: “They always want to hear about ... they want to hear an objective conference on ‘The Theatre and the Plague’, and I want to give them the experience itself, the plague itself, so they will be terrified, and awaken. I want to awaken them. They do not realize they are dead. (p. 48)

This particular description of the way that Artaud decided to share his work is quite unique and interesting. Fantastical in fact is the way that he is trying to move the experience of those gathered beyond the intellectual and into the corporeal. In academic environments currently, such an approach to sharing one’s work is still seen as avant-garde, despite an increased acceptance of artistic and experiential alternatives. This current reality makes it even more difficult to imagine the reception of privileging experience and the body in this way almost 70 years ago. And yet, this is what Antonin was committed to doing. As he is quoted saying in the Anais Nin statement, Artaud wanted to awaken the dead (in a manner of speaking). In some ways eliciting laughter and the actual removal of individuals from the lecture hall shows that he did something that forced an immediate reaction from those gathered. It did not however succeed in engaging others with his ideas and what they represented, most likely because Artaud, as he himself has proclaimed, was unable to articulate what he wanted to express coherently.

It is Artaud’s dedication to: trying to be constantly aware of one’s inner-self; trying to express this interiority using language, emotions, imagination and embodied understanding; and using dramatic and theatrical art as a medium to help others and oneself get in touch with their own metaphysical beings that I think are delineations of Artaud’s life and work that can benefit new artist-teachers experiencing boundary positions. To further explore how theoretically Artaud has influenced and informed some curriculum theories and theorists, I now explore some of his concepts in greater detail.

Artaudian Concepts

In 1926 Artaud co-founded the Alfred Jarry Theatre with Roger Vitrac and Robert Avon. This theatre was founded in order to explore surrealism and symbolism theatrically but only lasted for two years. During this time Artaud produced and
directed plays while also writing about some of the basic theatrical principles that he believed needed to be enacted in order to disrupt the trends, like department stores, that were enveloping France at the time. Artaud saw this work as a serious game which both actor and spectator had to realize in order to be reached as deeply as possible (Artaud in Sontag, 1976, p. 246). He thought that by presenting the audience with images that could speak directly to the mind and consciousness, rather than employing illusions, props or scenery to entertain, that people would understand that nothingness was something that was not to be feared.

By the late 1920s manifestos and performances with The Theatre of Cruelty were taking place to enable:

… the theatre (to) seek by every possible means to call into question not only the objective and descriptive external world but the internal world, that is, man from a metaphysical point of view. (Artaud in Sontag, 1976, p. 244)

These manifestos coupled with three features of The Theatre of Cruelty as outlined by Albert Bermel (1977) in Artaud’s Theatre of Cruelty state the necessity for: the implacability of life; drawing upon the collective and individual dreams of all men, both dark and utopian; and a theatre that works on the senses and nerves, rather than the intellect, that can subsequently be aimed at a general public so that the transcendental experiences of life that the theatre inspires can encourage the individual to live more passionately. When using the word cruelty, Artaud means that he wants to cleanse his audience so that they are awakened when they leave the theatre. Since Artaud wrote about most of his ideas in fragments, this in conjunction with what some have called a tendency to incorrectly interpret events, such as the Balinese theatre’s emphasis on gestures and movements, cautions the reader to question the way he seeks to apply his interpretations.

The Theatre and its Double was published in 1938 while most of the manifestos and essays in this book were written between 1931 and 1936. These writings have been extremely influential to theatre practitioners since his death. However, within arts education, the works of Artaud are rarely mentioned. Thus, as a way to expand the literature in arts education and specifically curriculum theory within arts based research, I now consider some of Artaud’s key concepts in relation to selected curriculum theories in arts education. The field of curriculum theory is particularly well suited to a discussion of Artaud as well as the outlined research questions and project because of its focus’ on lived experiences, autobiographical engagements and currere.

1.4 CURRICULUM THEORY

According to Artaud some of the men and women who lived in his contemporary society had to be awakened from their mindlessly lived lives. Artaud discusses this issue by talking about the ways that some people went to the theatre to be entertained and seen, or to department stores to buy things that were unnecessary. Such actions were compared to what Artaud saw occurring in Mexico, where all things were made for a purpose; even art was created for enacting various rituals.
This idea of men and women existing in a dream-like state, is articulated in curriculum theory through the works of Maxine Greene who says:

To open up our experience (and, yes, our curricula) to existential possibilities of multiple kinds is to extend and deepen what each of us thinks of when he or she speaks of a community. (Greene, 1995, p. 161)

(T)he role of the imagination is not to resolve, not to point the way, not to improve. It is to awaken, to disclose the ordinarily unseen, unheard and unexpected. (Greene, 1995, p. 28)

By discussing the importance of extending, awakening and deepening our multiple experiences, that may often be hidden, Maxine Greene reflects in relation to education and curriculum Artaud’s dream to awaken society. This wide-awakeness in Greene’s (1977, 1991, 1995) writings highlights the importance of contextual, emergent, creative, connected and imaginative qualities within lived curriculum. Such a view of the curriculum also anticipates the inward turn described in Toward a Poor Curriculum (Pinar & Grumet, 1976). This inward turn asks the individual to look inside themselves (as well as outside) to begin to describe honestly and personally what their internal experience is in order to bring into being a self in relation to knowledge and to the world (Miller, 2004, p. 48). This engagement is required as a way to capture the process of autobiographical educational engagement, as situated within a personal, political, historical and social reality that William Pinar has theorized as currere (1974).

In general terms, currere has been defined in the field of curriculum studies as running an educational course or the lived experience students and teachers have when engaged in learning. Understanding currere in this way was first proposed by Pinar (1974) and then later discussed as a method for systematic educational self-study by Pinar and Grumet (1976). This method has four steps—regressive, progressive, analytical and synthetical.

In the regressive step one’s past lived experiences are considered the “data,” which (is) generated through “free association”—a psychoanalytic technique—to revisit the past and thereby re-experience and “transform” one’s memory. In the progressive step one looks at what is not yet and “imagines possible futures”. The analytical stage is like phenomenological bracketing: in this step one examines the past and the future and creates a subjective space of freedom in the present. The present, the past, and the future are looked at as one movement. In the fourth, the synthetical moment, one revisits the “lived present” (Here, one listen’s) carefully to one’s own inner voice in the historical and natural world (and) one asks: “what is the meaning of the present?” … (the) moment of synthesis … is one of intense interiority”. (Kumar, 2011, p. 9)

Engaging in this process of currere is meant to help an individual address a significant and personal educational moment by dynamically and psychoanalytically looking at it in order to understand the roots of the chosen issue.
It is thought that by following this method, one can deepen their agency “...because autobiography is concerned with reconstructing self and cultivating singularity, which is politically progressive and psychologically self-affirmative” (Pinar in Kumar, 2011, p. 10).

For the new artist-teacher who may be experiencing role stress and the potential frustrations of being in a boundary position, autobiographical engagements that use currere as an inquiry process and as a creative art as a means for self-reflection and deepening agency, compliment Greene’s definition of the curriculum as a “means of providing opportunities for the seizing of a range of meanings by persons open to the world” (1977, p. 284).

Imagination also plays a key role in Greene’s encouragement to becoming wide-awake by: listening in new ways, developing on-going opportunities to encounter the arts, and working with others in community, because the imagination offers an individual a way to consider what might be rather than what is. Highlighting the role of arts curriculum, Greene calls us to move into spaces where we can create visions of other ways of being and ponder what it might mean to realize them (1995, p. 112). These perspectives are in an educational context, the same outcomes for society that Artaud wished to achieve through theatre. Although I am not making a case for Artaud’s influence within the works of either Grumet or Greene specifically at this time, I have chosen to link the curriculum theorists that influence my work with the work of Artaud because my research into Artaud inextricably informs and affects my readings of these and other theorists.

Another large part of Artaud’s theatrical theorizing is focused on breaking through the barriers of language in order to touch life and create new things with the fervor of a religious awakening but without the constraining system of beliefs. Instead he focuses on movements, gestures and sound as a way to disrupt habitual patterns of thought and action as a means for coming to know. Artaud believed that all systems such as institutions are within us and permeate our being and that for this reason it is the individual’s responsibility to create change if something is wrong in society. However, as the passage below indicates, Artaud does not think that people understand this. Rather, he thinks that men and women create society and their relative institutions to solve problems and keep order instead of relying on one’s self to do this work. This results in disengagement with the world and one’s life.

If our life lack’s brimstone, a constant magic, it is because we have chosen to observe our acts and lose ourselves in considerations of their imagined form rather than being impelled by their force. And this faculty is an exclusively human one. I would even say that it is this infection of the human that contaminates ideas that should have remained divine; far from believing that man invented supernatural and the divine, I think it is man’s age-old intervention that has ultimately corrupted the divine within him. (Artaud, 1938/1958, p. 8)

In his later writings, Artaud develops the seed of the idea that he began to articulate in this passage by talking about the ways that man (he chose to use gendered
language) has made himself into a god who no longer has to engage in his world because he has been able to gentrify some of the natural parts of himself such as using the bathroom for bowel movements. Artaud uses this as an example for the way that man has distanced himself from his humanness and signifies that an individual’s creative, imaginative and spiritual capabilities have also been dulled down. While Artaud’s theories for “fixing” this problem include extreme suggestions such as those written about in *The Theatre and its Double* (1938/1958), other interpretations of his ideas for an educational audience have been made by theorists such as Madeleine Grumet.

Madeleine Grumet has written about the curriculum as theatre in *Curriculum as Theater: Merely Players* (1978) and in *Towards a Poor Curriculum* (1976). In these two texts, she theorizes how the ritual roots of theatre can lead to an understanding of freedom for the educator by conceiving of the curriculum as a moving, spiritual, artistic experience. In *Curriculum as Theater: Merely Players* (1978) Grumet considers the way that the Greeks used props as actual representations of spirits that affected the individual and the society within which they lived. She then turns to the work of Antonin Artaud as a modern theatre theorist who picked up on the idea that people have lost their deeply spiritual essences because they do not engage in ritual processes of destruction and rebirth. For Artaud this understanding was developed in part through his work with the Tarahumaran Indians in Mexico (1976) where all things, including art, were made for a purpose and not for mere consumption. Because Artaud’s ideas were so theoretical and Jerzy Grotowski’s work⁷ attempted to put into action Artaud’s concepts, Grumet turned to applying some of Grotowski’s actor training concepts that seek to eradicate an individual’s habitual blocks, in her work with teacher candidates. Grumet went on to show how engaging with a curriculum that has significance for the individual leads to opportunities for her students to experience freedom, rather than liberation, through shared theatrical experiences.

For Grotowski, the theatre is not an end in itself but rather a vehicle for self-study and self-exploration that leads to a possibility for salvation. Thus for Grotowski, acting is a life’s work and the act of performance is an act of sacrifice similar to that of a priest and worshipper (Brook, 1968/1990). This connection between the theatre and a religious encounter can be viewed in a curricular context in *Theory as a Prayerful Act* (1995) where Macdonald tells educators that they must profess, reveal and justify, from their own viewpoints what they believe and value. This sort of living educational theory is:

…”(the act of theorizing (as) an act of faith, a religious act … (or an) … expression of belief, as William James expounds in *The will to believe*. (This) belief necessitates an act of the moral will based on faith. *Curriculum

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⁷ Jerzy Grotowski was founder and director of the Polish Laboratory Theatre, an experimental company that became an institute for research into theatre art and the actor’s art. Later he disbanded the company and focused on understanding human creativity outside the theatre and leading people back to ritual elemental connections with the natural world.
CHAPTER 1

*theorizing is a prayerful act.* It is an expression of the humanistic vision of life. (Macdonald, 1995, p. 181)

In *The Empty Space*, Peter Brook (1968/1990) calls Artaud’s views of the theatre holy. He then discusses how Grotowski’s theatre is as close as anyone has gotten to Artaud’s ideal because its purpose is holy. For Brook, Grotowski’s theatre is holy because it seeks to respond to a need that churches can no longer fill by professing to an audience images, words and visions that require contemplation, attention, meditation, consideration and action.

Curricular theorizing as theatrical engagement as an act of faith can thus be understood in relation to Grotowski and Macdonald’s writings about curriculum theorizing as a prayerful or religious act. Curricular engagement as religious or prayerful seeks through study, contemplation, theorizing and writing an understanding or deep engagement with a particular topic over a lifetime. This requires continual commitment and practice. It also means that at some point in time one must give over to a hope or belief that they don’t completely understand in order to enter into moments with the divine. For Artaud, this kind of engagement would represent one becoming familiarized with the divine within.

In order to describe how to push the theatre and society to new understandings and limits, Artaud uses the metaphor of the plague. This metaphor works extremely well for Artaud since the plague actually decomposes the body while an individual is still living and causes one to take all actions/gestures/sounds to a limit that was previously unfathomable. For the actor, this meant that they take on a form that negates itself to just the degree it frees itself and dissolves into universality (Artaud, 1938/1958, p. 25). In this way both the theatre and the individual have the possibility of recovering dormant conflicts/feelings/emotions within the self. Arguably, if every individual experiences such transformation, society would as a reflection adapt and change.

Alongside the writings about an ongoing deterritorialization of curricular borders that exist between the hierarchical structures in and within the very educational landscape curriculum scholars seem continually attempting to unify, Artaud’s metaphor of the plague can be seen as a reason for not trying to for example, find a one-size-fits-all definition for curriculum or the period that some have named it now in. This suggestion means that like a plague taking over a body’s organs in order to change a person’s physical form into something new, frozen institutional structures should be continually dissolved and rebuilt instead of artificially held up or maintained beyond their actual moment of effectiveness in order to allow for the continual process or transformation of the field.

The metaphor of the plague has helped me to come to understand the curriculum field as a process of deterritorialization as theorized by Deleuze (1994). This is a process by which we leave a territory in order to make new connections, or move

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4 The symptoms of the bubonic plague include painful, swollen lymph glands, vomiting and urinating blood, coughing, terrible pain (caused by the decaying of one’s body while still alive), fever, chills, delirium. 2 out of 3 people who have the plague die from this contagious disease.
away from spaces regulated by dominant systems of signification that keep us confined within old patterns. This notion is combined with Kaustuv Roy’s (2003) writings about curriculum as rhizome where the potential for a people-centered curriculum lies in the building of strong yet seemingly unconnected connections. Roy places his ideas within the reconceptualization of the curriculum movement and it may very well be that we are always in a process of reconceptualization if we agree with his idea of curriculum as rhizome.

Rhizomes are usually thought of as root systems that grow in multiple directions but that eventually interconnect and strengthen a plant. Deleuze and Guattari (1987/2007) use rhizome to theorize research that is non-hierarchical and that uses multiple entry and exit points to represent and interpret data. To me, thinking about approaching the curriculum as rhizomatic and people-centered means that multiple people, with varying perspectives, can have the opportunity to be involved with and engaged in a particular curriculum. For example, a rhizomatic people centered curriculum can allow professors, policy makers and governments to theorize and consider curricular questions as well as children, parents and communities. This means that a rhizomatic curriculum is people-centered because although there are so many different people with so many different relationships to a particular curriculum in existence; rhizomatic offshoots of curriculum allow multiple perspectives to co-exist and strengthen one another. In this respect, thinking about the curriculum field as rhizomatic recognizes that it is always shifting and moving; dependent on context; open to reinterpretation; looking to the past and to the future to inform the present; and available for multiple paths and people to engage with its conception. The curriculum is alive!

Researching the work of Artaud from the perspective of an a/r/tographer and then finding themes such as the plague, sleep-walking and having a double, in combination with the rhizomatic people-centered curriculum, have given me an understanding about working in a liminal or in-between space that I did not understand before engaging with said writings. In relation to the research project and research questions, the discussion about Artaud has helped me to see with more nuanced understandings and perspectives the importance of researching the shifts in identities and subjectivities for the artists, teachers and artist-teachers in this study.

1.5 OVERVIEW

This chapter begins by describing the inner and outer story framework for this book, as well as the ideas of multiple rather than fixed identities in relation to subjectivities. This discussion is then linked to the issue of retention for artist-teachers and some of the realities, such as identity formation, that lead to their

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5 In Teacher in nomadic spaces, Roy (2003) describes curriculum as rhizomatic because learning occurs as an offshoot, irregular growth that is not the result of deliberate planting. This means all events (not just those that are measured on a territorialized and conscious level) affect learning in powerful yet sometimes irregular ways.
higher than normal attrition rates. Boundary positions, narrative inquiry and a/r/tography are also described in order to try and understand why some artist-teachers find it difficult adjusting to the teaching profession. While most research on artist-teacher retention has been done on visual and music artist-teachers, this study focuses on the lived experiences of four Canadian Conservatory style-trained actors who have pursued teaching. As a way to explore, represent and reframe some of the tensions between acting and teaching, participants wrote monologues about a past, disruptive educational moment as a way to re-enter that moment, think about it, reframe it through a character’s voice and then move forward in one’s teaching. This currere-like approach is framed by the theories of Antonin Artaud and Maxine Greene as a means for considering more deeply the main research questions that inform this work:

What are the lived experiences of individuals with Conservatory style actor training who pursue teaching?

Did writing a monologue about a problematic educational moment help participants in their pedagogical development? How?

In order to continue to explore curriculum theories, Antonin Artaud’s work and what it means to dwell in an in-between place for actors turned teachers, I now turn to the next four chapters and interludes. Chapter 2: A/r/tography & The Research Project describes the methodology of a/r/tography and the research project in depth so that readers will have a deeper understanding of the project and why a/r/tographic methods are used in this research. Chapter 3: Moments Such as These present the data from participant interviews. This data sharing is significant to the research project because it allows the reader the opportunity to read some of the participant responses to the research questions as well as my own responses to what is said, as organized by themes. Chapter 4: Understandings makes sense of the themes in Chapter 3 and extends the data from the interviews, monologues and reflective writing into understandings. Finally, Chapter 5: Considering the Openings looks at the ways that theory, practice and research are affected by this book; as well as what future inquiry might be taken as a result of this work. Also, Interludes are embedded between the chapters as a way of creatively engaging with the research material. This creative approach to research reflects the a/r/tographical methodology that frames this study and the theatrical background of the participants who trained as actors because dialogue between characters is used in some of the Interludes. The use of another font for these Interludes further emphasizes that these stories within the larger story are separate but significant moments in between that extend the understandings and discussions presented in the chapters. The first Interlude Introduction introduces the characters in the a/r/tographical dialogues in the same way that a play would begin with a list of characters. After the characters are introduced their subsequent dialogue is woven into additional Interludes as a way of commenting on and introducing information. This ongoing dialogue also highlights the complicated conversations that are pivotal to the current field of curriculum theory’s representation. In the second
Interlude The Monologues, a/r/tographical conversations act as bridges that connect the presentation of the monologues collected during the research project. The third Interlude, Border Theories, Liminal Spaces & Becoming a Crossroads, is an extensive theoretical exposition that discusses and theorizes what an in-between space and identity is and means. This third Interlude combines both academic writing and dialogue between characters as a way of contemplating what a new kind of academic and artistic work in a liminal space might look like. As an extension of the emergent understandings of an immanent curriculum that is delineated in the fourth chapter, the fourth Interlude Learning the Language of the Heart takes the ideas presented in the fourth chapter and doubles them through the sharing of personal experiences. These journal excerpts are used as a way to reflect and provide new meanings to what is discussed within the research project. Finally, The Beginning from the End is a brief comment meant to, in an Artaudian way, suggest that although new understandings have been gained through the process of writing this work, there are always new directions to be taken and explored if one is to continually grow and learn.
INTERLUDE 1

INTRODUCTION

CHARACTERS

A/r/tographer and Stage manager:
The individual who seeks to bridge rather than divide the work of the artist, researcher and teacher by using a/r/tography to integrate and define simultaneously the distinctions of these three identities. During interludes, the a/r/tographer has the tendency to act as a stage manager, keeping these seemingly offstage aspects of the Interludes running alongside the paper. The reason for the Interludes and articulating particular aspects of this production is that a/r/tographical work evolves by investigating what is oftentimes taken for granted.

A/r/tographers do not strictly adhere to traditional qualitative methodologies that state research questions and then seek to answer them explicitly. Rather, a/r/tographers use all aspects of qualitative and arts based research to allow them to theorize and through theorizing engage in practicing theorizing. This means that research is viewed as a continually evolving situated and active process that leads to deep learning (Irwin, 2010).

Dramaturg and Director:
The role of the dramaturg is oftentimes limited to the conducting of research for a production and for the development of a play. At times, the role of the dramaturg extends to the hiring of actors and even to writing and directing. A director develops and works towards executing the overall vision of a production until performance. In this book, the director orders, oversees, melds together, edits and synthesizes.

Artist:
The artist is the a/r/tographer but is represented as an individual character in this study. This choice is made in order to deepen the understanding of the data in the study and as a means of privileging particular creative and artistic conversations that arise.

Teacher:
Like the artist, the teacher is also the a/r/tographer but represented separately in order to consider specifically the point of view of the educator in this work.

Researcher:
The researcher represents the a/r/tographer’s “research self” and is also represented by a separate character.
INTERLUDE 1

Maisey Roberts, Ardele Thompson, Solomon Davis and Darcy White:
Participants in the research study.

Jonathan Stevens:
A composite character\(^6\) developed from the feedback given by participants in the
first phase of the project.

Rhoda Cunningham:
A composite character developed from the feedback given from teacher candidate
participants who performed in The Teacher Monologues.

Artist: I am so excited! Now, I know we don’t have that much to talk about yet
(since we are just starting this journey together) but … I just really wanted to say
how much I have been looking forward to getting together with you all for this
conversation.

Teacher: Well, I am glad to be a part of it too. We don’t often get the opportunity
to spend time acknowledging in any kind of depth the aspects of our self that are
“artist”, “teacher”, “researcher” and “a/r/tographer” so …

Artist: Hey! Where’s researcher? (Artist looks around and then sees researcher
standing alone and deep in thought. She runs over and starts to give her a hug).

Researcher: (Researcher moves away from the embrace) Hey—what’s going on
here? And … whoah … who’s writing down everything I … STOP that … I (she
considers saying something else but decides against it).

A/r/tographer: We’re representing our process of understanding what it means to
be engaged in an a/r/tographical complicated conversation about our research.
Remember? We wanted to try something a little bit more theatrical for a part of the
research project in order to think about the experiences and monologues of the
artist-teachers in the study…(There is a pause as a/r/tographer waits for researcher
to answer).

Researcher: (Researcher finally speaks). Sheesh! Of course I remember but, (she
whispers) I didn’t think it would mean … C’mon … erase that … and this … what
ever happened to ethical research?

Artist: But, we all agreed on this approach … and you gave your consent … so, we
all have to participate (she smiles sweetly at researcher).

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\(^6\) The composite characters have been used in theatre education research (George Belliveau, 2006) as a
means of distilling the essence of multiple student’s experiences into one character (or a chorus) as a
way to focus themes, make meaning and highlight learning.
Researcher: (She keeps her mouth closed and rolls her eyes instead).

A/r/tographer: You know she has a point about ethical research … we always let our own participants withdraw from a project if they want …

Teacher: And we share our transcripts with them to make sure that their voices are represented fairly too …

A/r/tographer: I guess we should either reconsider doing these interludes altogether or let the researcher make comments “off the record”. What do you think?

Artist: I think it’s a terrible idea. We need the researcher to share all of her expertise with us. I don’t know anything about filling out ethical protocol forms or writing up a research proposal … she does! I just thought I was going to perform the monologues … and now … I can’t believe this is happening! It’s terrible. It reminds me of that time in grade 2 when I had a “Get along gang” and no-one got along.

Teacher: Don’t worry. We’ll figure it all out.

A/r/tography: Absolutely, and we already have the next chapter completed so we can present that now and hopefully by the next interlude things will have … shifted a bit for everyone. (She whispers under her breath: I hope.)

Artist: Well, alright. I guess I can use the time to rehearse.
CHAPTER 2

A/R/TOGRAPHY AND THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Chapter 2 will provide details about the methodology of a/r/tography that I use to situate the research project. After this discussion, details about the data collection phase, participants and data analysis are provided.

2.1 A/R/TOGRAPHY

Arts-based research practices are a set of methodological tools that are used by qualitative researchers in all discipline areas throughout all phases of social research (i.e. data collection, analysis, interpretation and representation) (Leavy, 2009, p. 3). What makes arts-based research unique for researchers and their audiences is that researchers who employ these methods do not try and hide their relationship to the work. The specific arts-based category of a/r/tography uses a/r/t as an acronym for artist-researcher-teacher. In a/r/tography these three identities exist contiguously and thus the importance of in-between space(s). As an example of these multiple identities and the importance of the in-between spaces to the relationships of and between artist, teacher, researcher and a/r/tographer, the Interludes in this book are used to explore and exemplify what living with multiple, overlapping identities that work together and in tension can mean. In this way, this methodological innovation (a/r/tography) is not simply about adding a new method to the arts-based research arsenal “…for the sake of more but, rather (about) opening up new ways to think about knowledge building: new ways to see” (Leavy, 2009, p. 3).

Rita L. Irwin and Stephanie Springgay introduce Being with A/r/tography (Springgay, Irwin, Leggo, & Gouzouasis, 2008) by stating that the chapters within it are not meant to provide a linear or rigid structure through which one can define a/r/tography. Rather the chapters work in tension sometimes leading to discordance other times working complementarily. This allows a/r/tographical research to resist standardization and to enter into a dynamic and fluid enterprise of living inquiry that concerns itself with self-study, being in community and relational/ethical inquiry. The ambiguity related to defining a/r/tography is in essence what it is about for it must be embodied, lived, felt, practiced, inquired into. Engaging through/with a/r/tography involves dwelling and becoming within an interstitial/borderland space where meanings and understandings are vulnerable and constantly in a state of becoming. The challenge of constantly becoming, coming into some sort of new being is that one’s ideas/perceptions/ways of knowing may be arrived at for moments but, in a lifetime, multiple moments exist and are continually being created.
CHAPTER 2

The doctoral dissertation of Alex de Cosson entitled (Re)searching Sculpted A/r/tography: (Re)learning Subverted-Knowing through Aporetic Praxis (2003) is considered the first work which speaks explicitly about the term a/r/tography; though echoes of related references can be identified in the writings of scholars such as Rita L. Irwin and Carl Leggo in the late 1990s and through presentations such as A/R/T as performative métissage presented at The International Society for Education through Art Congress by Irwin and de Cosson (2002).

In this dissertation, de Cosson relies upon personal journal excerpts to inquire and make meaning about the nature of a/r/tography and to explore his own personal understandings of this new arts based method, some of which were prompted by discussions and engagements within the A/R/T collective, a research group that consisted of six researchers. It was Irwin, a member of this collective, that is credited with coining the term “a/r/tography” and for also writing the first methodological implications of it as:

… a living practice of art, research and teaching (A/R/T): a living métissage; a life writing, life creating experience. Through attention to memory, identity, reflection, meditation, story telling, interpretation and representation, artists/researchers/teachers share their living practice practices … are searching for new ways to understand their practices as artists, researchers and teachers. They are a/r/tographers representing their questions, practices, emergent understandings, and creative analytic texts. They are living their work, representing their understandings and performing their pedagogical positions as they integrate knowing, doing and making through aesthetic experiences that convey meaning rather than facts. Their work is both science and art but it is closer to art and as such, they seek to enhance meaning rather than certainty. (Irwin, 2003, p. xii)

The first book A/r/tography: Rendering Self through Arts-Based Living Inquiry (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004) was written as a way to capture some of the work that individual visual artists were doing and to think about what it means to reflect through artistic inquiry, teaching and writing. This shows how connecting ones art, scholarship and teaching through writing is an essential part of the process for artist-teachers to come to know and understand who they are and what they are doing. Thus, using artistic inquiry and writing are processes that help the artist-teacher-research make sense of their identities.

While continuing to focus on autobiography and living poetically/artistically in the world, work in a/r/tography began to affect the work of other scholars and emerging scholars in a variety of ways. For example, Barbara Bickel (2004) focused on topics such as the shift she experienced from artist to a/r/tographer and how ritual inquiry and writing the body (Bickel, 2005) allowed her to deepen her understanding of living inquiry. The collaborative project The City of Richgate undertaken and in part culminating in the creation of The Rhizomatic Relations of A/r/tography (Irwin, Beer, Springgay, Grauer, Xiong, & Bickel, 2006) stresses the ways in which a/r/tographical inquiry emphasizes practice and rhizomatic relations of inquiry in order to elaborate on how this methodology provokes the creation of
situations. Situations in which we find ourselves may relate to our surroundings or other people: as artist, teacher or researcher; in a studio, classroom or investigation to which one cannot predict the outcome. Thus, because a/r/tography is understood in part through particular situations and in part through the perspectives of the individual a/r/tographer, some may surmise that a/r/tography is not stable or rigid in its definition. While I would contend that this holds true to a certain extent, I would also remind one trying to understand a/r/tography or looking to define it that a/r/tography is still embedded within the traditions of qualitative research and informed by the body of research that informs this method, such as narrative inquiry and autobiographical approaches.

Also mentioned and of significance to understanding the nature of a/r/tography are rhizomatic relations, accredited to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987/2007), who describe how metaphorically through the image of crab grass, the ways that rhizomes work by connecting any point to another point while growing in all directions. It is the interconnection and network of many entry points into a system that affects the understanding of how theory, practice/product and process are understood. Theorizing through inquiry by allowing for an evolution of questions, since theorizing and practicing are verbs that emphasize the process of producing (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004) is the way in which rhizomatic relationality links itself to a/r/tographical understanding. It is by considering educational sites for learning as in process, or through an a/r/tographic lens, that we are able to disrupt binaries, such as artist and teacher, in order to continually be in a state of becoming.

Our capacity to imagine allows us to take pleasure in others’ joy, to cringe at others’ pain, to be present even when we are not. Our capacity to imagine gives shape and direction to how we, as a species, learn from one another and transform our experience. We are connected. (Neilsen, 2008, p. xv)

The very beginnings of this methodology, springing from an art-research collective, has and continues to inform and shape the new directions which a/r/tography rhizomatically takes. In the second book dedicated to this topic, the introduction by Lorri Neilsen (2008) speaks of how our capacity to imagine as a species can help us to learn and grow with/from one another. This premise (originating with Jean-Luc Nancy, 2000), that we are all connected one to the other and essentially that we are singular-plural beings who are by nature in community with others, ourselves only understanding our own being by being with, is truly at the heart of this book and methodology. This means that whatever one does and whoever one is can only exist because of and in relationship to others. This reading of being-singular-plural means that a/r/tographers cannot exist without their communities and individuals cannot be without being with. It could also mean that although each person is an individual, they are still comprised of multiple identities, thus singular and yet plural beings. These readings highlight how identity is contingent upon being in relation to and with, consequently reinforcing the discussion about the nature of identity and subjectivity in Chapter 1. In order to further understand the concept of being-singular-plural in relation to the
participants in this study, further time will be spent delineating this concept in the third Interlude. To continue with the sequential evolution of a/r/tography and its related influences at this time, I now briefly introduce the six renderings.

Renderings

These renderings are used to provide one with possibilities for engaging in a/r/t/ographical work and include: contiguity, living inquiry, metaphor/metonymy, openings, reverberations and excess. The creation of these six renderings was influenced by one of Mieke Bal’s suggestions to focus on methodological concepts rather than methods when doing research. The purpose of the renderings is not to tell others how to use a/r/tography, but rather to provide a way of understanding what living and working as an a/r/tographer might mean. In this way, the renderings help to provoke personal engagements with the concepts and make space for individuals to conceptualize their own concepts for making meaning, as illustrated by my own rationale for using both chapters and interludes in this book. The beauty of approaching arts based research in this way is that by its very nature, a/r/tography requires those who engage with and in it to be creators and innovators of their own work, rather than following a pre-existing format for research.

Since I view the renderings as representing possible rather than pragmatic ways for understanding and engaging in an a/r/t/ographic process or project, I do not feel that every a/r/tographer or every a/r/tographic project will always have aspects of all of the renderings within it/them. For this reason, although I list all of the renderings, I have only expanded upon the ones that I feel relate to and inform this particular research project.

To begin, contiguity can be visualized by thinking of a paper being folded. Within each of the folds there is a relational space that links one fold to the next. In this sense, the a/r/t/ographic identities of the artist, teacher and researcher are contiguous because while separate, each part is only understood in relation to the whole a/r/t/ographic identity that finds synthesis through the in-between spaces. Contiguous relationships thus emphasize the importance of relationality in and between ones teaching, art making and research.

Living inquiry refers to the ongoing living practice of being an artist, researcher and educator and to the embodied encounters that change ones artistic and textual engagements and understandings while living in this way. Like the actor who begins to learn his/her craft by paying particularly close attention to his/her surroundings, self and others; the a/r/tographer who engages in living inquiry chooses to develop self-consciousness and awareness by, for example, asking provocative questions, imagining what might be, rather than what is and engaging in projects that allow for risks and creative processes that are emergent rather than pre-determined.

Metaphor and metonymy have been described as representing ways of understanding the world and making relationships accessible to the senses (Springgay, Irwin, Leggo, & Gouzouasis, 2008). While both words substitute one term for another, metaphor substitutes based on similarity and metonymy displaces
a subject/object’s relations. When an individual is adept at using these tropes in their writing, there is a potential for evoking past embodied encounters and memories that conjure up deeper signification and meanings that resonate with the reader and open them to something “other than”.

**Openings** in a/r/tographical works allow for the possibility of new conversations and relationships to emerge. In this way, openings, like the unfolding of a flower, resist predictability and acknowledge the beauty of emergent, unexpected spaces that can be explored allowing for new meanings and ways of coming to know to occur.

**Reverberations** are dynamic negotiations, sometimes tensions, between entities that provoke one to change the way they understand something. These reverberations often exist in the spaces between identities where one attempts to understand how or why something is the way it is while negotiating a situation. For example, when reading participant interview transcripts and trying to code the data for themes, there were times that I just felt as though the information was all running together. I took this as a cue to take a break from this kind of work and go for a run or sit and play the piano. What I then found when I returned to my interview data was that I then brought a different perspective to the work. For example, if I took a break and played piano, I would sometimes return to the data and find that there were certain moments that flowed through the transcripts that I didn’t notice before. This shows how my artistic identity reverberated into my academic thinking by shifting my way of approaching my work.

Finally, the rendering *excess* is about those which most people ignore, throw away, avoid. Choosing to pay attention to excess materials, data, supplemental lessons may thus signify a shift in attention and perspective that leads to new understandings more complex than what was once thought possible. For Artaud, this can be described as acknowledging the “thingness” of things and allowing them to “speak” or reveal their hidden “thingness”. In this sense, paying closer attention to the “thingness of things” each day might mean that there would be no excessive consumption because by the nature of things, every “thing” would have a story or purpose that could be re-vealed if the individual spent time seeing (it) in new ways.

To me, understanding the a/r/tographic renderings and a/r/tography means more than reading about the ways that other people have articulated, explored and discovered what being an a/r/tographer is or signifies. I feel that it is necessary to experience for myself what working a/r/tographically is about because although reading texts of other people’s accounts informs my work, it does not give me an embodied and lived encounter with it. This personal connection is essential to me because a large part of my own way of learning is contingent upon experiencing, touching, feeling, and bringing into existence my own ways of articulating, exploring and unfolding. Without this kind of immediate and personal engagement, I can only partially know what it means to be an artist, teacher, researcher and writer. This way of working is at times deeply reflective and personal while also being necessarily available to a diverse audience of researchers, educators and artists. Thus, in order to further explore some of the ideas of a/r/tography that have
been discussed, I will now provide a detailed description of the research that has been undertaken.

2.2 THE RESEARCH PROJECT

This project was designed primarily to introduce new teachers and educators to narrative reflective writing in the form of a monologue as a way to interrogate their new teaching practice, subject matter and self. Based upon the premise discussed in Chapter 1, that when the new artist-teacher begins teaching they experience a period of adjustment to their new identity and the way(s) that they thereby react in new educational situations, the purpose of introducing the monologue as a form of reflection, was developed to provide new teachers with actor training the opportunity to reframe and respond to situations and experiences that arose in their teaching (Hesford, 1999). Since this kind of narrative autobiographical writing inevitably connects the personal to the cultural, social and political and features emotion, self-consciousness and introspection (Ellis, 2004); the monologues were thought to provide a simple and yet powerful way for individuals to connect themselves with a wider social or political situation that stemmed from personal concerns.

Since research that looks at the experiences of trained musicians and visual artists who then enter teaching already exists but, trained actors who then pursued teaching are underrepresented in the research on artist-teachers; I chose participants for this study who were graduates of a Canadian conservatory style acting program who then entered teaching. A/r/tographic inquiry and data sources that include narrative monologues, performances, reflective writings, observations, thick descriptions and interviews where then used to design this research project because I wanted to use methods and approaches that would compliment the participants multiple identities and be representative of the drama and theatre field(s) being studied. I also wanted to consider if and how themes such as being wide-awake and waking the dead, that were discussed during the literature review, might relate to the experiences participants had in acting school or during their teaching experiences to see if there was any kind of relationship between the way one learns and the way they experience the world.

Social Media & Network Selection

I used social media as a tool to contact and ask all of the graduates from the 2000, 2001 and 2002 graduating classes of a Canadian university’s acting program if there was anyone who had since acting school pursued teaching or a BEd. As a result of this network selection process (deMarrais, 2004, p. 60) I was able to identify a potential list of participants for this inquiry. Network selection involves the researcher asking for information from one or more key people that can refer him/her to potential research participants fitting the researcher’s criteria. Out of the 42 graduates, I received responses from 15 individuals. These 15 people were able to tell me that 22 other people had taught in some capacity since graduation. (Note:
out of the original 42 graduates five individuals were unaccounted for.) Teaching for this group included: teaching ESL overseas; teaching drama and theatre camp programs in Canada and the U.S.; teaching as a part of summer theatre company programs; classroom teaching in K-12 environments; teaching music lessons and teaching at the University level. These numbers were staggering to me because I just didn’t expect that so many trained actors would end up teaching. Interestingly enough, eight of the 15 individuals who provided this information were themselves educators.

With this information, I decided to create a project that invited the eight individuals who responded and who were educators to participate in a series of interviews about their journeys and experiences in acting and teaching programs, and to write a monologue about a particular issue that was of significance to them as a teacher or teacher candidate. Out of these eight individuals, I received five affirmative responses. Four of these five people eventually participated in the study. Letters outlining criteria for participation were sent out, and Maisey Roberts, Solomon Davis, Darcy White and Ardele Thompson identified themselves as interested in taking part in this research. During the actual interviews, the questions acted as a flexible guidepost because each conversation evolved in different ways based upon participant’s individual stories.

The Interview Guide and Participants

Prior to the first round of interviews I sent all of the participants an interview guide and information about writing a monologue in addition to the ethical considerations of taking part in this research (see Appendices three, four and five). The interviews which were video and audio recorded took place over a four-month period because I had to travel to interview two of the participants and work around everyone’s schedules. Participants were asked to participate in two or three interviews that took between one and half and three hours each. These durations were chosen because the lengths of the interviews depended on the amount of time participants had to spend speaking with me at a given time. The time between interviews offered participants time to reflect on the topic of the inquiry in relation to their own teaching and art practices and allowed me to transcribe the interviews. This was also done so that I could consider key questions to focus on for subsequent interviews. The participants, with pseudonyms, include:

- **Ardele Thompson:** Ardele holds an HBA in Theatre (acting) (2001) and a BEd (in elementary education, 2009). Both degrees are from Canadian Universities. Ardele participated in the study by writing a monologue, reflective journal entries and participating in three interview sessions. She is currently working as an educator and storyteller as a part of a research team at a Canadian University.

- **Solomon Davis:** Solomon holds an HBA in Theatre (acting) (2002) and a BEd (2009). Both of his degrees are from Canadian Universities. He participated by being interviewed and currently teaches drama and visual art at a private school outside of a large Canadian city.
– **Maisey Roberts**: Maisey holds an HBA in Theatre (acting) (2001). She wrote a monologue and participated in two interviews. She currently works for a Canadian University as a program designer and teaches theatre to kids part time. She enrolled in an MA in Educational Studies program after participation in this study.

– **Darcy White**: Darcy holds an HBA in Theatre (acting) (2001) and a BEd (in elementary education (2009)). Both degrees are from Canadian Universities. After graduating with her BEd she took a full time position at a private school in a large Canadian city. She participated in three interviews. Darcy is currently working part time as a music teacher.

The focus of interactions was on: actor training, teacher training, teaching practice, identity formation and one’s experiences of becoming a teacher. The monologues, interviews and other reflective writings resulted in discoveries about Canadian conservatory-style acting programs and teacher training. It should be noted that I have not explored the differences between acting programs outside of Canada and thus am not in this book suggesting that I can make generalizations about all Conservatory style acting programs, this is why I have stipulated that participants attended Canadian Universities. A limitation of this study is that in actuality only four individuals from one acting school participated in this research project and only two of these four participants ended up submitting monologues. However, given that this study is not empirical and instead is focused on the particular stories and experiences of four individuals, this smaller participant pool reflects the nature of this research.

As the participants in the research study all attended a Canadian University acting program before entering teaching, an understanding of this kind of program will be described. This overview will be made in order to discern if there were any unique dispositions that this experience may have developed or honed in these individuals. After the description of acting school, teacher education programs attended by the participants will be presented using descriptions made by the individual participants.

*Conservatory Style Actor Training Programs*

A professional training program is typically focused on selecting a small number of students to participate in a conservatory-style acting program that is housed in a university, after a successful year in a university program and after a successful audition process. Generally, ongoing academic and practical evaluations are carried out in order to continually ensure that students are committed and suited to being in this program. In addition to other elective university credits required for graduation, students take acting, voice and movement classes. Curriculum and assessment is primarily experiential and hands on. Learning is most often demonstrated through performance. The classes in conservatory acting programs are usually taught by professionals in their areas of specialization, thus these individuals generally have MFA degrees. Participants in the research study
attended a performance-based program that reflects the criteria and standards described above.

One of the two-hour interviews that Darcy White participated in included the following description of her program. (Note: I have included a lengthy quotation at this time because Darcy explains in detail the program throughout all four years.)

… well, basically, in our first year we all just took a general acting class and did some exercises and scenes. Then we had to audition for the acting program. I remember doing a Contemporary comedy, a song and a Shakespearean piece for that audition … To answer your question about what the program was like … it sort of evolved … For example, that first summer we were told not to perform in anything for the next three years because it would counteract our training … but, these comments were always just suggestions … we really had to make up our own minds about things … So, anyhow … that first year I don’t even remember picking up any text. It was all about working on getting rid of the habitual ways you do things in dance class and learning to deepen and access your breath in voice class. Then in acting class we did a lot of exercises that helped us to see space and work together as an ensemble … to learn to respond to others emotionally, physically and to get out of our heads … things like throwing a ball in a circle for 3 hours was a big one … it seemed strange at the time but, it helped us to learn to have a simple intention that was driven by the breath. Then the next year in acting class we finally got to start with text … that was a big thing. We had to memorize a sonnet over the summer and then work on that in class sometimes. Other times we did mask work and focused on using the breath to develop an emotional score that we could easily access for developing characters and doing scene work. Its like—at the time we didn’t know how all of these skills were being added in bit by bit or where they came from…but, we were like sponges … we just wanted to do it all really well because we were all so committed to being actors. Oh! Another big thing was making sure you were in good shape so that the physical work would be effortless. The fourth year was the performance year and that’s when we started layering everything together. It was exciting how the different classes worked to build upon one another … but, I don’t really remember where the techniques or approaches came from. Our acting coach mentioned Michael Shurtleff’s book *Audition* and seemed to like David Mamet but, other than that, he just kind of led us through stuff and we trusted his vision and approach … Oh, and he was definitely influenced by Peter Brook I would say since we did his *Marat Sade* my graduating year. (White)

This lengthy passage provides a detailed description of the acting program that participants experienced and how learning in this kind of a program is quite different in comparison to another University course in which, for example,

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7 I have placed a pseudonym for each participant behind the quotes that were taken from my transcripts of interview data.
students sit in on large group lectures about a topic that the professor speaks on. What immediately strikes me as setting this program apart from others is the audition process that leads to one’s acceptance in this program. While other professions require and have ways of measuring special skills and aptitudes that lead to the acceptance of a student into a program, there are at the undergraduate level usually only criteria such as grades that measure into this kind of process. In the case of this acting program however, a small number of students are selected for a cohort based upon their auditions. This group is then, over the course of three years, trained to work as an ensemble in their voice, singing, acting, dance and movement classes. As described, this kind of training means learning to get out of your head and rid yourself of habitual actions by learning to get into your body, use the breathe to access emotions and find ways to develop attention and discipline that would allow one to participate in activities for hours at a time. These kinds of skills that acting school aims to develop appear to be ones that would make anyone a more grounded individual because they aim at connecting the individual to themselves and then others in order to then be self-aware and expressive. In relation to the research questions, having a lengthy description about the kinds of experiences that participants had in acting school helps to point to the hands on, emotional, interactive and creative approaches that acting students had to become accustomed to.

Additionally, three of the four participants noted that their theatre training impacted them so much because they had just graduated from high school. This period of time in one’s life was described as a time when you form your identity as an adult. Both Darcy and Ardele felt that by being given the opportunity to spend time looking inward during these years, they were able to develop an openness to themselves, others and their world that they did not think they would have developed in any other situation/program. Ardele, Darcy and Maisey all spoke about how this “open” disposition helped them to get rid of a part of themselves, named the ego by Maisey, that was judgmental. This disposition then allowed them to experience being in the world without being self-critical. In particular, the activities that helped to achieve this state included movement classes where the Luigi method\(^8\) was taught, and free warm up to music time before acting class.

Specifically, the Luigi method was taught as a way to help students develop awareness of and in their bodies so that they were neutral and without personal habits or ticks that would make it difficult to take on any particular character in a show (Thompson). Movement and dance class in itself was a difficult undertaking for many people who found it hard to have to show up to class in tights and be constantly scrutinized by a teacher who was hard on them (Davis & White). However, such a challenge was upon reflection seen as an opportunity to step up and commit to engaging despite the difficulty (White). Thus, the combination of wearing an all black leotard and engaging daily in the Luigi practice led students to

\(^8\) The Luigi method was a dance warm up technique created by Eugene Faccuito in the 1950s. It was created as a form of rehabilitation after Faccuito was in a near fatal car crash and wanted to continue on with his acting, dancing and singing in New York.
not only commit to a daily practice for three years, but to learn to leave life’s personal frustrations or realities outside of the rehearsal space.

Movement to music was an activity that began during the second year of the acting program and took place before acting class for Darcy, Maisey, Ardele and Solomon. During this time the lights in the studio space, a large open room with mirrors against one wall, were dimmed and music was simply played in the background. Participants of the acting class could then come into class early and begin clearing their minds before warming up their bodies and voices in order to prepare for class (Thompson & White). Finding a way to relax the body, mind and voice was the key to being prepared. Techniques for doing this work were learned in voice, singing and dance classes. But, ultimately, it was up to the individual to come up with a personal warm-up that worked for them. This chance to deeply explore oneself and to step-out-of-the-self is described as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that most people never get the chance to do (White & Thompson). Because of this particular kind of engagement, Darcy White felt that “there are so many things that one can do because of that foundation of learning about yourself and how to put yourself out there—which is a challenge really when you are just getting used to being up in front of people” (White).

In this particular warm-up space, where there were no particular ways for getting ready (i.e. it was up to the individual to warm-up their body, mind and voice in whatever way(s) worked best for them) or sense of judgment (White), students had the chance to “break the boundaries of who you think you are because you are not thinking about it—there is no judgment—there is no conception that this is me and this is how I act. You are adding onto yourself and become more of yourself or a different kind of yourself by getting over yourself” (White). This description of exploring oneself explained by Darcy was also described/articulated by Solomon as an opportunity to be in the zone and by Ardele as a way of being in the moment. When asked specifically what the theoretical underpinnings that their programs were derived from; all participants agreed that Luigi was the focus for movement classes and that Patsy Rodenberg’s (1992) techniques were used in voice. However, when asked about acting class the only participant in addition to Darcy White who recalled Michael Shurtleff, David Mamet and Peter Brook … but not in any detail was Maisey Roberts who said that:

... there was just a sense of the Stratford Theatre Style, which was about building a company and ensemble. And while there was a sense of community, there was also a lot of competition, because for me as a mid sized brunette … well, I had at least 4 other females who fit that category. At the end of the program I feel like I was just specifically prepared to work

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9 Patsy Rodenburg is a voice coach and theatre director from England. She believes voice work is for all people and not just actors/performers. She began this work because she suffered from a speech impediment as a child. The focus of her work begins with the premise that our voices are locked within habits that we must learn to liberate through breath and relaxation techniques. After this initial work she moves to more complex work such as developing well-resonated and articulated sound. She is the author of numerous books including *The right to speak* (1992).
with a company. I didn’t feel prepared to create work on my own like people from the National Theatre School do or to do specific things like the clown work I was interested in. (Roberts)

Since none of the participants interviewed could specifically remember what acting theories were used to teach them to act, I felt that this was something that I could look into in order to understand more about the theoretical rationale behind what they were doing. I didn’t want to assume that because participants could not recall the names of theorists of which their acting instructor based his technique on that there were no resources provided to them. For this reason I contacted the university that they attended and asked for a list of readings that were on the acting class syllabus between 1998–2003 (i.e., the first year that one of the participants began the three year program and the last year that one of the participants graduated). I was told by the head of the theatre department, who also taught these particular students voice at this time, that although the particular acting instructor that taught during these years had since passed away, he had used: The Actor at Work by Robert Benedetti (1970/1997) and Audition by Michael Shurtleff (1978) during the final year of the acting program. I was also told that this acting professor had studied at the National Theatre School and worked at the Stratford and Shaw festivals before taking a role as acting coach. Also influencing his teaching was his love and experience of/with Shakespeare. This was evident in the focus on Shakespearian text in the third year of his acting program and in the fact that he co-founded a local summer theatre company for young actors that focused on outdoor physical theatre performances of Shakespearean plays.

The Benedetti text (1970/1997) that was used includes a series of exercises that are designed by Robert Benedetti. These exercises are placed between a series of topics for the acting student and meant to help the student to patiently develop discipline and commitment to this art by conditioning the body, mind, voice, emotions and spirit. Benedetti largely relies on the work of Stanislavski\(^\text{10}\) to develop and discuss how to help students become performers who can deliver a strong and professional performance every time. This systematic approach to acting includes learning to analyze beats within a scene, identify the needs, actions and objectives of a character and understand action and through-lines within a written text. While this work is done by the individual, there is a simultaneous focus on building an ensemble.

The second text, Audition by Michael Shurtleff (1978), focuses on what an actor needs to know about auditioning. Viewing this text as course-required reading demands that one commit to the premise that being in a University acting program is preparation for professional acting. As such, this text takes one through the steps of what it means to have a good audition and how to follow Shurtleff’s twelve guideposts.

\[^{10}\text{Constantin Stanislavski (1863–1938) was a Russian actor and theatre director who created “The system” for mastering the craft of acting while simultaneously stimulating the actor’s individual creativeness and imagination. This system is presented in his trilogy of books: An actor prepares, Building a character and Creating a role.}\]
Given the dedication and discipline that a conservatory-style acting program demands, these two texts reinforce the commitment to professional acting that students in this program appear to have. I will now present descriptions of the teacher education programs that participants attended.

*Teacher Education Programs/The Participants*

Descriptions of the teacher education programs attended by participants are now provided. They are made under the individual participant’s name and include descriptions from the interviews.

**Ardele Thompson**

Ardele, 29 at the time of her interviews, moved to Toronto, ON after graduating from acting school and immediately pursued a career in acting. Ardele primarily focused on roles in theatre and found some success writing and performing her own work. During the seven years that she pursued acting, she also worked with various drama education programs and as a nanny. Consultations with her career coach over a period of years led her to decide to pursue teaching. Ardele then attended the University of Toronto’s Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) from September 2008 to the Spring of 2009. She took the primary-junior stream, preparing her to teach grades kindergarten to grade six, because she did not have enough credits to allow her to take Secondary level certification in drama and theatre. Core courses in this stream included:

- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Social Studies
- Science
- Health and Physical Education
- Music
- Visual Arts

Ardele did not have to take any courses in drama and theatre during this degree. In addition to her required courses, Ardele was a part of the inner city option that focused on social justice through anti-oppression activities and on the student council that planned activities for her cohort.

**Solomon Davis**

Solomon Davis, 28 at the time of his interview, also attended an Ontario teacher education program (Queen’s University). However, Solomon was a part of the Artist in Community Education (ACE) program. This is a program that is meant to place emphasis on exploring the positive roles that artists and the arts play in schools and society. Admission for this program is restricted to practicing visual artists, musicians, creative writers and actors who also have a previous degree that qualifies them for admission. ACE is meant to provide a unique opportunity for artists to study arts education and learn from one another. Graduation from this program provides students with a variety of options in addition to qualifying
students to teach in the regular school system. Solomon describes how “all these different artists from different backgrounds were lumped into this same particular class where the main focus of conversations was around the arts in education and especially why the arts are important at a time when there are so many cutbacks and things like that” (Davis). He goes on to discuss how this program expanded his idea of creativity and how to foster it in his own students. Essentially, teaching for Solomon means providing felt experiences for one’s students so that learning will have more of an impact. Solomon spent a lot of time in his interview describing not only educational theorists that impacted his learning at Queen’s but artistic principles and theorists who helped him to understand and deepen his ability to help others to develop their creativity and his own pedagogical approach to teaching. When asked about the difference in his experiences between acting and education programs he said that he felt being older (28) during his education program meant that he got a lot more out of this university experience, compared to his actor training. Solomon also noted that because of the ACE stream, he felt that he could continue to explore who he was as an artist and how this impacted his teaching rather than just focusing on becoming a teacher. Immediately after graduation Solomon got a full time teaching job at a private school, teaching visual art and drama. The school that hired him was specifically interested in hiring an ACE graduate. He is the only one of the participants who is still a full-time classroom teacher.

Maisey Roberts
Maisey, 28 at the time of her interviews, pursued acting upon graduation from theatre school. She also had extensive stage and television experience before attending acting school and for two summers in between acting school taught summer theatre for the San Francisco Shakespeare festival’s summer camp program.

With over twelve years of experience teaching drama and theatre programs for various groups, organizations and institutions, Maisey brings a rich understanding of this subject matter and what it is like to teach drama and theatre. Because of her passion for teaching and learning that came across in her interviews and monologue, I was very interested to find out why she had decided not to pursue a BEd degree but still chose to work at an educational institution in an administrative role.

Darcy White
Darcy White, 29 at the time of her interviews, attended the University of British Columbia’s (UBC) elementary stream 12-month teacher education program (July 2008–2009). She elected to be in the technology cohort for this program because she wanted to build her skills and experiences in this area. Like Ardele, Solomon and Maisey, Darcy sought work as a professional actor after graduating from her conservatory acting program. During this time she landed television, film and stage roles while waitressing in between jobs. Then, after a few years, driven by her other love, the outdoors, Darcy decided to work with a bike touring company,
Backroads, for a season in Europe. While making this decision, Darcy felt she was giving up her dream of being an actor. However, once she started with Backroads she knew it was the right decision. Through Backroads, Darcy met a girl who got her a job as a teacher’s assistant at a private school outside of Vancouver, BC. Being a second grade teaching assistant convinced Darcy that she loved to teach and she took a year of upgrading to be eligible for entrance into UBC.

When she completed her BEd she accepted a full time position at the same school she had been a teaching assistant at. However, during this first year of teaching Darcy also had a baby. This event led her to decide to stay home with her child and to only return to work on a part-time basis as a music teacher.

Research Sites

The research took place in two major Canadian cities: Vancouver, British Columbia and Toronto, Ontario. All of the participants moved to one of the two large Canadian cities where they currently reside after acting school in order to pursue a career in either film and television or theatre. The participants in this study were all educators at the time of the interviews. They did not all teach in K-12 schools. Interviews took place in a variety of community spaces suggested by the participants. Participants helped to select these spaces as they were familiar and conducive to conversation.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data generated from the monologues, the interviews and the performances, I developed an analysis framework that allowed me to uncover commonalities and patterns that existed between participant accounts as well as individual narratives. As a way to analyze and understand the data through the lens of an a/r/tographer, I reviewed the data on my own and through conversations with participants. This process led me to review the data multiple times in order to create themes, categorize information, interpret results and make meaning. During this process, I organized the data primarily around individual participants and their responses to particular questions that fit into reoccurring themes. The reason for choosing to do this was that interviews, although somewhat similar in content, did move in different directions in response to participant interest and experience. This was an easy decision to make because the structure unfolded naturally. Kramp (2004), a narrative inquiry scholar, talks about the importance of individual and contextual aspects of participant’s messages. For this reason he suggests exploring individual stories before exploring findings across narratives.

Additionally, my use of dramatic dialogues placed between each chapter of this book, in the Interludes, represent my a/r/tographic process for interpreting, analyzing and understanding the data. This reflective writing is a part of my own inquiry process and served as a vehicle for me to interpret and make meaning/connections between the theory and data while examining my own preconceptions and assumptions about what an artist, teacher and researcher are.
Since I chose to work with participants who experienced a conservatory style acting program like the one I attended, this process also acts as a way of examining the validity and reliability of my work because I am demonstrating how I am continually trying to question what I think, how I do things and what my own hidden biases might be. Thus, because I chose to work with a topic that was close to me, I benefited from this ongoing dialogue that considered how to address and recognize researcher bias and objectivity. In order to further address my own potential biases in this study, I also asked participants to provide additional clarifications for their statements and discussed some of the tensions I experienced with colleagues, without disclosing the identities or details of this study. I also turned to Eisner’s writings on structural corroboration (1998) in order to ensure that this study would have credibility. For Eisner, structural corroboration means that “… multiple sources of evidence for the recurrence of instances that support a conclusion” (p. 55) are evidenced. This is in large part the reason that I looked at common themes in the data. Additionally, I identified the following common elements between participants:

- Actors who entered teaching did so after pursuing acting into their late 20s or early 30s.
- Actor training based upon participant interviews appears to develop the individual’s noetic and aesthetic senses and perceptions.
- Teacher education programs prompted a renewed engagement with art making and this positively impacted pedagogical development for most of the participants.
- Once participants decided to pursue teaching, after much thought, it was easier for them to see alternatives, other than being a K-12 teacher that their teacher educations could lead them to pursue.
- Participants thought of themselves as educators rather than teachers or artist-teachers.

As a way to structurally corroborate what was being articulated across interviews, I looked at the idea of consensus (Eisner, 1998, p. 57) to describe another strategy for ensuring an inquiry’s credibility. For Eisner, consensus is a form of multiplicative corroboration and is represented by “… concurrence as a result of evidence deemed relevant to the description, interpretation, and evaluation of some state of affairs” (p. 57). This book not only represents the notion of consensus through the common elements evidenced in participant data but through the consensus that the characters in the Interludes have to come to in order to agree on how to proceed within this work. As I worked through this particular dialogical internal inquiry, through the artist, teacher and researcher, I also realized that what I saw evidenced, in artistic forms manifested and needed to be represented through research and in my own teaching. This constant process of triangulation forced me as an a/r/tographer to continually question what I am doing and how I am representing, evaluating and interpreting in multiple ways. In a sense, and this my opinion, working a/r/tographically where all identities are represented equally, can embody consensus in a study. For example, when I write as an artist in the Interludes, I am not thinking or reacting or able to represent data in the same way.
that I do as researcher, teacher or a/r/tographer. As artist I actually feel like I have to read aloud parts of the data, and use the free-associative dialogical writing in the Interludes to understand and express what this research project is about. This artistic identity also led me to perform one of the monologues. In this way, I had a different understanding of the monologue that I acted out because I had to put myself in the shoes of the person who wrote it. On the other hand, when I have been on my teaching term, at the University I work at and am engaging with the data in this project, I notice that I have more of a need to try and classify, organize and smooth out any sort of tensions that emerge in my research. This teacher lens or approach is very different to that of the artist who needs to feel through things. Finally, throughout the process of interviewing, researching and writing for this project, my researcher identity seems to keep me on track within the field and academic context that I am working in. While, the artistic part of me may want to take a different approach to presenting and exploring the data, the researcher helps me to go back to journal articles etc. to find a way to frame my artistic impulses for an academic audience. Thus, when the a/r/tographer speaks in the Interludes, I feel as though there is a representation of all of the different ways of knowing and coming to know that allow me to bring different viewpoints to my work. I have called this a/r/tographic approach a form of triangulation because it is like I am seeing the same information multiple ways that reinforce what I have come to know.

Now, as a way to begin sharing the data collected throughout this research project, in order to later work with and write about it, I will now present the monologues that were written for this research project.
INTERLUDE 2

THE MONOLOGUES

(During the second chapter, the director sat down and spoke about the researcher’s concerns about being a part of the dialogues that are included in the Interludes with the entire cast. It was agreed that researcher did not have to have her part of the conversation recorded. However, when this decision was made researcher told everyone that she had changed her mind and wanted to be a part of the recorded dialogue between chapters. Everyone agreed that this was fine.)

Artist: Finally! I have been looking forward to presenting these monologues for two whole chapters already. Is it o.k. if I just give a performance of each one now? Should I warm up a bit more first? I might be a little rusty. (She begins stretching and warming up her voice.)

Researcher: Hey—I thought you said she could do this.

Teacher: Be patient. This is all a part of being an a/r/tographer remember? We aren’t just waking up every morning and going to auditions and rehearsals … we do other things too … like teach.

Researcher: And study.

Teacher: Exactly … and finding a way to clear a space in our day for creativity that interrupts and disrupts the familiar.

Researcher: Well this certainly is disruptive … you know I (researcher is interrupted mid sentence) …

Artist: O.k. I’m ready. Who’s going to introduce me?

Teacher: I’ve already got that covered. Here we go: The following dramatic readings of The teacher monologues will be presented by Artist. The first piece entitled The Math Lesson was written by Ardele Thompson who was a participant in this research project.

Artist:
(Reads)
I am standing, in a tiny portable, in front of 30 grades 5 and 6 students. This is the first week of my second practicum. My palms are sweaty … my mouth is dry. Why am I nervous? This is my first math lesson … the dreaded math lesson. My greatest
fear in becoming a teacher is about to be realized. I’ve never really liked math! I’m an artistic person, a trained actor. Math stressed me out. Still stresses me out! I could never get the answer fast enough. I didn’t see anything creative about math.

As an actor, I am used to standing up and talking in front of people. But this is somehow different. There is no script here. What if some whippersnapper from the back asks me a question I can’t answer? That kid Michael over there, he’s really bright in mathematics. I know he’s going to stump me with something.

Okay get it together. You know this unit. You’ve reviewed it and let’s face it you know what you’re talking about.

So I begin …

“Alright class, before we get started on today’s lesson, are there any questions from yesterday’s homework that people would like to discuss?”

That’s good. Nice way to ease us all into this. Okay, looks like most students were having trouble with question #3. What was question #3? Oh yeah…the triangle with the algebraic equation. I can totally answer this one, no problem. Wait! I have a better idea.

“Is there anyone who would like to show how they solved the problem? Michael, great, why don’t you put your answer on the board.”

This is good. Everyone seems excited about this. Huh … he’s got the same answer, but that’s not the way I would have done it….

“Can you talk us through your strategy Michael?”

(thoughtful pause)

“Did anyone else do it a different way?”

Pretty soon I’ve got six students showing and explaining their strategies. And look at Toby …. Toby, who rarely speaks in class, standing up there with renewed confidence, proudly showing us how he solved the problem using his own method. Sure, a lot of the strategies are very similar when you examine them and some are better then others, but next time Michael might try Toby’s strategy and Toby might try Michael’s. Regardless, I know that the exchange of ideas during this time has made math seem less daunting for a lot of students. Now that’s what I would have liked growing up. I think I finally have seen how we can begin to find the creativity in mathematics.
Teacher: Wonderful job! You really attacked that piece with the necessary gusto. I can’t wait to hear the next one.

Researcher: Me neither! In fact, I think I’ll present this one for everyone. I mean, what’s the big deal about reading a few lines? Here … let me give this one a go. O.K? So, this monologue is called *On stage on both* and it is written by Jonathan Stevens who participated in the first phase of the project. (Heh-hem …)

(Reads)

*On stage on both.*

*Constantly on.*

One comes easier depending on the day, the mood, the students. Where in my head did that come from?

I cry often because it has been so long since I have been up there, rather, I’m honing these new skills (he tells himself).

What is more natural?

But as time passes, it’s easier.

Easier to watch, to switch hats.

Growing accustomed to this newness.

Watching the fulcrum go one way.

Always pulled one way, but when it comes

To doing it

For the students,

I could not imagine playing a better role.

It’s a funny thing to go from hours in the studio, having perfected every verb you’re capable of—

Found motivations (a clichéd gig).

After that, years ago, after that exercise,

I altered my thought patterns some,

In my interactions, my pursuits, my work,

All based on a verb.

It became second nature to find it.

I still do.

Identify the kiddo, name the goal, find the route.

They go hand in hand—for me, at least.

For other actors I’ve known,

I’m sure they’d cringe.

Last resort, they’d say.

The “those who can do, those who can’t teach” approach—again, as clichéd as that shit is.
INTERLUDE 2

It’s a nicer group—more real—I say that
Having extracted myself from the broken hearts
And escapees.

Teachers. They’re the real ones.
They can do anything.
Funny to think both professions have been scoffed at from
Time to time.

Both hard.
What do you do?
I’m an actor.
Oh.
What do you do?
I’m a teacher.
And?
On stage on both.
On scaffold, is more like it.
If one accepts it as that.
I’ve gained more respect for my teachers since becoming one since, it’s tougher
than any other profession I know.

Actors—sure, it’s a tough life.
Tough to put the pieces together, tough to nail a life down, tough to remove
yourself from one bed and place yourself in another.
Tough to be wrapped up in the removal of oneself from the self and look in and/or
remove yourself for the sake of expulsion.

Teachers—do they even question their motivations behind it?
I’m sure they do—if the job doesn’t sing, or the student’s don’t glow—it’s only
natural.

But, really.
Are there any out there who believe they are not being the ultimate contributor?

But the art now. Wow.
That’s where the canker gnaws.
Art—art and education.
The ultimate contribution.
Become yourself, kid.
But, how?

Here’s a chord.

Become what’s real, buddy?
But how?

Here’s space.

Discover everything child?
But where?

Inside.

What better a combo than that of someone who can put on the mask that draws out the demons and open opens their arms into which the exorcized run?

Harsh, yes. But how?

On stage on both.

On fire.
A gift to be able to stop talking about the self for some time and give the light to those who deserve it.

The next ones.

The promise that all we’re devoted to, all the past we’ve collected, all the identities we’ve played, the shows that have closed, the moments frozen-all of those can come with us and contribute to the next ones.

I have a place where dreams are born and time is never planned.

Oh, that’s true. So constantly true.

Teacher: Good work researcher. Your recitation was clear and well-paced. How was presenting that monologue for you?

Researcher: Well, as much as I don’t want to admit it … that was kind of hard. I kind of feel a bit out of breathe and I don’t know, I just had a lot of questions about the whole monologue. You know, like I wanted to figure out more about this person’s experience writing it and stuff. I didn’t feel in the moment … you know … absorbed in the character … I guess there really is a difference between a reading and a dramatic reading or performance of a text …

A/r/tographer: Absolutely. I think your point that it takes time to hone artistic skills that make things like performing a monologue effortless and engaging are the result of a lot of hard work. But, you know, as much as I’d like to continue this conversation, I really think we need to just include the rest of the monologues at
this point and wait until Chapter 3 to analyze them in detail alongside the rest of the data collected.

Artist: That sounds good to me except that I really, really wanted to present *Gallop apace* by Maisey Roberts for you all. Could I just do that one and then we can include the remaining monologues after that?

Teacher: Isn’t that monologue the one you performed at the University of British Columbia’s theatre in education evening?

Artist: Yeah, that’s the one. I performed it there and then showed my performance of that piece to the author before we interviewed her about it.

Researcher: Alright, then let’s hear it.

Teacher: I think the correct phrase is: On with the show!

(Artist Reads:)

Self-doubt is a funny thing, especially when you are staring into a crowd of pimply faces. I feel it, feel its hot fingers creeping up my neck, while I try desperately to convey the kind of orgasmic excitement that this speech should inspire.

*Just listen to this! I say, get a load of this rhythm!*

It happens every time I teach Romeo and Juliet. There are three, maybe four scenes that just get the better of me. They take over my body. I can feel it coming, feel this surge of energy as I get ready for the passage.

*Who can get up here and break up the syllables for me? Andrea? “Gallop Apace” what is that?*

They look at me blankly. My eyes are on fire; I gesture back to the board, and recite it again for them:

*Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds! If this were purely iambic pentameter, I ask them, what would it sounds like? Anyone?*

Again I scan the room for some glimpse of recognition. The spark I am looking for, that tells me I am reaching someone, anyone who cares as much about this poetic trick as I do. I sigh.

*Let’s review. What-DOES-i-AM-bic-PENT-a-MET-er-SOUND like?*
Now I have lost a couple of them. They think I am an absolute nut.

O.k...it-SOUNDS like-THIS the BEAT ing OF your HEART!
If Juliet was using only iambs in this line, she would be saying “ga-LLOP a – PACE.” Do you think that’s how she’d say it? I ask.

“That would sound stupid.” says Trent.

Yes! I practically shout. Yes, Trent! it would sound stupid!

Trent is surprised. He does not normally inspire such positive outbursts from his teachers, I suspect.

So how would you say it, if you were playing Juliet?

The class snickers a little, at the thought of Trent in drag. I go with it.

Go on, Trent, close your eyes. You are sitting in the upper window of your home. Romeo, whom you have recently married, in secret, will be back under the cover of night. You will probably make out. Right? You are excited. But it is still daytime! You are asking, in this speech, that Apollo run his horses across the sky a little faster today, am I right? His steeds. His “fiery-footed” steeds. Who can tell me what that means? Why are their feet fiery?

Ayesha jumps in. “they are pulling the Sun!” she blurts out.

I can see she is proud of herself too—she hated this class last week, and now she is piecing together this puzzle with the rest of us. Well, with me and Trent at least—I don’t know about the rest of them yet.

And this is when the self-doubt rears its head a little. All of a sudden I can see myself in front of this group, as if I am staring in at the class through a window. What am I doing? Flailing around, jumping and whirling and dancing to get this language into them. I want so desperately for them to care. They will care, I tell myself. They must. How could anyone hear this language and not care?

So, back to Trent—

How would Juliet say this?

He responds sheepishly, as though he doesn’t have the answer.

Gallop Apace.

Right Trent. Right. GALL-op a Pace.
That’s how we would say it and that’s how Juliet would say it too. But Why? Why does Shakespeare write it this way? Juliet is breaking out of her rhythm for this one—and we know that doesn’t happen by accident. What is going on here?

A couple of students shift in their seats. Many of them are thinking about break time. About their sports game this afternoon. About the headline news this morning, or the awful things their friend said to them at lunch. But a couple of them are really considering my question, I just know it.

GALL op a PACE.

This is not the rhythm of a beating heart now is it?

I am moving my body more and more now, waving my arms and flailing a little. They may or may not care about this particular lesson, but it is obvious to me, and to them, that this might be the most exciting moment in my week. In a matter of seconds, one young student will Get It. Someone will See The Magic. They will Hear what I hear. I could pee my pants from the anticipation. But that wouldn’t be very appropriate for a teacher, would it? So, who will it be?

Before I know it, I am galloping around the room. I can’t help myself. I know that this makes me the lamest teacher around. Not only do I embarrass them with my frank discussions of adolescent sexuality, now I am whinnying around the room like a fool. I am beet red, I am sure of it. And I bet my underarms are wet through my shirt.

This is the day though. Look forward to this lesson all term.

GALL-op a-PACE
GALL-op a-PACE
GALL-op a-PACE

I am free like the steeds. I am crossing the sky, pulling my own chariot of begrudging, stubborn, awkward teenagers behind me.

Artist: O.K so, I know we said we wouldn’t read these last two monologues but, I at least want to introduce them …

Researcher: By saying what … now for the last two monologues?

Artist: No, of course not … I just want to say (in an over-the-top voice) And now for the last two monologues!
If we shadows have offended
By Jonathan Stevens (Participant in first phase of the project)

Offstage Voice: If we shadows have offended, think but this and all is mended.

Teacher: I love it, I really do! It’s so rewarding! I hate it. I hate it! I want to quit! I go back and forth between loving it and hating it. Thankfully most of the time it leans towards loving it. Otherwise, I’m not sure what I’d do. Teaching is all consuming for me. It sucks me dry. I don’t know how to give less of myself to make it less demanding. Their minds are so active, it’s nearly impossible not to want to get right in there and show them a lesson.

Inner Voice: Can I sustain this? How do others do it?

Benjamin can you and Blake work on the herb fetching scene? … Yes, begin with “These are the forgeries of jealousy”.

Debbie and Rosie can you prompt the lovers scene between Audrey and Harrison. They’re almost off book but, they’ll need a few prompts.

Offstage Voice: (Announcement-buzz sound from playground opening)

Sorry for the interruption. Teachers remember that the playground’s official opening is happening at 1pm today. Please ask your students to line up at 12:55. Primaries will go to the East side of the Playground. Intermediaries on the West side. A reminder that the school band is rehearsing at 12:30. Senior girls basketball at Kitchener at 3:15. Have a nice morning children and teachers.

Teacher: Mechanicals! Can I have all the mechanicals? Pheterachart, Lulu, Caroline … Oh right, Valerie’s at ESL. He should be back in 10 minutes. Can Laughlyn read Valerie’s lines?

Offstage Voice: Knock on the door (and Beatrix enters).

Teacher: OK everyone Beatrix has just arrived from the University to work with us. Can you come to the carpet?

Inner Voice: Oh my God! This is chaos. We need to work on the individual scenes. But, let’s work on the ensemble while Beatrix’s here. Bathroom! I maybe shouldn’t have had that second coffee. I need to go to the bathroom while Beatrix’s here—it’s my chance.

Offstage Voice: It’s mine. No—It’s Mine! Give it back.
Teacher: Blake and Benjamin please join us. Yes, I know you want to continue working on your scene. You’ll have more time after recess. I love this chaos.

Offstage Voice: [Knock on door]. Can we have your attendance sheet?

Teacher: Oh Yeah! Lulu can you give the monitor the attendance sheet? Laughlyn Ho is here so don’t mark him as absent, just put as late.

Offstage Voice: Hey-Laughlyn C’s back from ESL.

Teacher: O.K. everyone Beatrix’s going to work on the “If we shadows have offended” ensemble piece with you … I know you weren’t here yesterday Lisa but, we’ll include you. The 5 fairies can you come with me? Beatrix, Gabriel is with the Math LEAP program, but he should be back soon. And, Sophia is in resource.

Offstage Voice: [Announcement—buzz sounds] Sorry for the interruption again. Teachers can we have a brief 5 minute meeting at recess about the playground opening. In the staff room at 10:30—thank you and I apologize for the interruption.

Inner Voice: Ah, this is crazy! There’s too much going on! Oh my God, Daisy is reading without me asking her to. And Laughlyn … he’s memorized the entire first scene!

Offstage Voice: If we shadows have offended, think but this and all is mended—

Teacher: Are those cue cards? Oh my God! Benjamin and Blake have created cue cards on their own to remind them of their lines!

Fairies let’s work on the revels dance. Let’s begin from the circle formation. Sophia, you’re kneeling down so the audience can see Titania in her bower.

Offstage Voice: If we shadows have offended, think but this and all is mended—

[Knock on the door] We’re collecting field trip forms for the Water-Mania outing.

Offstage Voice: Mr. Hayes, can I go to the bathroom?

Teacher: Yes Debbie. Who is going with you?

Offstage Voice: Lulu can you come with me?

Sure, we can practice our lines while we go!

[Sound of the recess bell is heard].

Teacher: I love it