

**Teaching and Learning in the Arts:  
A transformational journey**

by

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## **STATEMENT OF ETHICS APPROVAL**

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this work, has obtained, for the research described in this work, either:

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or

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or has conducted the research

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the Graduate Diploma in Arts Education offered at Simon Fraser University and identifies whether and how this program provides the support for teachers to think about themselves and their teaching practice and to grow personally and as professional educators. By utilizing research tools such as interviews, observations and written surveys, I look at the journey of three elementary teachers as they engage in their own understanding of the arts, of their teaching practice and of themselves. Through the evidence collected during their journeys, and with the group surveys collected at the pre and post program stages, I document changes as experienced by the participants. I focus particularly on how participants interacted with two elements of the Arts Education program: the program structure utilized by Field Programs to deliver the diploma programs, and the program content (the Arts).

## **Dedication**

As I write, I feel my parents at my side. At one elbow, my Mother whispering encouragement, at the other, my Dad asking questions. It is from this rich, prairie foundation, that I have become the woman, the writer, the person I am. Their support, their example has helped me to take risks, to ask questions, to work hard, to laugh harder, to love. This work is dedicated to Eleanor and Peter Wahl with love and great respect.

## **Acknowledgements**

Experienced actors know that you cannot act in a vacuum. Believable performances can only be created when you are in relationship with others, relationship with the text, the other actors and of course, with the audience. I see a close parallel to my journey with this thesis. My relationships have been fundamental to the completion of this project.

Thanks again and always to Sharon Bailin for her insights and support for this research and for her mentorship over the past fifteen years. I am most grateful to Cheryl Amundsen and Michael Ling for their invaluable input into this project and for their encouragement as I juggled the demands of a difficult personal time with my own expectations for my work.

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Finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the commitment and dedication of my participants. From the very beginning, they inspired me as an educator and as a researcher. I hope that I have represented their voices respectfully and accurately.

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## **PROLOGUE: SETTING THE SCENE**

*I beg you to have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps, then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without ever noticing it, live your way into the answer.*

*Rainer Maria Rilke*

### **Introduction**

It is the intent of this thesis to examine the Graduate Diploma in Arts Education offered at Simon Fraser University and identify whether and how this program provides the support for teachers to think about themselves and their teaching practice and to grow personally and as professional educators. By utilizing research tools such as interviews, observations and written surveys, I will look at the journey of three elementary teachers as they engage in their own understanding of the Arts, of their teaching practice and of themselves. Through the evidence collected during their journeys, and with the group surveys collected at the pre and post program stages, I will document changes (if any) as experienced by the participants. I am especially interested in how participants interacted with two elements of the Arts Education program: the program structure utilized by Field Programs to deliver the diploma programs, and the program content (the Arts). I will examine any changes in the context of what the educational literature has to say regarding the documented effect on participants of complimentary or similar educational and Arts based programs.

### **Statement of purpose and research focus**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate and describe the nature of the experiences of a sampling of participants in one Arts education cohort. This research is guided by the following general questions:

1. Have participants' knowledge, skills and attitudes in relationship to the Arts changed, as documented in the experiences of three teachers over the length of their participation in the Exploring the Arts, Graduate Diploma Program?
2. Have participants' views of teaching, and their views of themselves as educators, changed, as documented in the experiences of three teachers over the length of their participation in the Exploring the Arts, Graduate Diploma Program?
3. What program experiences according to the participants, may have contributed to any documented changes?

### **Significance of the study**

Several educational theorists suggest that certain design components of teacher in-service can subsequently influence educational practice. Donald Schön (1983) documents the ways in which the act of reflecting on one's actions can influence subsequent understandings. Michael Fullan (1991), Andy Hargreaves (1992), and J. Harstey (1990), among others, speak of the efficacy of collegial learning communities and describe how the transference of theory to practice is imbedded within effective and

sustainable teacher change. There is little research, however, which documents over a significant period of time, the experiences and understandings of teachers as they participate in a program that combines theory and practice, mentorship and collegiality, and is grounded in the philosophical understandings of reflection. This study undertakes to provide such documentation.

### **Organization of the study**

I have arranged my data to follow a standard qualitative research format (Woolcot, 1990). I have titled the chapters in this document with an acknowledgement toward my theatrical roots. Theatre was my first passion and this study (embedded as it is within the Arts) is framed as acts in a theatrical text. This Prologue (Chapter One) sets the foundation for the study. It articulates the research questions and focus and outlines the organizational structure for the document. It is my intention to investigate two primary aspects of the Graduate Diploma program: the program structure, and the content. I have also chosen to give a preliminary introduction to my three primary participants in this chapter. It is their journey that provided me with the majority of the qualitative data through which to investigate my questions. I thought it fitting to introduce their voices in the beginning.

Act One (Chapter Two) is an in-depth look at the philosophical and theoretical foundation for the Graduate Diploma program at SFU. I have specifically looked at the theory surrounding Field Programs' diploma structure to articulate the connection between participant understandings and change and programmatic structures such as: action research and reflection, constructivist understanding, and situated learning. I will

spend some time articulating the connections between the current practice of Field Programs and the theoretical perspectives that I contend are the foundation of the program design.

The second aspect of the program, the content or curriculum, is examined in Act Two (Chapter Three). The importance of the curriculum (specifically the Arts), to the development of the learner, is supported by scholars such as Elliot Eisner (2002), Maxine Greene (1995), and Howard Gardner (1984). They, among many others, have stated that engaging in the Arts can have a transformative effect on participants. This chapter will look specifically at the literature surrounding current Arts research and at some of the documented changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes that have occurred when learners immerse themselves in the Arts. There is much literature surrounding the efficacy of Arts education. I have chosen to restrict my literature review in this area to the authors who have spoken specifically on the relationships between the Arts and teaching practice and to highlight two specific educators (Greene and Eisner) in acknowledgement of their contributions to the field.

Act Three (Chapter Four) provides the background for my methodological choices. As my research is guided by questions regarding participants' understandings of and experiences in the Arts, I have chosen to place my study within the domain of qualitative research. In this chapter, I examine the literature surrounding qualitative research and specifically the methodology of case study, which I contend supports my choices in this research. The connection between case study methodology and my research is outlined specifically in this chapter.

In the theatre, the final act usually holds the climactic moment of the play and reveals answers to any lingering mysteries. Act Four in this text (Chapter Five), articulates the data compiled during the course of the two -year study. The methods utilized for data collection included surveys, recorded video and audio interviews, journal reflections and teaching observations. Wherever possible, I have recorded participant responses verbatim in order to preserve as accurately as possible participant voices. In this chapter, I have placed the data chronologically (Yin, 1994). I begin with the pre-program survey that I hope will surface base-line understandings of the Arts. I have then included transcribed interviews (group and individual) with the three key participants as they progress through their program. The last section of this chapter provides the data from the post-program survey highlighting current understandings about the Arts and comments regarding the program structure.

The Epilogue (Chapter Six) looks at the study data and teases out the implications and understandings for educational research and practice. In this chapter, I make some modest suggestions for Field Programs to consider and raise some questions regarding Arts education in-service for practicing teachers.

### **A preliminary word about the participants**

The three primary participants are three elementary teachers. Jenny is the youngest of the three. She has been teaching for 3 years. She has some background in Visual Art,

and Music, has taught ballet and incorporates a lot of plays into her classroom. She states that Visual Art is the art with which she is most comfortable (because there is a product that can be evaluated). She has painted for her own enjoyment in the past. She also has taken ballet as a child and adult. She has little formal Drama background. Jenny thinks she is most uncomfortable with teaching Music, because she doesn't know where to start. Jenny has never taken a post- Graduate Diploma course before. She seems to the researcher to be energetic, enthusiastic and eager to express her opinions. (Field notes, 2003)

Barb is in her early fifties and has been teaching for 23 years. She has significant experience in Music. She can read music and play the accordion. Barb describes herself as a supporter of the Arts. She has promoted the Arts for her children. She incorporates folk dancing into her PE classes and Readers Theatre into her language Arts. She states that she loves the Arts but has no specific training. She states that she is most comfortable with Music, and although she is comfortable teaching Dance and Drama, she is not confident that she is good at it. She is most uncomfortable with teaching Visual Art. Barb is very vocal and exhibits a lot of energy in the interviews. (Field Notes, 2003)

Sarah is in her late forties. She has been teaching since 1979 with a ten- year break to be at home with her children. She currently teaches at 50%. She is the quietest of the three. She identifies no Arts background other than basic education courses taken during her teacher certification year. She feels most comfortable with Visual Art, but qualifies

the statement by calling her classroom art projects “crafty”. She is least comfortable with Music as she states that she “can’t carry a tune” (Field Notes, 2003).

These three women met with me in individual and group interviews over the course of the two years of their diploma program in Arts education (2003-2005). I visited their classrooms and observed their Arts classes. They provide the foundation for my observations and data although I also spoke with other members of their cohort and collected pre and post contributions from the entire group. The details of the selection process for these participants will be further articulated in Act Three when I go into further discussion regarding my methodological choices. In a very real way, this study is their journey through the Arts and it is their perspectives that I hope to clearly represent.

## ACT ONE: UNDERSTANDING THE GRADUATE DIPLOMA PROCESS

*All theories of learning are based on fundamental assumptions about the person, the world, and their relations. But there is common ground for exploring their integral, constitutive relations, their entailments, and effects in a framework of social practice theory, in which the production, transformation, and changing in the identities of persons, knowledgeable skill in practice, and communities of practice are realized in the lived-in world of engagement in everyday activity.*

(Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.47)

### The field program model

The Exploring the Arts Graduate Diploma Program (2003-2005) followed the following programmatic sequence (see full timeline in Appendix B)

(August, 2003): **Three Day Summer Institute:** Foundations of Inquiry and Fine Arts Education

(Sept-Dec, 2003): **Special Topics Course:** Issues in Education in the Arts

**Field Studies:** Exploring the Arts: Issues

(Jan-June, 2004): **Special Topics Course:** Exploring the Arts: Visual Art

**Field Studies:** Exploring the Arts: Visual Art.

(July, 2004): **Summer Institute:** Arts in the Community

(Sept-Dec.2004): **Special Topics Course:** Exploring the Arts: Music

**Field Studies:** Exploring the Arts: Music

(Jan-June, 2005): **Special Topics Course:** Exploring the Arts: Drama and Movement

**Field Studies:** Exploring the Arts: Drama and Movement

(July, 2005): **Summer Institute:** Reflections on Teaching and Learning

The Summer Institutes and Special Topics Courses run in seminar fashion with readings and written assignments. The Field Studies components are implemented either immediately following the seminar sessions or are conducted alongside the courses.

Field Studies refer to the teacher's exploration within their own classroom of a specific question or inquiry. These areas of teacher research often have immediate application to the curriculum being examined within the seminar. The Field Studies are combined with mentor sessions that bring small groups of participants together with a colleague to reflect on decisions and dilemmas encountered in their classroom research. A working portfolio is maintained throughout the program to document participant activities and understandings.

Field Programs' Graduate Diploma rests within the qualitative arena of teacher as researcher. Scholars such as Joe Kincheloe (2003) have written substantively about the methodology and resulting pedagogy in teacher action research. The following quote illustrates what I contend to be one of the philosophical underpinnings for the development of the Field Programs model of teacher in-service:

Using the model of teaching as reflective inquiry, teacher scholars appreciate the numerous ways that scholarship is connected to teacher education, curriculum development, and the teaching act itself. Teachers can use these understandings to make informed decisions about life in the classroom. Such a process helps them create a climate where students can develop into active, curious researcher citizens of a diverse globalized society. Such pedagogical decisions are grounded on teachers' insights into consciousness construction in the experience of both themselves and their students, the intersection of the social and the cognitive, diversity, social and educational theory, and instructional strategies (Kincheloe, 2003, p.252).

### **An examination and definition of field programs**

Field Programs is one of four program areas of the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. Its broad mandate is to provide professional development and teacher in-service to K-12 educators within the Lower Mainland geographical area of British

Columbia, although historically, it has also provided teacher professional development and in-service to educators from other countries.

Field Programs was established as a distinct administrative unit of the Faculty of Education in 1993 under the name “Field Relations and Teacher In-service Education.” Prior to this, the main activity of the unit occurred under the auspices of the “Project Office”—an area of the Dean’s portfolio originally formed to develop connections between SFU and other agencies that would support teacher in-service education in the field. Field Programs offerings permit practitioners to examine their own practice in light of current educational research. These offerings also draw on the resources of school districts and other agencies, linking local experts and leaders with University Faculty and In-service Faculty Associates in collaborative, focused investigations of various contemporary themes in education such as “Adolescent Literacy,” or “Supporting Diverse Learners.”<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this study is to document the experiences of a sampling of participants, identify the context of the study and articulate the critical components that are designed to support these in-service educational offerings.

### **The design of the SFU Field Programs**

Simon Fraser’s Faculty of Education developed its Field Programs component in 1993 to design and deliver “in-service programs which foster change in educational practice within an appropriate theoretical framework” (O’Shea, 1999). Within that broad mandate, Field Programs offer teachers a variety of different fields in which to study, including Arts, humanities, technology, mathematics and social justice/diversity issues. All of the Field Programs Graduate Diplomas have a similar course structure. There are thirty credit

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<sup>1</sup> From the Faculty of Education Three Year Plan (2004-2007)

diploma programs that combine Special Topic Courses<sup>2</sup> with Advanced Field Studies<sup>3</sup>.  
(See Appendix B for a list of program components).

The design of the Graduate Diploma does not vary significantly between curricular focused areas. The basic rhythm of the program is to begin with a special topics course that sets the theoretical foundation. This either precedes or is combined with an action research field study on an area of inquiry chosen by the participant. This balance of theory and practice is maintained throughout the diploma. As I continue in this document, I will refer to this format with specific examples.

Field Programs states three philosophical principles that broadly reflect the areas of teacher action research, reflection and dialogue on practice and the importance of a supportive learning community.

Let's take a closer look at the Field Programs principles (1999).

- Learning is nurtured and facilitated when educators are provided with opportunities to engage in critical inquiry into the areas of their practice, which they find personally and professionally significant.

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<sup>2</sup> These courses explore issues that are related to the teaching of the curricular area being studied. "They look at curriculum and instructional practices as well as the research, theories and pedagogical principles upon which these practices are based." Field Programs (May, 2003) Exploring Fine Arts Education.

<sup>3</sup> Field Studies allow participants to "develop an inquiry plan around an issue or curricular area of particular interest to them. Participants implement the plan in their classrooms and critically reflect on growth and changes in their practice". Field Programs (May 2003) Exploring Fine Arts Education.

- The construction and reconstruction of understandings about the learning and teaching process are fundamental to creating new ways of knowing and being as educators.

Later in this chapter, I will show how these principles are grounded in the research surrounding action research and reflection on learning.

- Educational change is fostered when teachers have opportunities to engage in sustained dialogues about aspects of their practice which are personally and professionally meaningful for them, and when the dilemmas and discomforts of the educational change process are acknowledged and accommodated;
- The presence of a supportive learning environment contributes significantly to the depth and breadth of learning that occurs.

I will demonstrate the way in which these principles have their basis in conceptual understandings surrounding community- learning theory.

To find the theoretical connections behind the operating principles of Field programs, I began by looking for published documents that specifically located the development of Field Programs in a single theory or philosophical understanding. Like a detective searching for irrefutable evidence, I discovered that the smoking gun in this case doesn't exist. There is no piece of evidence that unequivocally states "We do X because of Y".

Through conversations and by perusing the writings of some of the program's key architects such as Dr. Tom O'Shea (1999), Dr. Allan MacKinnon (1992), and Pat Holborn (1991), and by reading some of the articles and books of other scholars instrumental to the development of this program area, Dr. Peter Norman (1991), and Dr. Peter Grimmett (1992), I have uncovered some of the theoretical inspiration behind Field Programs' guiding principles. By using the descriptive language in documents published by Field Programs, and by connecting my own experiences as an instructor and developer of specific courses within the Arts Graduate Diploma, I have been guided toward what I suggest is a reasonable assumption about the philosophical foundation of the design of Field Programs. This chapter outlines what I contend to be the theoretical support for the program's published principles (as articulated in the preceding page).

Finally, I am an Arts educator and my heart resides within the Arts. However, Field Programs' Graduate Diploma offers a multi-disciplinary infrastructure and it is to this model that I have directed this chapter. Connections and extrapolations between participant understandings in the Arts and the literature and philosophy surrounding the Arts will be made later in Act Two (Chapter Three).

### **The connection to action research and reflective practice**

To begin, let us connect the Graduate Diploma program principles with a working definition of action research. The first two guiding principles articulated by Field Programs (Field Programs, 1999) incorporate a number of statements that can be reasonably encompassed by action research theory.

- Learning is nurtured and facilitated when educators are provided with opportunities to engage in critical inquiry into the areas of their practice, which they find personally and professionally significant.
- Educational change is fostered when teachers have opportunities to engage in sustained dialogues about aspects of their practice which are personally and professionally meaningful for them, and when the dilemmas and discomforts of the educational change process are acknowledged and accommodated.
- The construction and reconstruction of understandings about the learning and teaching process are fundamental to creating new ways of knowing and being as educators.

Program descriptors such as “critical inquiry”, “practice which they find professionally and personally significant” and “sustained dialogue about aspects of their practice” (O’Shea: 1999), are echoed in an inclusive working definition of action research which was drawn up collaboratively by the International symposium on Action Research, Brisbane, March 1989 (cited in McNiff, 2002). It includes the following descriptors:

- a situation in which people reflect and improve on their own work by tightly interlinking their reflection and action and by making their experiences public.
- a situation in which there is increasing data gathering by the participants; participation in decision making.

- power sharing and collaboration among members of the community; self reflection, self-evaluation and self-management by autonomous and responsible persons.
  - learning progressively by doing and making mistakes;
  - reflection which supports the ideas of the self reflective practitioner.
- (McNiff, 2002, p. 24-25).

McNiff (2002) describes teacher action research as, “A process of learning from experience, a dialectical interplay between practice, reflection and learning” (p.6). Case, Reagan and Brubacher (2002) add to the definition in this way: “The research questions these teachers are trying to address arise from their own curiosity and worries, and not a result of a literature search of some sort” (p.51).

I contend that there is a connection between these definitions and the two Field Programs’ guiding principles cited above. Both clearly establish a process that highlights learning by doing, reflecting and dialoging about the process, and working on issues that address areas of interest to the learner.

Underneath this broad umbrella of action research lie a number of conditions or factors that also help to define it. One of these is the understanding of the nature of inquiry. Case, Reagan and Brubacher (2000) identify several specific parameters for classroom inquiry. They state that inquiry is dynamic and not static and that it always takes place in a social and cultural context. Individual characteristics such as intellectual curiosity,

motivation, and an openness to challenge are necessary for inquiry. Classroom inquiry should begin with a real problem or concern that is of interest to the teacher so that there is ownership of the research study (Case et al. p.36).

This sense of connection to or ownership of the research is a crucial component of action research and features prominently in the Field Programs' documentation (Field Programs, 1999) and in Field Programs' Graduate Diploma program design. Participants self select into Graduate Diploma courses. Because there is a wide range of subject and issue based programs (including Arts, humanities, technology, mathematics and social justice/diversity issues) from which to choose, teachers can elect to participate in something to which they already have a connection or interest. Once within that program, teachers can focus more specifically on one aspect or concern that resonates even more closely with their interests.

The Field Programs' programmatic structure conforms closely to both the working definitions of action research set out by the International Symposium (1989) as included above and by an acronym (CRASP) developed by Zuber-Skerritt (1992) to describe action research (see box below). The specific connection between the special topics courses in the Graduate Diploma and the field studies components provides the collaborative enquiry and public accountability described (in the definition of action research) by the symposium (1989) and Zuber- Skerritt.

Critical (and self-critical) collaborative enquiry by  
Reflective practitioners being  
Accountable and making the results of their enquiry public,  
Self-evaluating their practice and engaged in  
Participative problem solving and continuing professional development.

Field Programs asks participants to explore a topic or issue and then take that issue and apply it in a real world context within their classrooms. Participants are also encouraged to reflect privately and publicly (during mentoring sessions) on the problems and dilemmas faced while pursuing their research. The evaluation of the program is through the submission of portfolios. These portfolios reflect the participants' understandings of their own growth and their expectations and challenges for future explorations.<sup>4</sup> This process of exploration and reflection closely mirrors the definitions previously stated for teacher action research. Later in Act Four, I will examine the participants' evaluations of the portfolio requirement.

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<sup>4</sup> "Evaluation is referenced to evidence of ongoing, cumulative learning that goes beyond performance on specific learning tasks or assignments. At several points participants are asked to prepare individual portfolios that synthesize and evaluate what they have learned in relation to criteria negotiated with the instructor. Participants are expected to document their own learning by maintaining an individual working portfolio that includes evidence of continuous reflection and that provides examples of significant learning and professional growth throughout the Graduate Diploma Program". Portfolio Assessment and Evaluation in a Graduate Diploma Program. Field Programs Faculty of Education Simon Fraser University. (2001)

There is another aspect of action research that is closely aligned with the programmatic structure of Field Programs. The sense of the importance of the individual and his/her background is critical to the growth of the individual and the reflection on the process. This is also articulated in a publication authored by Grimmett, MacKinnon, Erickson and Reicken (1990): “the reflective process whether it be described by a practitioner or a researcher, is dependent on the context, on the richness of repertoire that a person brings to that context, and on his/her ability to draw on a level of reflection appropriate to that context” (Grimmett et al.p. 23).

This understanding of personal context and the disposition a teacher may bring to the process will be examined more thoroughly in Act Two where I examine the connection between personal disposition and development in the Arts. I will also pose a corollary question in the final chapter of this document.

If we are to fully understand the ways in which Field Programs’ Graduate Diploma courses are influenced by the theoretical underpinnings of action research, it is appropriate to take a moment and look at some of the historical roots of action research.

Kurt Lewin (1945) developed a definition of action research as a series of steps involving planning, fact finding and execution later to be generally understood as a cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (as cited in Nofke, 1997). Lewin’s work has obvious parallels to Field Programs’ programmatic structure as articulated in the process of topic or curriculum courses followed by implementation of action research or field studies

(for the purposes of this thesis, I will use these terms interchangeably) in their classrooms and augmented by continuous reflections and conversation in mentor groups.

Similar parallels can be found in John Elliot's (1991) work about the "teachers as researchers" movement that emerged in England during the 1960s as a reaction to the emergence of the age 11 GCE's. Elliot outlines a conceptual shift in this curriculum reform process that saw in response to the students' own search for meaning, the pedagogical practice of the teacher changing from predetermined selections of knowledge, concepts and skills, to an organization of "knowledge content". Elliot sees this as providing the teacher with a sense of direction without prescribing a fixed agenda. "The fundamental aim of action research is to improve practice rather than to produce knowledge" (Elliot, 1991, p. 49).

Elliot sums up this pedagogical approach: "Action research integrates teaching and teacher development, curriculum development and evaluation, research and philosophical reflection, into a unified conception of a reflective educational practice." (Elliot, p. 54). Working with Lewin's original conceptualization of action research, S. Kemmis's (1988) writings further articulate the socially and politically constructed nature of educational practices. Kemmis describes the elements within the classroom and the school environment that determine the shifts and changes in planning as teachers respond to dynamic situations. This understanding of the volatile nature of action research is explored in the training that Field Programs holds for field study mentors. It is clearly articulated to mentors (and later to participants) that the direction of a study can vary depending on the relationships and connections that develop within the classroom ([www.educ.sfu.ca/fp/sdl](http://www.educ.sfu.ca/fp/sdl))

As the work of Kemmis, Lewin and Elliot give some understanding of the intricacies of action research, the question arises of how to document or articulate this research. As we have seen, Field Programs prescribes the use of a working portfolio (Field Programs 2001) to document participant learning and provides directions on ways in which to become a self- directed learner.<sup>5</sup>

McNiff (2002) sets out some basic questions that parallel these directions. To help clarify the connection, I have placed McNiff's questions beside Field Programs' directions (wording obtained from the portfolio document: Field Programs 2001) and I have identified the Field Program directions in bold italics.

- What's my concern? (*What do I want to do and learn?*)
- What could I do? (*How can I go about learning?*)
- What did I do? (*How could I assess and evaluate my learning and achievements?*)
- What is my evidence? (*What is my documentation? What will I include for my portfolio? E.g. Reflective journal, reading responses, artifacts, critical incident vignettes, narrative summaries*)
- How do I judge my own effectiveness? (*Self-evaluation summary and rubric*) (McNiff, 2002,p. 60).

I began this section with a definition of action research, a brief examination of its historical roots and then attempted to connect some of the literature on action research with the documents

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<sup>5</sup> The current Field Programs website contains a number of "modules" within which there is one specifically called "The Self Directed Learner" Field Programs Faculty of Education Simon Fraser University [www.educ.sfu.ca/fp/sdl](http://www.educ.sfu.ca/fp/sdl).

and practices of Field Programs. I believe Lawrence Stenhouse (1975) encapsulates the Field Program action research experience with the following quotation:

in short the outstanding characteristic of the extended professional (teacher) is a capacity of autonomous professional self-development through systematic self-study, through the study of the work of other teachers and through the testing of ideas by classroom research procedures. (Stenhouse, 1975,p. 65).

Perhaps Dr. Joe Kincheloe (2003) should have the final word on teachers as action researchers:

In this research context teachers and students continuously reflect on their scholarly work and contemplate ways to improve it. Together teachers and students gain a sophisticated view of educational purposes and the power interests particular purposes serve. Such informed teaching creates unprecedented levels of awareness and higher forms of cognitive activity (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 252).

### **The connection to reflective practice**

As we have seen in the previous pages, action research is intimately connected with participant reflection. However, I have chosen to separate the literature on reflective practice as it has a lengthy and substantial body of work related specifically to its nature and implementation.

Field Programs has stated their mission is “to work with partner organizations to design innovative in-service programs that engage educators in focused, sustained reflective inquiry into classroom practice”(Field Programs’ promotional brochure, undated). As with action research, the definition and attributes of “reflection” are wide and varied. John Dewey argues that experience and reflection equals growth (1916) and that reflective thinking frees us from mere impulsive and routine activities (1933). Posner (1989)

attributes to reflective thinking the development of new ways of reacting, new perspectives, and new interpretations to old problems.

Given this understanding of the potential within reflection, it becomes clear why there has been much written about reflection in educational literature. Few people would argue that the work of a teacher does not involve making many and varied decisions. Often these decisions are made on the basis of little information. There are two schools of thought as to whether teaching is an artistic act (and the decisions are made on the basis of instinctual, tacit knowledge) or a mechanical act (decisions made with specifically learned skill sets) (Regan, Case, Brubacher, 2000). If, however, the decisions are to be rational, reasonable ones, they must be able to be justified. The teacher must be able to account for the reasoning behind the decision. To be able to provide such justification, the teacher cannot rely on instinct alone or on a pre-packaged mechanical skill set. Instead he/she must think about what is going on and critically analyze the situation, in other words, engage in reflection on his/her practice. As we will see, it is this desire to understand, justify and improve teacher practice that appears to lie at the heart of Field Programs' Graduate Diploma courses.

Field Programs acknowledges the importance of reflection by featuring the term in their mission statement and liberally sprinkling the phrase "continuous reflection" throughout documents describing specific courses and the program in general. Teachers are required to reflect on and respond to articles and readings in their special topics courses. The emphasis on the analytic and reflective nature of practice is addressed in Field

Programs' mentor sessions, which intentionally provides time (albeit outside of the regular school day) for teachers to reflect on their actions and discuss with others the ramifications and implications of decisions made within their practice. The requirement of a portfolio as the major assessment tool demands that teachers pay attention to their own learning and provide artifacts that document their reflection. By including reflection within every aspect of the programmatic structure, this concept occupies a key place in the Graduate Diploma philosophy.

Posner (1989) describes the reflective act as a “ metacognitive discourse” and defines it further as, “the ability of teachers to examine their own concepts, theories, and beliefs about teaching, learning, and their subject-matter, and the ability to monitor their decisions about what and how they teach. In a sense, metacognition is a psychological approach to reflective teaching”(p. 25).

Posner (1989) and McNiff (2002) warn about the dangers of generalizations (drawing inferences about teaching in general rather than extrapolating understandings about the particular situation with regard to the single context). They both propose guiding reflection with focused questions in order to give specific lenses. Field Programs also provides guiding questions when asking teachers to reflect on their learning.

#### Guiding Questions for Reflection (Portfolio Assessment and Evaluation in a Graduate Diploma Program, 2001)

- What have I learned?
- Why is this learning important to me?
- How did I go about learning?

- How could I use what I learned in the future?
- What do I want or need to learn next?

Donald Schön's work appears to have been highly influential in the development of the Field Programs approach to teacher in-service. Schön is cited in a number of articles and publications written by many of the major architects of Field Programs: Peter Norman (1986), Pat Holborn (1991), Peter Grimmett and Alan McKinnon (1992). In a statement that could be argued to reflect the trial and error, reflective nature of the Graduate Diploma courses, Donald Schön (1983) said the following:

When a practitioner becomes a researcher into his own practice, he engages in a continuous process of self-education. When practice is repetitive administration of techniques to the same kinds of problems, the practitioner may look to leisure as a source of relief, or to early retirement; but when he functions as a researcher-in-practice, the practice itself is a source of renewal. The recognition of error, with its resulting uncertainty, can become a source of discovery rather than an occasion for self-defense (Schön 1983,p. 88).

Schön's (1987) work describing the conditions that lead to reflection and ultimately to creativity and problem solving include an emphasis on learning by doing (preferably in a situation of relatively low risk) and working with coaches who facilitate rather than direct. These conditions are replicated in the mentor sessions of the Graduate Diploma. As we have seen previously in the chronological outline of the program, each field study component is accompanied by a series of sessions which pair participants with a colleague who acts as a facilitator for uncovering questions and guiding direction for the research. These mentor sessions are kept small (to facilitate ease of conversation) and the mentor is advised to provide opportunities for participants to lead the discussion rather than taking the opportunity to direct the action. (Personal notes, January 2001).

Another central concept in Schön's work is "knowledge-in-action"(1987).

Knowledge-in-action does not rely on a series of conscious steps in a decision making process, but is based in part on the past experience of the practitioner interacting with a particular situation. This interaction is based on tacit knowledge that cannot necessarily be articulated at the time of action. MacKinnon (1994) states that at least a portion of what teachers know, they know tacitly and this knowledge is imbedded and communicated through gestures and actions and that meaning is developed through imitation of practice. By combining knowledge-in-action with Schon's reflection in action, you have an epistemology that has served as the basis for much of Field Programs' programmatic structure, which allows for substantive time and dialogue for participant reflection on decisions and actions in their practice. The sequence of topics course (to input specific knowledge and skills), followed by field study (to implement a question or inquiry which has arisen from the first course) and augmented by mentor sessions (to help make sense of the participant decisions and in-class practice), closely follows Schön's work.

To continue the parallel: as the teacher continues to reflect on his/her actions, Field Programs recognizes that there needs to be some kind of feedback or sounding board from which participants can move forward, check understandings and look at actions through different lenses. In addition to providing the opportunity for discussion (as mentioned above), the mentoring sessions are meant to support this dialogical experience (a programmatic structure which is in accordance with Schön's description of facilitator and participant). This quote from Grimmett, MacKinnon, Erickson and Reicken (1990) is an accurate depiction of the style of discourse encouraged by Field Programs:

When supervisor and teacher freely exchanged views and regarded feedback as a source of information to be evaluated critically, reflective dialogue was promoted. Supervisors framed research knowledge in the form of questions that apprised teachers of information considered useful for deriving insightful appreciation of the lesson under discussion. Indeed, the criteria on which Grimmett judged the conference dialogue to be reflective was whether it brought fresh insights to bear on the teacher's lesson and facilitated the teacher's viewing of his or her behavior as a causal factor in his or her professional development (Grimmett, Mackinnon, Erikson, Reichen, 1990, p. 26).

As we can see, the role of the mentor has significant influence on the experience of the participant. This reflection (by the mentor) of a participant's articulation of their learning and their actions within the classroom could have an effect on subsequent actions. This relationship echoes Schön's conception of the "hall of mirrors" (Schön, 1983).

Field Programs encourages teachers to reflect on their actions and their teaching and the program understands that such reflections do not exist in a vacuum. They provide time and space for teachers to reflect on their professional actions and acknowledge that these reflections will undoubtedly occur in connection with a reflection of self. In other words, reflections on professional actions can lead to reflections of a more personal nature. It is the

Max Van Manen is an educational theorist who has written extensively about the personal nature of reflection in educational settings. Van Manen has articulated a conception of pedagogy that includes as one of its principles, "self-reflection of life" (1987). He describes three ways in which the idea of life's reflectivity has been used in hermeneutic pedagogy: self-reflection as an ontological phenomenon, self-reflection as a life philosophy, and self-reflection as a methodological concept. As an ontological phenomenon, self-

reflection is concerned with the nature of being human and how we come to understand our own existence. Human beings acquire an understanding of themselves through self-reflection. It is an aim of Field Programs that, as teachers proceed through the program they will arrive at new insights about their abilities, their values and ultimately their identities as teachers and as people.

When defining the complexities of reflection, scholars have categorized the concept a number of ways. Georgia Sparks-Langer and Amy Colton (1991) speak of reflective practice in terms of three generalizing elements: cognitive, critical and narrative. The cognitive element concerns the knowledge base that teachers need to make informed decisions. The critical element as articulated by Sparks-Langer and Colton is considered to be that which concerns issues of social justice and ethics. The narrative element encompasses the stories surrounding the teachers' own experiences in the classroom. When working with participants in the Graduate Diploma program, it is the narrative element that teachers appear most comfortable with and which appear documented most often in their portfolios.

This was an area of interest for me as I investigated the understandings of my sampling of participants. Were there factors within the infrastructure of Field Programs that prohibit teachers from researching and documenting a greater number of cognitive and critical elements? I suspect that this is one of the dilemmas facing Field Programs. How to design a program of study that maintains the academic rigor and yet accommodates the

intense physical and emotional demands of full time teaching? I will look at this issue in greater depth later in the document.

Case, Reagan and Brubacher (2000) identify their own three levels of reflection:

Level one- the appropriate use of strategies and materials for the classroom; Level two-teachers apply educational criteria to teaching practice to make independent decisions about pedagogical matters; Level three-the questioning of moral, ethical and other normative type of criteria related both directly and indirectly to the classroom (Case et al.2000, p. 26).

I include this final definition of reflection to once again support the notion that the structure of the Field Programs' Graduate Diploma, (as articulated in the Arts Graduate Diploma program) aids in the development of teacher understanding and change through reflection. Level one coincides most closely with the topic courses, Level two with the field study components and Level three with the reflective nature of the final portfolio.

Case, Reagan and Brubacher (2000) state that the learning process is a personal and individual one, that learning is an active process, that learning is collaborative in nature, and that all learning is situated. This understanding is echoed in the Field Programs' portfolio document (2001)

Graduate Diploma programs have been designed to encourage ongoing learning that continues and builds from course to course. This may be quite different from other experiences you have had, where each course ends with a product (e.g., a major paper, an exam, a unit plan) that completes the learning cycle for that course. Like your own students, you and your colleagues in the Graduate Diploma program will experience learning in different ways and at different rates. Instead of experiencing the same kind of representation from everyone, we ask each of you to create a series of portfolios that is personally meaningful and relevant.

### **The connection to supportive learning communities**

As seen in the literature of Barth (1990), Elliot (1991) and Hopkins (2002) there is a natural evolution from the question “How do I improve my practice?” to “How do we improve our practice?” Field Programs acknowledges that evolution with their articulation of this aspect of teacher development: “ongoing participation in and contributions to both the cohort learning community and the individual’s broader educational community” (O’Shea, 1999).

On the Field Programs website, the following is stated;

By building up your knowledge of effective practices, your understanding of the students and community you work with, and your confidence to act with a clear moral purpose, you will increase your capacity to make appropriate educational decisions, even when faced with difficult dilemmas. You will be able to perform your work more thoughtfully and effectively. This is why the most important capacities in each Graduate Diploma focus on development as a learner, leader and decision-maker ([www.sfu.ca/fp/sdl](http://www.sfu.ca/fp/sdl)).

Much has been written about the effectiveness (or non) of school culture. The term “learning community” has been coined to describe an infrastructure that supports learning in creative, individualistic and innovative ways. Educators such as Fullan (2001), Hargreaves (1991), Goodlad (1984) and Barth (1990) have all written of the importance and necessity for schools that support learners taking risks, encourage collaborative endeavor and promote professional autonomy. It is the goal of these educators and others to transform ordinary schools into highly effective and caring learning communities.

Although Field Programs has acknowledged that the “broader educational community” (O’Shea, 1999) is one of its dimensions of teacher development, this particular

aspect does not appear to be a primary goal of the Graduate Diploma program itself. The learning community most frequently referred to in the Field Programs literature is the cohort of students within a specific Graduate Diploma. This emphasis on working collaboratively, working in a situation of relatively low risk, working with other professionals in a dialogical context comes from the constructivist traditions, learning community theory and from the approach to reflective practice as seen in Schön and others and refers specifically to the work within the cohorts, not to the environment in which individual teachers may find themselves outside of the program.

In fact, it is difficult to separate the theory surrounding learning communities from the ethos advocated by action researchers and reflective practitioners. Theorists who support constructivist approaches to education also embed these experiences within “learning communities” (Jalongo, 1991). Jalongo defines the following characteristics of a “functional learning community”:

- there must be mutual trust and respect among members;
- there are opportunities to deal with ideals and values;
- members must take responsibility for their own actions;
- there must be freedom to explore alternatives, encouragement to be creative and innovative;
- members must learn through interaction with colleagues (Jalongo: 38-41).

These characteristics closely parallel the components I have articulated which frame the parameters for reflective practice and for teacher action research as expressed in the work of Schön, Van Manen, Sparks-Langer, Colton and others.

## **The connection to adult learning theory**

As the learning communities we have been talking about have adult learners as their constituents, it is appropriate to also take a brief look (a glimpse actually) at adult learning theory. Andragogy is a relatively new field of study. Jalongo (1991), Knowles (1975), Mezirow (1990) and others, articulate five basic assumptions about how adults (in this case we are talking about teachers) learn and grow:

- learner's self-concepts move from dependency to self direction;
- learning occurs by tapping into personal experiences and reflecting upon them;
- learners are motivated by their desire to fulfill social roles;
- learners are motivated by immediacy of application;
- learners are most interested in solving problems rather than information for its own sake.

Much of what we have already seen in Field Programs documentation supports these assumptions. I refer once again to Field Programs' guiding principles in which they state, "four philosophical principles of teacher in-service education, well grounded in research on adult learning" (taken from the Field Programs' website: [www.educ.sfu.ca/fp](http://www.educ.sfu.ca/fp)). This website contains a link to a series of learning modules which help the program participant direct their own learning. There are eight modules in total and they include sections on the principles of inquiry, working with reflective journals and how to successfully document the learning

journey in on-going portfolios. The following quotes taken from the website ([www.educ.sfu.ca/fp/wp/lrnresmodules.php](http://www.educ.sfu.ca/fp/wp/lrnresmodules.php)) will help to support the connection to the adult learning conditions identified above:

“The inquiry process is driven by one’s own curiosity, wonder, interest, or passion to understand an observation or solve a problem”

“Making meaning from the experience requires reflection, conversations, comparisons of findings with others, interpretation of data and observations, and the application of new conceptions to other contexts. All of this serves to help the learner construct a new mental framework of the world”.

Jalongo (1991) also argues for the importance of the supportive relationship between the university and the school in an effective learning community. She states that university scholars and faculty need to stand beside teachers as they go through their own development and inquiry, not simply act as a resource for theoretical information. This may be one of the most important components of the Field Programs structure. Tenured faculty, faculty associates, course instructors and program mentors connect with teachers on a continual basis as they progress through their diploma. There is ample opportunity for all parties to connect personal reflections with theoretical knowledge, to dialogue about difficulties within practice and to make sense of the collective journey. In these ways I would contend that the university does stand as an equal partner in many aspects of the Graduate Diploma program.

Anne Leiberian (as cited in Grimmett and Neufeld, 1994) states that the modern concept of teacher development redefines the old notion of one shot wonders and weekend

seminars with strong presenters, to include the notion of five central elements necessary for facilitating teacher growth:

- norms of collegiality
- openness and trust
- opportunities and time for disciplined inquiry
- teacher learning of content in context
- rethinking the functions of leadership, and
- networks, collaborations, and coalitions. (Grimmett, Neufeld, 1994, p. 16)

By incorporating the theoretical constructs of action research, reflective practice, constructivism and collegial learning communities, Field Programs has created a model that appears to support this conception of teacher development.

In this chapter, I have attempted to describe the theoretical concepts of action research, reflection, constructivism and adult learning communities and argued for the connection between these concepts and the design and structure of the Field Programs' Graduate Diploma. By connecting the words and actions of Field Programs' Graduate Diploma to the literature, I have tried to discover a coherent theoretical foundation for the Graduate Diploma process that I believe is justified based on the various documents I have examined and the conversations I had with the key program architects. The understandings of the principles behind action research, the many conceptions of reflection, the conditions required to construct personal meaning from learning opportunities, and the ethos surrounding an effective learning community I believe are all embedded within the Field Program model. The literature indicates that programs that

incorporate these components are conducive to teacher development and change. Did my participants and others in the program experience any changes? But wait. If there are changes, to what extent can they be attributed to the curriculum, to the content of Arts education? That question is examined in the following chapter.

## **ACT TWO: WHAT THE LITERATURE SAYS ABOUT ARTS EDUCATION.**

*“Only those who risk going too far, can possibly find out how far one can go.”*  
*T.S. Elliot*

In the last chapter, I described how the design and structure of Field Programs may affect participants in both their understanding and implementation of their practice. Now, I'd like to address the content of the study, the area of Arts education and its effect on the learner. How does the curriculum facilitate the journey of the learners in the Graduate Diploma Process? In the two years of this study, I followed my participants through the conversations and explorations of a number of the issues and disciplines in and of the Arts. In this chapter, I will look at some of the primary architects of Arts education in North America, including Elliot Eisner and Maxine Greene. I hope to draw theoretical support from the literature surrounding Arts education, from these sources and others, for an understanding of how the Arts can facilitate teacher growth. This literature will also provide grounding for my hypothesis that the curriculum (the Arts) is one of the primary factors in the participants' experiences and that this curriculum is soundly implemented in the Field Programs' Graduate Diploma.

In a recent conversation with the Faculty Associate who coordinates the Arts education diploma for Field Programs, it was stated that although all diploma programs offer transformation for their participants it is “the Arts that gives them wings” (personal communication, September, 2006). I will begin this chapter with an articulation of the

definition of Arts education, then outline what some of the literature says about the efficacy of Arts education for personal and professional growth. I have restricted my literature review to these primary areas to focus on the question: What program experiences may contribute to personal and professional changes?

An overview of educational research in Arts education uncovers several key themes. One of the most prevalent central themes is an awareness of the power of creativity to help define new understandings of oneself and one's world. This particular understanding of the power of the Arts is found in much of the writings of Maxine Greene, Elliot Eisner, and Howard Gardner among others. Associated understandings which are believed to emerge from the act of creating art include; seeing the world in new ways, making connections that were not already readily apparent, building community, providing an opportunity to develop a sense of belonging, preventing isolation and alienation, and developing artistic skills and aesthetic sensibilities. In the remainder of this chapter, I have selected Arts education literature that supports these themes and specifically connects them with the Field Programs' guiding principles discussed in depth in the previous chapter.

### **The connection to reflection**

The following statement appears on the Field Programs' website: "It (reflection) involves a critical examination of our experiences in order to derive new levels of understanding." "The ongoing interactions between thought and action can both deepen

our understandings and change our educational practice”.

([www.sfu.ca/fp/wp/lrnresmodules.php](http://www.sfu.ca/fp/wp/lrnresmodules.php))

The sense of making meaning of the world through reflection on our actions has a close parallel to making sense of the world through the Arts. This understanding of making meaning through the Arts is not new. As the front- runner in the progressivist movement, I will again turn to John Dewey, who was one of the first pioneers of the concept of engaging students in their learning. It was through this personal connection to the curriculum, that Dewey saw the Arts as a communicative tool with which to encourage learners to participate in their own meaning making (Dewey, 1934). I cite Dewey here not to delve into his work in detail, but to acknowledge his importance as one of the first theorists to make an explicit connection between the Arts and the learning experience.

Nearly seventy years later, educators are still writing of the ways in which the Arts can help students to make meaning of their worlds. This is a central theme in Philip Taylor’s, *The Drama Classroom* (2002). In his research, Taylor identifies the value of dramatic experience in “develop(ing) the ability to help teachers and their students reflect and act upon their world, and through that process transform it into something more equitable and worthwhile” (p.43). Thus Taylor can make the claim that the Arts can move beyond the mere understanding of the world to effect change within that world.

Maxine Greene has this to say in *Releasing the Imagination* (1995):

Yes, one tendency in education today is to shape malleable young people to serve the needs of technology and the postindustrial society. However there is another tendency that has to do with the growth of persons, with the education of persons to become different, to find their voices and to become participatory part of a community in the making. Encounters with the Arts and activities in the domains of arts can nurture the growth of persons as they reach out to one another as they seek clearings in their experience and try to be more ardently in the world. The significance of the Arts is in growth and inventiveness and problem solving (p.132).

Greene continues by arguing for the Arts as a way of shedding new light on society and the multiple facets of our existence. She encourages participation in the Arts as a way of gaining different lenses and perspectives and of ensuring conscious participation in our meaning making. Both Greene and Elliot Eisner speak of the ways in which engagement in the Arts can help to contribute to the growth of the individual.

Eisner speaks at great length in his book *The Arts and the Creation of Mind* (2002), about the contribution of the Arts as a process for creation, not only of art, but of the artist's understanding and conception of his/her own world. I conjecture that this growth in understanding and awareness of the world can also include personal transformation as it pertains to the understanding of self. Examples of personal growth and transformation are cited on several occasions in *Aesthetics and Arts Education* (Smith and Simpson, 1991) by Arts educators such as H. Betty Redfern (p. 265), E. F. Kaelin ( p. 169) and David N. Aspin who has this to say:

[the value of the Arts embraces] the notion that individuals should be so enriched, should have greater sources and modes of achievement, creation, performance, and communication in which their personal autonomy can be developed and extended. (David N. Aspin 1991, p. 221).

It does appear that the literature supports the notion that reflection as associated with the creation and exploration of the Arts, can affect the participant's understanding of both his/her world and his/her self.

### **The connection between the Arts and other areas**

What are some of the other contributions of the Arts to the learner? One of the most thorough articulations of the efficacy of the Arts in education comes from "*Building the Case for Arts Education*" (Laughlin, 1990). Laughlin summarizes a number of theoretical studies into twelve major areas in which the Arts have made a contribution. An overview of the findings include:

- contributions to creative thinking
- development of cognitive, affective, psychomotor, communication, and literacy skills
- individual and group decision making
- an increase in self- esteem and academic achievement.

A long-term (1995-2006) artist-teacher-institutional collaboration called *Learning through the Arts*<sup>6</sup> offers similar findings. The authors of this study conclude that an Arts rich curriculum can provide students with vehicles for self-expression, self-understanding, self-confidence, creative problem solving and motivation. It is interesting that this study indicates that immersion in Arts education affects teacher attitudes and practice as well. The research indicates that when teachers worked with guest artists,

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<sup>6</sup> Learning through the Arts is a collaborative project initiated in 1995 by the Royal Conservatory of Music to provide opportunities for Canadian elementary students to engage in Arts activities with professional artists. The project is currently being conducted in six cities across Canada.

they experienced a greater degree of comfort in teaching the Arts, more self-confidence in the teaching of and engagement with the Arts, and an awareness and appreciation for risk taking that was transferred to other areas of the curriculum. In other words, the study has found that teachers working substantively in the Arts experience similar outcomes to those experienced by their students.

There is, however, the possibility that justifying the Arts through the accomplishments of other academic areas diminishes the importance and inherent integrity of the art. Elliot Eisner, for example, cautions researchers to be careful of finding justification in research and documented studies that legitimize the marginal position of the Arts.<sup>7</sup> He recognizes that the Arts are important in their own right and insists that their importance is not “located in their contributions to more important subjects” (Eisner, 1999, p.3).

Eisner points out that there are problems with studies that equate the transfer of learning from the Arts to other areas of the curriculum (such as those conducted by the Royal Conservatory and Dr. Laughlin) in that the analysis of the data is often based on anecdotal evidence. He believes there is difficulty in appraising an “Arts program whose effects are measured solely on non-Arts tasks” (Eisner,1999, p.4). But rather than dismiss the contribution to academic achievement entirely, Eisner suggests that perhaps it is the motivational effects of Arts courses that transfer to other subjects. In explanation he suggests that perhaps it is not the skills that students develop while engaged in the

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<sup>7</sup> Does Experience in the Arts Boost Academic Achievement? Eisner, Elliot., Clearing House, Jan/Feb99, Vol. 72, Issue 3

Arts, but the promotion of certain kinds of attitudes that encourage risk-taking and hard work that provide the basis for achievement in other areas of the curriculum. To use another analogy, it is not the development of a certain theatrical skill that transfers to an adolescent's work in English and History, but the rigor of the rehearsal room that makes the transference. Howard Gardner agrees as he states in his work *Frames of Mind* (1994), his belief that training in the Arts develops constructive habits of discipline and mind.

An experiential parallel can be drawn with the Graduate Diploma program at SFU. As a relatively short (two year) multi-disciplinary program, Field Programs cannot expect to teach their educators all the foundational Arts skills and strategies that they will need when they are in the classroom. Indeed, as every classroom situation is unique, we cannot even anticipate all the strategies that will be needed. Instead, the focus is on encouraging the development of certain attitudes or dispositions that foster the attainment of a variety of skills and the understanding that there is a multitude of perspectives. The utilization of action research oriented field studies, the many avenues and requirements for reflection on their actions, and the portfolio assessment requirement support the understanding that it is the process rather than the product that is most important in the Graduate Diploma program. This is reflected in the following statement included on the SFU Field Programs' website: ([www.sfu.ca/fp/wp/lrnresmodules.php](http://www.sfu.ca/fp/wp/lrnresmodules.php))

“The learner must find his or her own pathway through this process. This is rarely a linear progression, but rather a back and forth, or cyclical, series of events”.

Later in this study, I will examine my participants more specifically and determine the ways (if any) in which the dispositions developed during their Arts program, transferred to other areas of their teaching practice.

We find corroboration for Eisner's argument that it is attitudes and dispositions that are transferred to other areas within the work of Karen Gallas. In her book, *The Languages of Learning- How Children Talk, Write, Dance, Draw and Sing their Understanding of the World (1994)*, Ms. Gallas speaks of the process required to infuse the Arts into the curriculum, and how that process changes not only what we study but also how we study it. The attitudes and understandings of her students shifted considerably as they realized they were engaged in creative endeavors across the curriculum. Their work in the Arts provided insight into the aesthetic components within other fields. I will pay specific attention to this transference of the awareness of the aesthetic when I document participant understandings of course content, later in Act Four.

Rather than focusing on the extrinsic benefits of the Arts, Eisner categorizes the contributions of the Arts into three tiers of intrinsic learning outcomes:

Tier One accommodates the learning outcomes that are directly related to the Arts, for example, the identification and discussion of form and content as related to a specific work of art. In the Field Programs' Graduate Diploma, tier one is articulated in the specific knowledge and skills of the methods courses offered within the program.

Tier Two outcomes require an understanding of the culture and personal side of the artist's work and provide for transference to an aesthetic experience. Tier two is also exemplified in those same methods courses and in the theoretical components of the Issues in Education in the Arts, and Arts in the Community courses. In these courses, participants are encouraged to look at historical and societal examples of art and to develop their own awareness of different expressions of aesthetic appreciation.

Tier Three is called the ancillary outcomes and they provide the transfer of skills that are employed in the creation and comprehension of the Arts to non-arts tasks. By placing non-arts tasks (e.g., academic achievement) as an ancillary outcome, Eisner is emphatically positioning the discipline of the Arts at the core of the curriculum (1999). In the Field Programs' model, tier three will depend on the individual participant's understanding (and embracing) of their journey and their subsequent transference (or not) to other areas of their teaching practice. This differentiation in the ultimate outcome of the program is the essential core of the Graduate Diploma program. Each participant will develop their own path through the program, will derive their own sense of accomplishment and understanding, and will document this journey in their own way through their individual portfolios. I will speak about my participants' understanding and my own connections with the transference of skills in the final chapters of this study.

### **The connection to the nature of inquiry (taking risks)**

Eisner further specifies the contributions of the Arts to education through four major areas:<sup>8</sup>

**1. “Students should acquire a feel for what it means to transform their ideas, images and feelings into an art form” (Eisner, 1994).**

It is interesting to note that Eisner states that he has intentionally used metaphors such as “getting a feel for” and “getting in touch” to describe the Arts experience because he can find no literal words for describing the bodily process that is imbedded within the art of creating. Teachers enrolled in an earlier Field Programs’ Graduate Diploma in the Arts (2002-2004) in which I was an instructor, used similar descriptors when they recounted their own forays into the experiential component of the program. As these teachers experienced (sometimes for the first time), the opportunity to create a work of art, they were often emotionally affected by the creative process. This ethereal, indescribable affective outcome of Arts participation is key I believe to fostering future investigation and participation in the Arts.

**2. “Dispositional outcomes ... appear to be cultivated through programs which engage students in the process of artistic creation” (Eisner, 1994).**

Eisner articulates the following as dispositional outcomes: a willingness to imagine possibilities now and in the future; a desire to explore ambiguity and to forestall premature closure; a recognition and acceptance of multiple perspectives and solutions. I believe this is one of the most compelling connections to and components of the Arts

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<sup>8</sup> From “The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs” 1994

Graduate Diploma. By inviting teachers to take risks in fields of endeavor in which they are not initially comfortable, then presenting them with a variety of perspectives so that they see possibilities rather than certainties, (something I would contend to be the nature of inquiry and action research), their confidence and self awareness as potential artists may grow as their artistic skills begin to grow. Teachers are encouraged to become learners again. This encouragement to take risks and to look toward process rather than product parallels the understandings I have previously defined of action research and reflective practice.

### **The connection between Arts education, the role of aesthetics and the learning community**

Maxine Greene has something to say on this subject of aesthetic awareness and articulation of understanding. In her article “Aesthetic Literacy” (as cited in *Aesthetics and Arts Education*, Smith and Simpson (1991). she asks for a “kind of aesthetic education to be invented that provides fundamental insights, certain ways of proceeding; but its emphasis must be on releasing learners to attend in such a fashion that they are moved to go further on their own initiative, to begin teaching themselves as they uncover particular works, and as they move more and more deeply into the province of the Arts” (p.152). Greene is speaking here of the need for a deliberate education of the aesthetic in order to empower students with the skills necessary to make informed understandings not only of works of art but also of their lives and the world in which they live. This is not unlike the work previously cited in the section on learning communities (establishing a

collaborative community in which a dialogue of practice is encouraged and facilitated) and in Field Programs' statement on teacher development:

[The Graduate Diploma process supports] “ongoing participation in and contributions to both the cohort learning community and the individual’s broader educational community” (O’Shea, 1999).

**3. “Arts education should help students learn to use an aesthetic frame of reference to see and hear” (Eisner, 1994).**

This quote from Eisner implies that students should develop the ability to identify their preferences and articulate what they like and why. Put another way, Arts education provides students with an additional framework with which to communicate. The language of the Arts is one of the basic fundamentals addressed in the methods courses offered in the Graduate Diploma program. In the Visual Art course, they are exposed to the specific language of the elements and principles of design. There is also discipline specific language associated with Dance, Drama and Music. In my study, I looked closely at the impact of the acquisition of this language of the Arts in my conversations with my three participants.

Numerous educators have written about the role of the aesthetic in education. Alan Simpson (1991) summarizes the usefulness of aesthetic education into three main functions: to emphasize contemplative and critical reflections and articulate objective judgment; to provide a justification for the Arts as separate and distinct disciplines; and to

value a mode of perception and judgment that is free from utilitarian needs. Field Programs incorporates conversations regarding the role of the aesthetic into a number of their special topics courses. Articles on aesthetics were required reading in both the Issues in Education in the Arts, and the Arts in the Community courses.

### **The connection to context**

**4. [Arts education should] “Enable students to understand that there is a connection between content and form that the Arts display and the culture and time in which the work was created” (Eisner, 1994).**

Eisner states that the understanding of the cultural context will enrich the educational experience. Certainly the present British Columbia provincial Art curriculum as outlined in the Integrated Resource Packages, provide a number of learning outcomes that require a knowledge of and an exploration into the cultural and historical context of the Arts discipline. The inclusion of this contribution is intended to provide breadth and depth to the artistic experience. Context is specifically addressed in the Issues in Education in the Arts course, and in the Arts in the Community course.

Paulo Freire talks about the importance of authenticating the cultural context of the classroom. In his book *“Pedagogy of the Oppressed”*(1970), Freire speaks of the need to connect learners with the world around them. He argues that it is only through

identification and critical analysis that students will uncover the biases and status implications that imbed cultural icons.

Michael Fullan also speaks in a number of his books of the need for teachers to understand the societal context in which they teach. In *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (1991), Fullan states “It is through this [societal] understanding that new beliefs and understandings are formed” (p.76). There is an implicit assumption here that new beliefs and understandings are necessary for dynamic and responsive teaching and learning.

Field Programs’ summer course, Arts in the Community, is an example of a course that addresses the social and cultural context. This course looks specifically at graffiti and its social impact. Did the conversations embedded within this course influence the understandings of the participant group? Did the dialogue about graffiti transfer to other areas of their teaching? Will the participants in this study identify context as a key component in their Art curriculum? These questions will be addressed later in the study.

To summarize so far, the literature leads to the following claims: students (and teachers) who participate in artistic experiences which encourage them to develop a critical awareness of themselves and their social surroundings, learn to question the status quo (Freire), wonder how to improve their world, and possibly take action to balance

inequalities (Fullan). Henry Grioux speaks of an individual who participates in this type of learning as a “public transformative intellectual” (*Crossing Borders*, 1993).

**The connection between the Arts and the “intangibles”** (quotes are mine)

The dispositional outcomes identified by Eisner are understandably hard to quantify. How do we know that students do not bring these dispositions with them to Arts classes? Eisner does not explain how we might go about measuring the attainment and development of such affective objectives. This remains one of the dilemmas in documenting Arts research. Eisner does however equate the opportunity for aesthetic engagement to the acquisition of a “natural high” which contributes to the energy students require to perform and reform an activity. Students may bring with them the disposition for engagement to the Arts class, but it is through the act of creating, that they experience the excitement and enthusiasm that encourages and motivates them to return.

Seymour Sarason sees the endorphin-supported energy that comes with creating as being part of the attitude of the teacher who is in “performance”. He sees the actor’s primary responsibility as engaging the emotions of her audiences and he believes the teacher’s role to be similar. According to Sarason, it is in the emotional engagement of the students that true learning happens and that is the art of teaching. (*Teaching as a Performing Art*, 1999). As a performer, I can speak to the addicting quality of that performance “high”. Once you’ve tasted it, it is hard to be on the periphery of creation

on a continual basis. This is why I asked my participants about the nature of performing and how it did (or did not) affect them.

According to the authors I have cited, another intangible contribution of the Arts to education is in the development of creative thinking skills that can lead to the acquisition of higher order cognition. Maxine Greene talks about this contribution in her book *“Releasing the Imagination”* (1995). She sees the evolution of thought processes to be a result of the understandings that emerge when we reflect on our own conscious view of the world as a result of engaging in the worlds of others. In her article “Aesthetic Literacy” (1991), Greene talks about the ways in which this qualitative perceptive lens can be taught and thus adds to the list of affective contributions of the Arts in education.

Greene also argues that the Arts provide opportunities for the learner to be “fully present” (from *Art as Education*, Harvard Educational Review #24. “*Texts and Margins*” p.4) and encourages educators to embrace a combination of pedagogies that empower students to create, to attend and to appreciate. The program structure of the Graduate Diploma allows just that kind of engagement. Within their subject specific courses, teachers are offered the opportunity to create art (there are assignments designed to produce individual and group visual and performance pieces), to attend to the process of art (with exposure to the works of others and conversations regarding their own art works), and are given tools and skills with which to appreciate art (specifically in dialogues and readings on aesthetics and context).

Where do we go from here? The understandings and theories that have been written about the efficacy of the Arts in education have been the life's work of a number of educators and the research has filled volumes. The connection between participation in the Arts and the ways in which that participation has helped to shape students' lives, understandings and beliefs have been documented, discussed and argued over for decades. I have not in this chapter discussed in detail these specific studies, but have outlined some of the contributions and the authors who have written compellingly about them. Using this literature as a basis, I will explore whether and how that the experience of working in the Arts can contribute to personal and professional changes of the participants. In Act Four, I will look specifically at the participants in my study, and see if they have experienced any changes in their attitudes toward the Arts, toward artistic representation and toward themselves as teachers and as artists.

### **The connection between the Arts and cognitive and academic achievement**

One of the last contributions of the Arts to education that I will discuss at this juncture is represented (once again) by Elliot Eisner. Eisner points out in his book "*The Arts and the Creation of Mind*" (2002) that the Arts are not necessarily known for being intellectually demanding. Eisner believes that there is a discreet set of cognitive categories that are necessary for the art of representation and that once these categories have been understood, they can be taught. These categories are identified as:

- inscription (concretizing an image or idea)

- editing (the process of making the good, better)
- communication (taken for granted but crucial as a key for educators)
- surprise (coming out of improvisation and the predilection toward flexibility).

Eisner believes that an Arts curriculum that promotes these cognitive components will result in deeper and broader thinking. I see a parallel here with sound teaching pedagogy that is applicable to the Graduate Diploma program where one of the tenets is to help teachers improve their practice. **Inscription** is articulated in the Graduate Diploma program through the physical act of producing a work of art. In the Visual Art course, participants were exposed to the elements and principles of design. To help them understand (or concretize) their perception, they were encouraged to develop Visual Art pieces that reflected these principles. The **editing** process was ongoing throughout these courses. As skills and knowledge of the discipline increased, so did the participant's aptitude in the Arts area. Continuous reflection also contributed to the editing process. **Communication** was enhanced through the acquisition of specific Arts vocabulary and **surprise** was exemplified throughout the entire program, which required risk taking and inquiry into what was often an unknown teaching area.

Eisner goes further to identify a set of cognitive functions that are promoted through the engagement with the Arts. These include:

- an awareness of the world
- an opportunity to liberate us from the literal (engage in empathy)
- an ability to tolerate ambiguity

- the directing of our attention to what we believe (the focus of evaluation is internal), and
- the propensity to inspect more carefully our own ideas.

Some of this is not new. I have already identified in this discussion the potential of the Arts to make us more aware of others and aware of opportunities for empathetic connections. However, Eisner's framework does offer a specific direction for program development and delivery of in-service education programs and this is reflected, I argue, throughout the Graduate Diploma program. For example, in one course, participants in the program were asked to look at the societal impact of graffiti, to think about the agonizingly complex and ambiguous concept of aesthetic beauty, to reflect on their own values on art and to document those ideas carefully and continuously in an on-going portfolio.

Eisner continues to offer suggestions for teachers as he articulates the following requirements for strong teaching:

- engage student imagination
- master technical requirements (including subject knowledge and materials)
- provide constructive and supportive feedback from an aesthetic foundation
- model the language and skills of the art
- understand when to direct and when to sit back and allow for exploration
- know how to manage material distribution and class organization
- set a problem that allows for personal interpretation and clarity of focus

- make scope and sequence clear, set up scaffolding learning opportunities.

These elements too, I argue, are present in the Graduate Diploma Arts Education program. Students begin the program with an area of research that speaks to them and their imagination; as they continue, they are at first concerned with mastering the technical requirements (learning the artistic skills). In conjunction with skill development, they are exposed to the language and the aesthetics of the Arts. Their continued study is enhanced by the feedback of mentors and colleagues as their journey shifts and changes to follow the dynamics and personality of the classroom. By the end of the two-year program, students are encouraged to provide documentation in their portfolios on the ways in which they solved the problems they were investigating in their action research or field studies.

Eisner makes the following recommendations for establishing the artistry in teaching: that teachers treat teaching as a form of personal research; that self reflection is critical; that it is important to design the right environment for your students; and that passion is crucial for teacher responses to the Arts and students' awareness of those responses. I contend that Eisner is (unintentionally) supporting much of the work being done in the Graduate Diplomas offered in the Field Programs' component of the Faculty of Education. As we have seen, these programs are driven by an inquiry agenda, they include reflective practice coupled with theoretical research and they are grounded in the passions and interests of the teachers. They are also highly subscribed and by many accounts greatly appreciated by both teachers and students. They rest upon the notion

that the practice in the classroom is grounded in a theoretical foundation and that learning arises out of the connection between them. We shall see if my three participants articulate any of these understandings as they recount their experiences in the Arts at the end of two very full years of study.

In this chapter, I have looked at some of the literature surrounding the efficacy and beneficial aspects of Arts education. The concepts of flexibility, multiple perspectives, imaginative perceptions, relationships imbedded in the process of creation, discovering the joy of the journey through awareness of the intrinsic satisfaction, and the deliberate decision to take time to savor the experience are all components of teaching and learning in the Arts. They speak compellingly of the effect that working in the Arts can have on students and on re-vitalizing and re-energizing their teachers. In the next chapter, I will explore the methodologies I utilized to document the experiences of the three participants in this study.

### ACT THREE: WAYS AND MEANS (THE METHODOLOGY)

*Though, this be madness,  
Yet there is method in 't''  
Hamlet (II, 206)*

This research is guided by general questions regarding participants' understandings of the Arts, their understandings regarding their teaching practice, and an examination of the experiences that may have led to these understandings. Because of this emphasis, the domain of qualitative research is arguably the most useful one from which to draw. Although similar methods and procedures cross boundaries between qualitative research designs, it has been argued that there are five primary qualitative traditions (Creswell, 1998). When I began my study, one of my leading questions was to determine which of these qualitative research approaches best supported my work and what were the significant methods and tools that would be of greatest use in this research. I searched for the most appropriate method with which to capture the quality of the participant experience, and to interpret the subsequent data in the most clear and holistic manner.

#### **To begin**

Michael Bassey (1999) articulates the difference between quantitative and qualitative research design by defining positivist research as quantitative (that which can be measured and subjected to analysis. There is no "I" in positivist research).

Interpretative research (Bassey determines) is qualitative in nature. Qualitative research implies (among other things) that researchers are potential variables in their studies. Some examples of interpretative research are ethnographies, hermeneutics, case studies and social anthropology.

Qualitative research was the most appropriate methodology for my study because I focused on describing the progress of my participants through “narrative, which stresses the importance of context, setting and the subject’s frame of reference” (Marshall and Rossman, 1989, p. 22). As my research came within the realm of a limited environment (the activities and experiences of a single cohort within one program of study), and because I limited the number of participants with whom I had direct and specific contact over an extended period of time (the course of the two year program), I determined that the most appropriate method for data gathering and analysis was case study. I acknowledge that qualitative methodologies have numerous overlapping aspects and although grounded theory had potential and phenomenology had some applicability in its narrative orientation, case study appeared to support my research most closely. This chapter defines case study methodology, identifies the salient characteristics that I believe were the most useful in my study, and therefore articulates the reasons why qualitative case study research provides the strongest foundation for my work.

### **Definitions of case study**

Helen Simons (1980), Adelman, Kemmis and Jenkins (1980), Lincoln and Guba (1985), Merriam (1988) and Michael Bassey (1999) among others have all written about

the difficulty in coming to a singular, mutually agreed upon definition for case study methodology. Listed below are some definitions that cover the broad spectrum as articulated in the literature and that relate specifically to the details of my study.

John Creswell defines case study as “an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (Creswell, 1998, p. 61). As stated previously, my study fits this definition in that I studied a small group of participants (three from within a single cohort experiencing the same program of study), over a two-year period and with a variety of data collection sources (audio and video recording, surveys, field journals, and interviews).

Robert Yin defines case study to be empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear. “Case studies are the preferred methodology when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed” (Yin, 1994, p.13). As my key questions guiding this study are embedded within the context of “change” and how and why this change may or may not have occurred, Yin’s definition appears to support my choice.

Robert Stake defines case study in slightly more interpretive terms, as a “study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (Stake, 1995, p.2). I would argue that the “important

circumstances” articulated by Stake are the Graduate Diploma program components previously described in this document. The understanding of how the program design and structure, and the program content work together to create the opportunity for change within the participants fall within the parameters of Stake’s definition.

The feature of singularity is articulated by Michael Bassey who defines case study as “a study of a singularity conducted in depth in natural settings” (Bassey, 1999, p. 47). I appreciate this definition as I contend that it supports the conception of the singularity of the student’s perspectives and experience studied within the context of a particular program over a two-year period.

Sharan Merriam situates the use of case study in the qualitative research domain and states that case studies are used in education to approach a problem of practice from a holistic perspective: “the interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Such insights into aspects of educational practice can have a direct influence on policy, practice, and future research” (Merriam, 1988, p. xii).

These definitions speak to the type of research I have conducted and to the understandings presented within this document. As described in previous chapters, I have worked personally with a limited number of participants (three) as they went through a process which is imbedded in a specific context, (the Graduate Diploma) but which had varying outcomes depending on the individual (details of which will be

articulated in the next chapter). Later in this document, I will speak about the possibilities for change in policy and practice for teacher in-service, understandings I have derived as a direct result of this research.

There are other aspects of case study that have application to my work. Adding to Creswell's (1998) definition of a "bounded system" (one that is bound by time and place), Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) give other examples of bounded systems such as a child, a clique, a class, a school, or a community. They argue that case study provides a unique example of real people in real situations enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles. In my study, I have defined the length and scope of the Arts diploma program as a bounded system. This fits with Creswell's definition and with Cohen, Manion and Morrison's. Creswell also defines a "within-site study" (Creswell, 1998, p.61) as the study of a "single" program. I would argue that a single program is an accurate definition of the graduate Arts diploma program. This program has one central focus, Arts education thereby making it a "within-site" study. Given these parameters, my study of the participants in the graduate Arts diploma program is a bounded system, within-site study.

Cohen et al. (2000) cite the following hallmarks of a case study:

...[case studies are] concerned with a rich and vivid description of events relevant to the case; provides a chronological narrative of events; blends a description of events with analysis of them, focuses on individual actors or groups of actors seeking to understand their perceptions of events; highlights specific events that are relevant; researcher is integrally involved in the case; attempts to portray the richness of the case in writing up the report (p.182).

This definition coincides with my approach to the documentation of the Graduate Diploma process. As I have documented the activities and understandings of my participants from the beginning of the program until the final, concluding celebration, I have provided not only a chronological depiction of events (located in Act Four) but also a descriptive detailing of the experiences. I have endeavored to bring forth my participant voices in order to best understand their perceptions of their experiences and in the preceding chapters, I have attempted to document what I consider to be the key components of the Graduate Diploma program (the process and the content).

Barry Macdonald and Robert Walker define case study as the “examination of an instance in action” (as cited in Bassey, 1999, p.22). Stephen Kemmis combines this definition with its emphasis on action, with Creswell’s limited parameters of time and space by calling case study, “the imagination of the case and the invention of the study” (as cited in Bassey, 1999, p.24). Kemmis elaborates on this phrase by making explicit the cognitive and cultural aspects of case study research. He reminds us that the research process is both active and interactive and that case methodology requires both cognitive and cultural processes (Kemmis, 1980, p. 119-120). Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, p.316) suggest that case studies are identified less by the methodologies utilized than by the subjects studied, although there is resonance between case studies and interpretive methodologies. I am grateful for such reminders. My research, while grounded in theory (as outlined in the previous chapter), is still embedded within the social and cultural dynamic of the individual and the classroom. I have paid attention to the

interactive nature of the research process. I will speak more about this dynamic and its accompanying challenges later.

The definitions and aspects of case study that I have listed above support the types of questions utilized in my research. When interviewing participants, I spent a significant amount of time on identifying their theoretical understandings of the courses and the accompanying emotional and social affect (if any) as articulated in their professional and personal lives. To illustrate: in the instance of the graffiti conversation for example, (conducted after their Arts in the Community course and mentioned in the previous chapter), did the exploration and conversation surrounding the social and cultural dynamic of street art affect their perspective on other social and cultural components of their classrooms? This conversation is recorded in the following chapter and sheds light on the aforementioned interactive nature of my research process.

### **A word about interpretive methodologies, specifically ethnography**

Ethnographic research is another methodology that is also concerned with cultural processes. Creswell summarizes the ethnographic study with this statement of three central elements, “overall format is descriptive (case description of each candidate), analysis and interpretation” (Creswell, 1998, p. 35). An ethnographic design is chosen when one wants to study the behaviors of a culture-sharing group (Creswell, 1998). The design requires time observing and interviewing. Wolcott (1994) posits that, “the ethnographer’s task is the recording of human behavior in cultural terms” (p.116).

Within the context of my study, the culture I was most concerned with was the programmatic (cohort) structure of Field Programs' Graduate Diploma. My documentation or recording of the participants' activities, as well as their thoughts and understandings, I contend, fit within the parameters outlined by Creswell and Wolcott. To support this claim, I refer to the work of Joe Kincheloe (2003). In his book, *Teachers as Researchers: Qualitative inquiry as a path to empowerment*, Kincheloe argues strongly that, for teacher researchers to understand the complexities of knowledge production and the pedagogical process, they must first accept that knowledge is primarily grounded in culture. It is this cultural context that frames the researcher's reference points and the perceptions of the world around them (p. 231). Kincheloe argues that ethnography attempts to "gain knowledge about a particular culture, to identify patterns of social interaction, and to develop holistic interpretations of societies and social institutions" (p.232). In this way, Kincheloe links ethnography to education as a way to understand and record the nature of schools and the way in which social events move them. In the following chapter, I will look more closely at the ways in which the participants describe the culture of the program and of the societal and cultural influences that they identified as significant.

Creswell's (1998) continued definition of ethnographic research also has some immediate applications for my study and some aspects that are not as relevant. His understanding of ethnography as a description and interpretation of a cultural or social group or system seems to fit the general context of the cohort structure of the Graduate Diploma. However his articulation of the role of the researcher as one who examines the

group's observable and learned pattern of behavior, customs, and ways of life is perhaps more anthropologically inclined than my research. I did not observe group dynamics as a primary focus. My three participants have specific histories and cultural biases that I have identified and used in context and in that way, I followed Kincheloe's example more closely than Creswell's. Creswell also states that ethnography can be both a product (not necessarily applicable to my research) and a process (more helpful). As a process, ethnography involves prolonged observation of the group, typically through participant observation in which the researcher is immersed in the day-to-day lives of the people or through one-on-one interviews with members of the group (Creswell, 1998). Although I have had prolonged observation of the cohort group (in terms of pre and post group surveys, attendance at group portfolio shares), I engaged in focused interviews and close observation, with only a few (three) participants. I therefore have rejected ethnographic research as a primary tool and have utilized a definition (as outlined below) by Robert Stake of "ethnographic case study" as support for my methodological choices in my study.

Naturalistic, ethnographic case study, to some extent, parallels actual experience, feeding into the most fundamental processes of awareness and understanding. Enduring meanings come from encounter, and are modified and reinforced by repeated encounter. In life itself, this occurs seldom to the individual alone but in the presence of others. The case researcher emerges from one social experience, the observation, to choreograph another, the report. Knowledge is socially constructed and thus case study researchers assist readers in the construction of knowledge (Stake, 1994, p.240 as cited in Denzin and Lincoln).

I had repeated encounters with my participants in the form of focused interviews. I repeated the same three questions (in addition to others), over the two years of the study in order to maintain a chronological record of their responses. My participation in the

development of my participants' understandings (through our interviews and our conversations regarding their experiences) cannot be ignored. As the data will show in the following chapter, the three teachers with whom I worked, made mention at the final portfolio sharing of the way in which talking about their experiences with me helped them to articulate more clearly their understandings in their portfolios.

### **Delineating features and elements of case study**

As I continued to refine and define my understandings of case study and specifically of ethnographic case study, the following scholarly delineations have proved helpful.

Yin (1984), who states that the essence of a case study is that it is an inquiry in a real life context, identifies three major strands of case study research: exploratory (as a pilot for other studies or research questions), descriptive (providing narrative accounts), and explanatory (testing theories). I would argue that my study fits into Yin's descriptive strand of case study research not only because I have spent time documenting detailed descriptions of the process and the participants, but because I have recorded responses to questions verbatim and with written descriptors of non-verbal gestures and expressions. Merriam (1988) identifies three similar classifications: descriptive (narrative), interpretative (developing conceptual categories inductively to examine initial assumptions) and evaluative (explaining and judging). Merriam (1988) further categorizes case methodology into four common domains or kinds of case study: ethnographic, historical, psychological and sociological. These are loosely echoed by

Sturman (1999) who focuses on the holistic nature of cases and the need for the study to investigate the relationships between their component part, something I am attempting to do by drawing connections between program infrastructure, program content and change.

Stenhouse (1985) also identifies four styles of case study: an ethnographic case study (a single in-depth study); action research case study; evaluative case study; and educational case study. I have found Stenhouse's understandings of these studies to be most relevant to my research. I've quoted Stenhouse (1985) extensively highlighting with italics and in bold, the section I believe to be most closely related to my study.

...of ethnographic case study it may be said that it calls into question apparent understandings of the actors in the case and *offers from the outsider's standpoint explanations that emphasize causal or structural patterns* of which participants in the case are unaware. It does not generally relate directly to the practical needs of the actors in the case, though it may affect their perception and hence the tacit grounding of their actions (p.49).

Although there are aspects in three of the case studies mentioned by Stenhouse that could have relevance to this study, I contend that the ethnographic case study has the most relevance to my work. I am the one making the connections between the experiences of the participants and their subsequent actions and understandings and I will draw the connections to educational practice from these experiences. Stenhouse's definition of an ethnographic case study connects most closely to the conclusions and extrapolations (articulated in the Epilogue), which arise from the documentation of the participants involved in the Graduate Diploma process.

Robert Stake speaks of the importance of understanding the “issues” within a case. “It is the issue questions or issue statements that provide a powerful conceptual structure for organizing the study of a case” (Stake, 1995, p. 17). By issues, Stake is referring to the problems or questions of the case. These issues are not clean and simple but are intricately connected with the political, social, historical and personal contexts of the human subjects. This understanding of issues mirrors the work already cited by Kincheloe, and as has already been stated, the insight into the complexities of case study context has had ramifications for my work. I looked at documenting how participants translated theory into practice, and I was particularly interested in how this translation affected them. Did they report changes in attitude? Did they view their classroom differently? What about their perceptions of art? Did they report growth? Did they report changes or growth in ability, in self-confidence? These are complex affective questions that are mired in what Stake called the “intricately connected contexts” (Stake, 1995, p. 17).

In searching for examples of how to document change, I found a powerful depiction in Patricia Cranton’s illustration of Tim (Cranton, 1994, p.2-5). In this case study, Cranton effectively articulates the way in which a descriptive rendering of subsequent interviews can illustrate transformation within an individual. By transformation, I mean a change in attitude, demeanor and/or understanding. It is this (self reported) transformational experience that became the focus of my final interviews with my participants.

## **The connection between case study and ethnographic research methodology**

I shall now identify some of the components of ethnographic research as they pertain specifically to ethnographic case study. Ethnographic methodology supports the understanding and documentation of participant behaviors and change. Paul Atkinson and Martyn Hammersley (as cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) describe the following elements as primary components in an ethnographic approach:

- a strong emphasis on exploring the nature of particular social phenomena rather than setting out to test hypotheses about them.
- a tendency to work primarily with unstructured data.
- an investigation of a small number of cases.
- an analysis of data that involves explicit interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions, the product of which mainly takes the form of verbal descriptions and explanations, with quantification and statistical analysis playing a subordinate role at most (Atkinson, Hammersley, 1994, p.248)

LeCompte and Pressle (1993) identify the following elements in ethnographic approaches:

- participants' definition of the world is investigated.
- meanings of the phenomena are attributed to both the participant and to the researcher.
- the constructs of the participants are used to structure the investigation.

- empirical data are gathered in their naturalistic setting.
- observational techniques are used extensively.
- the research seeks to describe and interpret the whole experience.
- there is a move from description and data to inference, explanation, and suggestions of causation and theory generation (LeCompte, Pressle, 1993, p.35)

LeCompte and Pressle's list of elements coincide closely with the ways in which I have documented my participants' process in the Graduate Diploma program. I have observed them teach in their classrooms, which I contend is their naturalistic setting. I have interviewed them as a group (with the accompanying dynamics) and spoken with them as individuals. This group and individual documentation will help to identify and interpret the Graduate Diploma process as a whole. I have attempted to record their observations verbatim to preserve their voices and relay as accurately as possible their interpretations of their journeys. In the final chapter, I will look at what I believe are the causes for any perceived changes in attitudes, knowledge and behaviors and will endeavor to extrapolate a few educational suggestions for consideration.

### **Challenges in the use of case study**

Merriam (1988) and Yin (1994) identify a number of challenges in the undertaking of case study research. The area of boundaries can be problematic in case study methodology. In my study, I believe that the cohort and programmatic structure of Field Programs clearly designates a boundary of study. Data collecting is recommended

to be extensive. As I have followed participants over a two- year period and documented with a number of methods (personal interviews both audio and visually recorded, journal entries, surveys), I believe this will suffice for extensive collection. The biggest challenge has been the identification of a rationale for selecting participants. How do I justify my selection as the representative participants for the study? Who is “my purposeful sampling”? (Creswell, 1998, p. 64)

Cohen et al. (2000) define purposeful sampling as “unashamedly selective and biased” (p.104). They also state that such a sampling is useful as it is done to suit a specific research need. In my case, I needed to select a small sample of participants for whom the experience of teaching in the Arts was new and different. It was important that I tracked the learning of these individuals as they engaged in a curricular area that was not entirely familiar to them. I also looked for individuals for whom the process of action research was relatively new educational territory. As the fates would have it, selecting my participants was not difficult. After the first exploratory survey that was administered to the entire cohort (see Appendix A), I received only four responses. Out of those four teachers, I chose Jenny who had the least amount of experience teaching, Barb who had successfully completed a previous Graduate Diploma course and could therefore make comparisons re: curriculum, and Sarah who had the least amount of experience (and expressed the greatest amount of trepidation) in the Arts.

The second applicable challenge to case study and to my work is the problem of generalization. After I had gathered my data, how was I going to generalize a theory or

extrapolate a conclusion from the documentation of the participants within the case? Stake (1995) coined the terms *petites generalizations* (general statements made within a study) and *grandes generalizations* (general statements or assertions about issues of which the case is one example). I am struck by the clarity of the warning that Stake (1995) gives potential researchers:

It is not uncommon for case study researchers to make assertions on a relatively small database, invoking the privilege and responsibility of interpretation. To draw so much attention to interpretation may be a mistake, suggesting that case study work hastens to draw conclusions. Good case study is patient, reflective, willing to see another view of the case. An ethic of caution is not contradictory to an ethic of interpretation (Stake, 1995, p.12).

I have heeded Stake's warning and am cautious with the implications I have drawn from my documentation. I will say more on this subject in a moment.

Stake's final category for generalization is "naturalistic generalization" (Stake, 1995, p.86). Bassey defines this term as "the learning processes through which we individually acquire concepts and information and steadily generalize them to other situations as we learn more" (Bassey, 1999, p.33). Stake sees case study as a vehicle through which vicarious experiences can provide the opportunity for naturalistic generalization.

To assist the reader in making naturalistic generalizations, case researchers need to provide opportunity for vicarious experience. Our accounts need to be personal, describing the things of our sensory experiences, not failing to attend to the matters that personal curiosity dictates. A narrative account, a story, a chronological presentation, personalistic description, emphasis on time and place provide rich ingredients for vicarious experiences (Stake, 1995,p.87).

Once again, Stake gave me a direction for the way in which to report the activities and interactions of the participants within my study. Given Stake's cautions as a parameter, I

looked at my data to create interpretive, naturalistic generalizations. In the following chapter, which articulates the data accumulated over the two- year study, I have included a concluding paragraph in each chapter to allow for my personal reflections and connections. In the Epilogue, I will articulate the generalizations mentioned above, more substantively.

Other challenges to qualitative research design as posed by Marshall and Rossman (1989), Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), Creswell (1998) and others include the issue of ethics, reflexivity, and interviewer bias. I discuss these in the following section.

### **Case study tools and methods**

The issue of ethics is a pertinent one to all researchers. Bassey (1999) identifies three main ethical issues in research: respect for democracy, for truth and for persons. Essentially he defines respect for democracy as the right of researchers to ask questions and to receive information. The other two issues bound this right. The respect for truth demands truthful data collection and reporting. Respect for persons recognizes the participants' entitlement to dignity and privacy. I have obtained truthful data through methods such as trustworthiness and triangulation, which I will define in the following paragraph. Simon Fraser University has a rigorous ethical review procedure that was undertaken to help provide anonymity and privacy for the participants within my study.

As my participants were adults, they willingly agreed to engage in this research and have agreed to my representing them both visually and anecdotally.

As reliability (the extent to which a research fact or finding can be repeated given the same circumstances) and validity (the extent to which a research fact or finding is what it claims to be) are not concepts readily associated with ethnographic case study, (Bassey 1999), Lincoln and Guba (1985) have coined the term “trustworthiness” as a defining guide for perspective researchers. Trustworthiness includes prolonged engagement with data sources, persistent observation of emergent issues, and raw data adequately checked with sources (Lincoln, Guba, 1985, p.11). Searching for trustworthy data will help to combat the methodological pitfalls of reflexivity and bias. To address one aspect of trustworthiness, I repeated the same three questions over the two- year period of the study: What is Art? What does it mean to teach Art? Why teach Art? I have recorded verbatim the responses of the participants to these questions in the four separate interviews in which they were asked.

Another method for understanding and accounting for the complexity of data is triangulation. Stake (1985) characterizes triangulation as a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning and verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation. In case study and in ethnographic research, we acknowledge that no observations or interpretations are perfectly repeatable, therefore triangulation serves to also clarify meaning by identifying the different ways in which the phenomenon is being seen. I utilized the triangulation method in the group interviews when I asked for

participants' views on the same event or issue. Again, the method I chose was to pose the question, then record verbatim the answers given by all three participants. In my reflective summary at the end of the chapter, I articulate questions that I feel arise from the responses and draw some connections to previously cited literature.

Participant interviews feature prominently in case study methodology. The key to a successful interview is to ask questions and listen intently to the answers (Yin, 1994). Merriam (1988) states that a researcher turns to interviewing participants when “we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them. It is also necessary to interview when we are interested in past events that are impossible to replicate” (Merriam: 72). I chose interviews as a primary source of data collection in order to better understand participants' emotions and thoughts that lie behind their actions. Again, I was reminded of Kincheloe (2003) and his articulation of the importance of social and cultural context. Merriam calls this, “what is in and on someone else's mind” (Merriam,1998, p. 72).

The determination of the style of interview: open ended, focused or survey (Yin, 1994) or telephone, focus groups or one- on- one (Creswell, 1998) is made to accommodate the objectives of the researcher. I have used surveys (both pre and post in order to gage participants' general understandings), and one- on –one and group open ended and focused interviews. There were occasions when I wanted to simply record participants' feelings regarding an issue in an open ended interview (for example the conversations regarding the Music course) and other times when I wanted more specific

information (focused interviews). I also occasionally recorded gestures and emotional clues when I felt one teacher was supporting or negating the contributions of another.

Spradley (1980) offers a series of twelve elements in ethnographic interviewing. Three are most applicable for my purposes: explicit purpose (informing the participant of the reasons for the interview), ethnographic explanation (identifying the goals of the study for the participant), and ethnographic questions (descriptive, cultural and contrast questions which offer the interviewer the opportunity to decipher the participant's responses). All of the participants in the study were informed of the reasons for the interviews and of the goals of the study. My questions in the group and individual interviews were a mixture of descriptive, cultural and contrast questions.

I followed most closely the interview protocols outlined by Patton (1980) and as cited in Cohen et al. (2000, p. 271). For the purposes of my study, I adapted a combination of informal, conversational interview and interview guide approaches. The characteristics of the informal interview include: questions emerge from the immediate context and are asked in the natural course of things; there is no predetermination of question topics or wording. The characteristics of the guided approach include: topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in outline form; interviewer decides sequence and working of questions in the course of the interview. In all of the group and individual interviews, an informal approach was employed. We followed the conversation as it emerged. However, I did let the participants know that we would always either begin or end with the three repeated questions: What is Art, What does it

mean to teach Art, and Why teach Art? They also were aware that each interview followed a semester of study and we would be discussing the successes and challenges of that semester. In this manner, I contend that my interview protocol embraced both informal and guided approaches.

Classroom observation was another data point I used in my study. The purpose of the classroom observations was to obtain data on the participants' teaching and to provide context for the references they used in the subsequent interviews. The observations also provided a direction for some of the questions in the various interview formats. Merriam (1988) suggests that participant observation is the best technique to use when an activity, event or situation can be observed first hand. In- class observations were conducted in both Jenny's and Sarah's classes. Under the auspices of supporting their dramatic work (my professional field of expertise), I was able to spend an afternoon in both classes and then debrief later about the process of teaching an unfamiliar subject. Although it was clear that there was a certain dynamic created by having a stranger in the room, after the first 15 minutes or so, the students became totally engaged in the activities and my presence as a stranger was forgotten. I took written records of the ways in which the teachers engaged the students, moments of uncertainty (as ascertained by mannerisms and speech patterns) and then checked my perceptions during our conversations following the class. There is greater discussion about these observations in the following chapter.

Merriam (1988) summarizes the elements of observation checklists to include the following; setting, participants, activities and interactions, frequency and duration and subtle factors. As evidenced in the preceding paragraph, I was particularly appreciative of the element of subtle factors as it was the documentation of the subtext (gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice) that provided me with questions for subsequent interviews.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest a number of ways in which to record observations: ongoing notes, logs or diaries, notes made on specific themes, chronologs, context maps, sociometric diagrams and structured rating scales and checklists. Ongoing notes and journals are familiar to me and therefore were my written documentation tools of choice. I followed the protocol suggested by Lofland (1971) and as cited by Cohen et al(2000: 188) and recorded my observations as quickly and with as much detail as possible, typing them shortly after the observation in order to record additional details and provide substantive content for subsequent interviews. I wanted to be able to have a clear picture of my participants' classrooms when they referred to their practice.

I used video- tape to record some of the interviews. On three separate occasions, I videotaped the three teachers in group conversations (i.e. group interviews) to record their current understandings of their program and process. I also audiotaped their individual interviews. Cohen et al. define reactivity as the dynamic tension that arises when being observed, and which may skew the reactions and actions of the participant (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). As I analyzed the visual and audio -tapes later in

the process, I realized there was some initial self-consciousness in the first video taped interview but that any evidence of such hesitancy was completely gone by the time the second and subsequent interviews occurred. I consider this to be an example of the intimate and informal relationships that can develop when researchers follow a case for an extended period of time (Bailey, 1978). I followed Yin's (1994) advice on the three principles for data collection: use multiple sources of evidence (interviews, observations and field notes), create a case study database (chronological collection of data following program evolution), and maintain a chain of evidence (notes in journals, dated audio and video tapes and surveys collated).

The observational aspect of data collection is considered by many (Woolcot, 1994), and (Hammersley, 1983) to be one of the most important tools in the researcher's arsenal. Cohen et al. (2000) articulate four primary observational foci:

- the physical setting (environment)
- the human setting (gender, class)
- the interactional setting (formal and informal, verbal and non)
- the programme setting (resources, pedagogy and curricula).

These four foci offered a context for my observations and conversations with the participants of the Graduate Diploma program. Each setting required consideration in the analysis of the data. Over the course of the two years, I interviewed my participants once in the district- learning centre, once in my home, once in-conjunction with my classroom observation at a nearby coffee shop, and once in a school library. Each setting provided a different physical context (and subsequent quality of recording), but surprisingly little

variation in the intensity, depth and breadth of conversation. As I have stated previously, any temerity evidenced in the first videotape was totally absent six months later when I taped them again in my home.

### **Why have I situated my study within the methodology of ethnographic case study?**

Given the nature of the Graduate Diploma programs as outlined in the previous chapter, I see a distinct parallel between Field Programs' programmatic structure and what Stake (1995) has called a specific integrated system with patterned, consistent, sequential behavior. As Stake articulates, "the boundaries and behavior patterns of the system are key factors in understanding the case" (p.67). In my study, the boundaries and behavior patterns of the system are the set program configuration of special topics courses and field studies as offered by the Graduate Diploma process.

Although labeling my study can be problematic as I may provide limits which frame the research too closely, I have found the following case study descriptions helpful in shaping my inquiry: "instrumental" and "collective"(Stake, 1995), "bounded" and "within-in site"(Creswell, 1998), "descriptive" (Yin, 1994) and ethnographic (LeCompte and Pressle (1993). As I understand the literature, this indicates research that is predominately of a narrative nature and one in which the exploration and analysis of the case is aimed at illuminating a theory of educational programmes, systems, events or projects. To summarize, it is through the description and analysis of my participants'

journeys that I have accumulated the data through which to examine certain components of the Graduate Diploma program.

As I approached the interview process with my participants, I remembered that accuracy and attention to detail are paramount in providing an authentic rendering of a participant's conversations (Meyerhoff, 1978). I also appreciated Meyerhoff's articulation of the need to be aware of the pull toward identifying and perhaps idealizing a study's participants. Her careful entry into her chosen community provided me with an understanding of the role of the "gatekeeper" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). My entry into the world of Field Programs was facilitated by my previous work in the community. I was known to the administration and to the instructors and my challenge was to not let those past connections and experiences color my current interactions. I approached my participants and my study with the understanding that although the Arts are my passion, I was willing to entertain the thought that they may not be the deciding factor in any perceived changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes as acknowledged by my participants.

By employing case study methodology, it was my intention to be able to accurately document the activities and attendant feelings and understandings of my participants as they proceeded through a Graduate Diploma program in the Arts. I have documented through observation and interview, videotaping and in situ recording, the ways in which teachers approached the learning of a new field of study. The attendant

changes in attitude, ability or understandings (if any), will be documented with evidence to support the articulation of a subsequent pattern or theory.

Case study has provided the frame or lens through which to document the Graduate Diploma process. Both case study and ethnographic research have supplied the methodological tools for my narrative inquiry into this specific educational program. I have intended the use of an ethnographic approach to help me accurately convey my participants' voices. It is the human experience of the participants within the graduate Arts diploma at Simon Fraser University that I believe helps articulate the ways in which we approach the understandings and the practice of our work as educators. The next chapter will more substantively contribute the voices of my participants as I look at their journey and record their observations, successes and challenges.

## ACT FOUR: THE PLAYERS AND THEIR COMMUNITY

*Syracuse Drom: "I am transformed master, am I not?"*  
*Syracuse Antiph: "I think thou art in mind, and so am I"*  
*(The Comedy of Errors, II.ii.195-197)*

### To begin

The dates of this study were September 2003 to July 2005. The location of the study was within one of the largest school districts in the lower mainland of British Columbia, Canada.

The Fine Arts Cohort was one of two Arts diploma cohorts offered in this district during this time period. This particular cohort was comprised of teachers from within a section of the city that is considered by many to be inner city. There were 23 participants in this Fine Arts cohort. They were primarily female and primarily elementary teachers. The age range of these teachers was from mid twenties to mid fifties.

I have chosen not to focus on the specific demographics of the area, as the teachers' program was conducted in a variety of locations and encompassed theoretical ideologies that I believe transcend individual locations. I also specifically chose three key participants with a varied age range so I am not considering age to be a factor in the data.

Over the course of the two- year program, my participants and I met on five separate occasions. Each interview session was at least two hours in length. I shot over twelve hours of video- tape and recorded eight hours of audio- tape. In addition, I wrote my impressions, questions and some of the responses in my field notes and later reflected on the interactions in my research journal. The final portfolios of my participants were video taped and I have included these in their entirety as they demonstrate their summative understandings of their progress in the program.

In this study, I did not endeavor to define a base line in my participants for the dispositions toward risk taking or propensity toward creativity. I did however, attempt to document their understanding of the Arts and of aesthetic education as they progressed through their program and made note of the changes in understanding as they arose. I also made note of the way in which they approached taking a risk in performance and the connected emotions with creating art.

As an ethnographic case study researcher, I am aware that my presence is a factor in the data. The questions that I have chosen, the responses that I give (both verbally and non-verbally) intentionally and unintentionally influence their responses. I state this as an awareness of my role in the study. This is the documentation of the journey of three participants in a Graduate Diploma course in the Arts. It is also my journey. My understandings of how these teachers make sense of their learning, how they communicate with each other and my articulation of the changes I have seen as manifested in their writings, their discussions and in their reflections will be articulated in

each section of this chapter. As I quoted from Robert Stake earlier in this paper, “The case researcher emerges from one social engagement, the observation to choreograph another, the report” (Stake, 1994).

I have organized my discussion of the data as follows: I begin with a chronology of the study, explaining in detail how the data collection proceeded. I then present the data derived from each encounter with the participants, most often with verbatim quotes. For the purposes of this study, I have chosen not to include transcriptions from the interviews that were not pertinent to my research. Casual comments on the weather, on the plans for the upcoming weekend etc. are not included in the transcripts, although I do acknowledge that they contribute to the building of the relationship between researcher and participant. Each interview (both individual and group) combined guided and informal interview techniques as outlined in Patton (1980). I allowed questions to emerge from the immediate context (introduction of the participants, articulating progress throughout program, presentation of portfolios), and I emailed set questions prior to the interviews, which were then covered during the course of the conversation. All interviews were conducted with an informal approach and combined open ended (Yin, 1994) and explicit questions (Spradley, 1980). Each interview transcription is followed by a reflective summary in which I articulate my understandings of the data and make connections to the relevant educational literature.

The three participants in my study specifically chose the Arts program for three very different (yet fundamentally similar) reasons. Jenny wanted pragmatically to continue

her education and achieve the next salary level and since she had substantive personal background in the Arts, this was a “safe” beginning (Personal communication, June, 2005). Barb had already taken a previous Graduate Diploma (in Math) and she knew she liked the process. She enrolled for the opportunity to improve in some of her Arts instruction techniques (specifically her Visual Art) (Personal communication, May, 2005). Sarah offered a similar reason as Barb but mentioned that she was motivated by the “conversation around the lunch room and the marvelous art that was coming out of classrooms of teachers previously involved in the program” (Personal communication, March, 2005).]

### **Data Collection Chronology**

To provide an overall picture of the types of data collected and a time frame for the collection, I have begun with a chronological depiction of the two- year study.

#### **September 2003**

This was my first meeting with the entire cohort. My purpose for this meeting was to introduce the study and distribute a survey that would help me to solicit appropriate participants for the research and identify participants’ initial understandings of Arts education. This was the second session of their first course, held in a classroom of one of the district’s schools. The instructor let me introduce myself at the beginning of the class and explain the project. I had an opportunity to watch the class at work before I distributed the baseline survey (See Appendix A for complete survey). The survey was

collected and returned to me (by the instructor) the following week. As I have discussed earlier, based on the responses from this first survey, I contacted (by phone and email) three of the four willing responders. I based my selection of my participants on the following criteria: experience (or non) in the Arts, experience (or non) with the Graduate Diploma process, and experience in teaching (I wanted a range of teaching experience).

### **February 27, 2004**

This was my first group interview with my three key participants. I utilized the interview protocol as outlined in Yin (1989) and the questions are specific and closed (1989). This initial interview took place over three hours during a Friday morning at the District Curriculum Centre. I videotaped the entire morning and immediately made field notes after we had concluded the interview. My primary purpose for this interview was to develop a baseline articulation of participant knowledge, skills and attitudes in the Arts.

The questions I utilized for this interview were:

- What brings you into this program?
- Which of the Arts (if any) do you find least threatening? Do you dread any one in particular?
- Is there any connection between what you were learning in your first course (Issues in Arts Education) and what you were teaching?
- Was there anything in the readings that transferred into other areas of your teaching?

- Has the first course heightened your awareness of the Arts in general? If not, why do you think it hasn't?
- Now that you have begun your second course (Visual Arts Methods) and have been working with your mentors, do you have any comments about the process?

At the conclusion of the two years of data collection, I returned to my field notes and the video tapes to transcribe the responses and conversation which reflected the questions on participant views regarding the Arts, their teaching practice in the Arts, their current understandings of the Arts and the direction they hoped their studies would take them. The responses to these questions were transcribed verbatim. Any other conversations from that interview which were recorded but which did not pertain to these areas are unused and remain unrecorded in this document.

### **July 12, 2004**

This was my second group interview with the three key participants. I once again utilized the same interview protocols as discussed previously (Yin, 1989). This interview coincided with a theatre visit as part of their Arts in the Community course. At this juncture, the participants were almost half way through their diploma program. This interview took place before dinner at my house. I videotaped the entire two -hour discussion, and have again included only the data which is pertinent to the study questions. My primary objective was to articulate a sense of participant understanding and individual progress of the program. I obtained this data with the following questions:

- What does it mean to learn about Art?
- What does it mean to teach Art?
- What is Art?
- Does this program transfer outside of teaching? Can you identify ways in which you may or may not have changed?
- Name an “AHA” and an “OHNO” moment (if you have had any).
- Any final comments as you end your first year and begin your second?

## **Feb. 2005**

During this month, I held individual interviews with the three key participants. These meetings took place after school visits to their classrooms. For two of the three participants, I visited their classrooms and worked with them to teach small Drama games to their students. These lessons were approximately one hour in length. I planned a portion of the lesson, and the teacher subsequently took over instruction to conclude the class. Barb was unable to teach during this time, and I did not visit her class. The purpose for the classroom visits was to obtain a clearer understanding of participant practice as they taught Drama. I wished to have a better understanding of the references to which they referred when they spoke of their classrooms in their subsequent interviews. For example, when Sarah looked hesitant in response to a student’s question about a Drama game, I asked her about that moment later in our post-class interview. She identified that moment as being one of discomfort because she was leading a game with which she was unfamiliar and was worried about letting

the students know that she was not “in control” as much as she normally would have liked (Field notes, 2004).

In all three cases, the subsequent interviews were recorded on audiotape and the locations of these interviews were in local coffee shops close to the participants’ schools. Each interview was at least one hour in length. I recorded field notes during the classroom and interview times. My key objective at this juncture was to identify current understandings regarding the Arts, and pinpoint any transference of knowledge and understanding to other areas of curriculum. I was also interested to see if there was any participant identification of personal change in their awareness of the Arts and their teaching practice. To obtain this data I utilized the following questions:

- What are your current thoughts or impressions of the program?
- How have your views on your teaching changed? Or if they haven’t why do you think they haven’t?
- Has the program changed you personally? If not, why not?
- What skills (if any) have you found have transferred to other areas of the curriculum?
- What specific experiences (if any) have helped your progress?
- What specific experiences (if any) have hindered your progress?
- Name three things you have taken from the program so far.
- What is Art?
- What does it mean to teach Art?

- Why teach Art?

### **July 2005**

The final baseline survey was distributed to the entire cohort through email. The purpose of this survey was to identify summative understandings of Arts education. Unfortunately, there were very few responses returned. I have utilized some of these responses in the final chapter. The entire survey is included in Appendix A.

### **July 7, 2005**

This was the final portfolio share of the three participants. Each participant presented their portfolio to me either after or before they presented their material to their mentor. These individual interviews were recorded on videotape by Linda Hof (SFU videographer). The utilization of a separate videographer allowed me to make substantive field notes during the interviews. These portfolio shares occurred in a district school library. My key objective during these interviews was to identify summative understandings and statements. To obtain this data, I utilized the following questions:

- You've been asked this a hundred times, one more time for posterity:  
What do you know now (if anything) about the Arts that you didn't  
before?

- What skills in the Arts have you learned (if any)?
- Do you feel differently about the Arts in general now? Or about a specific art?
- Has your teaching of the Arts changed? Has your teaching in other areas changed?
- Can you pinpoint any specific area or process in this program that has contributed to your change (if any)?
- Final impressions: what would you like to see me say about this program?

**July 8, 2005**

This was the final program evaluation and was developed and administered by Field Programs to the entire cohort. A sample of this evaluation is included in Appendix C. I have collated the responses and represented the data in this chapter. Some of the responses have been used to support understandings outlined in the Epilogue. As my final survey elicited so few responses, I elected to utilize the course evaluations from Field Programs to help identify summative understandings regarding Arts education and to see if other students within the program were identifying similar feelings and understandings as my three participants.

### **The first pre-program survey**

I begin with the first survey that was administered by me to the entire cohort at the start of the program. The purpose of this survey was to identify initial understandings of participants of the value of Arts education and to determine appropriate candidates for the study. I hoped to be able to select participants with a wide range of experience in the Arts, with varying experience in Graduate Diploma programs, and with a range of teaching experiences. I have followed question protocol guidelines as outlined in Yin (1989) and the questions were specific and closed (Yin, 1989). The responses were collated and recorded without additions or deletions. When respondents gave specific descriptions or examples, these have been included in the paragraphs preceding the numerical data.

### **September 2003**

Base line Data obtained from Pre-Program Survey: administered September 2003  
(21 respondents).

a). **Identify any educational background you have in the Arts. Identify any experiences (personal or educational) that may have influenced your teaching practice in one or more of the Arts. Please identify each/all of the Arts.**

Experience in the Arts was interpreted by the respondents as classes and lessons taken in school as children, adolescents or adults. Two teachers identified themselves as Music majors. Two teachers identified themselves as Visual Art majors. Two teachers identified post secondary Visual Art courses. Some teachers identified experiences in

more than one art. This question was asked specifically to determine participant experience in the Arts.

Experience in Music: 10

Experience in Visual Art: 11

Experience in Drama: 6

Experience in Dance: 5

**b) Which (if any) of the art(s) are you most comfortable teaching? Why?**

Teachers defined comfort in the Art to be: previous experience and knowledge in the arts; having more teacher material to guide the teaching of the art; enjoyment in the experiential element of the arts; opportunity for “fun” for the teacher.

Most comfortable in Music: 6

Most comfortable in Visual Art: 15

Most comfortable in Drama: 1

Most comfortable in Dance: 0

Not comfortable in any art: 1

Most comfortable in All: 0

**c) Is there an art form that makes you most uncomfortable? Why?**

Respondents described discomfort as: “lack of talent, don’t know where to start, not confident in abilities, too shy, struggle to reproduce what I see, performance is scary, creative juices are lacking, childhood issues, experiences of ridicule”.

Least comfortable in Music: 10

Least comfortable in Visual Art: 3

Least comfortable in Drama: 7

Least comfortable in Dance: 1

Not uncomfortable in any: 1

Least comfortable in All: 2

### **A few reflections**

Based on my previous experience as a curriculum consultant for the Vancouver School Board (in which some of my responsibilities included Arts support for elementary generalist teachers), I do not consider it unusual to see that the area of Music instruction affords the most discomfort for generalist teachers. There are a number of qualifying explanations for that understanding. Like many districts in British Columbia, the district in which this study was conducted offers a core Music program to elementary schools. This is largely a band program that is taught by Music specialists. It is not unlikely that an elementary school teacher in this district could teach for most of his/her career without having to teach substantive Music in his/her class. The same unfamiliarity is true for the performance Arts of Dance and Drama. Without sufficient training in these areas, teachers expressed a discomfort in putting themselves into “unknown territory” (Personal communication, 2004).

The element of risk is much greater in the performance Arts. Field Programs has intentionally acknowledged this by placing the issues based course at the beginning of the program. This is a course that most closely replicates a “traditional” understanding of academic study. The first methods course is the Visual Art offering which is a curricular area expected to be less feared (Personal communication, 2006).

The last six questions on the survey were asked to articulate hopes and aspirations of the respondents for the program and identify initial understandings on the value of the Arts. My intention was to compare participant understandings to determine appropriate participants for the study.

- What do you see as the value of the Arts (if any)?
- What do you hope to achieve with the completion of this program?
- Identify what (if anything) that intrigues you about working in the Arts. Is there a specific reason you have chosen this particular Graduate Diploma?

I asked the next questions to determine demographics of specific participants and to determine appropriate participants for the study. I have placed the complete survey in Appendix A.

- How long have you been teaching?
- What grades do you teach?
- Identify other graduate programs in which you have been involved.

### Feb 27, 2004: Group Interview with three key participants

This interview took place at the district curriculum centre on a Friday morning. It was one month into the second semester of the program. The participants have completed their first course (Issues in Education in the Arts) and are well into the Visual Art and accompanying Field Studies course. In documenting the interview for this study, I have chosen to present the interview questions followed by participant verbatim answers in order to illustrate the rhythm and style of the interview, as well as to provide the reader with a glimpse into the personalities of the participants. I have identified physical gestures where they pertain to the answers and dynamics of the questions. As discussed in the chronology, I chose six open-ended questions that I hoped would elicit conversation regarding the key issues of my study. I utilized both audio and video recordings to capture the participant responses, made notes during the session and chose an interview location that was quiet and amenable to conversation. I transcribed the responses at a later date.

*Question: What brings you into the program?*

**Barb:** I'm not an Arts person. Every time I complete an art piece, I feel very proud. I knew from the last course I took (Graduate Diploma in Elementary Math), that I would be learning a lot. It was time to learn again.

**Jenny:** I am an Arts person. I used to dance, I've taught ballet. I don't feel comfortable teaching Drama. I really don't have any confidence in that area. And although I have a

background in Dance, I've kind of pushed Dance aside in my classes. Also, I realized that my Art had become more crafty. This program reminds me of my PDP<sup>9</sup> and is reaffirming the things I know to be true about the Arts.

**Sarah:** My job share partner is an Art teacher. She does wonderful things with Art, so I always left those things up to her. I did crafty things. I know it was just crafty and I know that Art should be more than that. I wanted to find out more myself so that I could teach the kids.

***Question: Which of the Arts (if any) is the least threatening? Do you dread any one in particular?***

**Barb:** Visual Art was by far is the most threatening. It's really why I took the program, to try to get over my inhibition. I'm not worried about Music at all. A little worried about Dance and Drama.

**Jenny:** Music will be the worst. I don't know how I will approach Music.

**Sarah:** I find them all a little threatening. I'm not musical at all. In fact when I was in elementary school, people told me that I can't (sic) sing. So I've got that block.

***Question: Let's talk about the connection (if any) between what you were learning in your first course (Issues in Arts Education) and what you were teaching.***

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<sup>9</sup> PDP refers to the Professional Development Program at Simon Fraser University. This is the teacher certification program.

**Barb:** I really enjoyed the talking. It was like I was filling up my background with what was missing and now I know that I am on solid ground. I would never have had those conversations about the value of Art because I wouldn't have had a clue where to go with them. "What is Art?" I didn't know. Now, if someone comes to me with this question, I wouldn't give them a lot of time on it because it is a stupid question (others laugh). What is Art? There is no one definition of Art. Art is many different things. It is so much more than the question. I didn't do the art projects from that first class with my students because I was still intimidated by the projects, by the necessity of producing something for show to others. I guess I didn't go deeply into myself as an artist. I was still thinking about things as a teacher. But the biggest impact has been the sense of collaboration and community. Everybody is great and very supportive. We've sort of become a little family with all of our little quirks. That kind of environment doesn't happen in our school because everybody is doing separate things (Sarah nods). Michael's course <sup>10</sup>set the scene. Reminded me of the kind of environment I want in my own class.

**Jenny:** That first class was the highlight of my week. Every lesson we did with Michael, I ended up using with my students. Suddenly I found myself being enthused again about Art and wanted to pursue my own artistic abilities. Another teacher from my school was in the course, and we worked together on a couple of assignments which was neat.

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<sup>10</sup> Issues in Education in the Arts.

**Sarah:** I started off being so intimidated by the secondary Art teachers. Those first few classes I kept thinking “what have I got myself into?” I went home every night with so many questions and wondering when we were going to get some answers. That’s the sort of person I am. I am very logical. I did get lots of information and I’ve learned its okay for people to have different answers on the meaning of Art. Michael’s questioning techniques was something new to me and I am trying them with my class. I kept waiting for the practical stuff. I didn’t think to use the Art projects with my class.

**Question:** *Is there anything in the readings that transferred into other areas of your teaching? If not, why do you think it hasn’t?*

**Barb:** Gardner’s multiple intelligences article<sup>11</sup> reminded me that there are so many different kinds of learners in my class. (She relates a story about a young boy in her class whom she was able to reach through a Music project). And Michael’s whole course was an affirmation that the important stuff is not necessarily the curriculum but the environment. That’s the trick of this program. It’s much, much more than the Visual Art. It’s the sense of community.

**Sarah:** I can’t think of anything specific but being in the course has made me think differently. I feel like I’ve changed, but I can’t say how. Can I read a poem I wrote at the end of the first course? (**I nod**) Sarah reads the following poem.

*This fine Arts course has been so enlightening  
And at times rather daunting and frightening.*

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<sup>11</sup> Gardner, Howard: “Unfolding or Teaching: on the Optimal Training of Artistic Skills”

*There were the inevitable deadlines to meet  
And several creative art projects to complete  
All the while I was making many a discovery  
About the importance of an art vocabulary.  
The words texture, colour, shape and line,  
To me these now mean elements of design.  
Rhythm and pattern are important too,  
At least for the PLO's of grade three and two.  
I'm developing confidence in the world of art.  
My teaching has taken me places I'd never before start.  
I've discussed with colleagues about colours and textures,  
Before this course I didn't even know these features.  
Wow! I also bought two paintings for my house,  
Before this course, I'd have been hesitant as a mouse.  
I thought the work of Jackson Pollock was quite splattery  
Knowing the content helped me unravel the mystery.  
The mentors were supportive whenever we'd meet,  
The portfolios they asked to be brief yet complete.  
So I've written this poem as a synopsis of learning  
A passing mark is what I hope to be earning.  
So much more yet about art to discover and learn  
This course is taking my art teaching on many a new turn!*

**(We all clap).**

**Jenny:** I think the two biggest influences were the conversations about context and space. I do think context is important in Art and I'm thinking all the time now about how to make the classroom space safe for explorations in Art. I also was inspired to write a poem.

### ***Musts***

*Must embolden them to persevere,  
Especially when their confidence is mere.  
Must give them time to practice,  
Time to look inward so that in blindness,*

*Connections with their lives, they won't miss.*

**Must teach them to slow down and notice**

*(something I also need to practice)  
and really listen to their surrounding.  
Must offer daily practice in observing.  
Ethnic cultures, I must be considering,  
As well as the residual, dominant, and emerging  
Cultures of the society in which they are living.  
Must consider that we each have differing  
Preferred ways of expressing;  
Must teach some of everything.  
Must find their passion,  
So they will be drawn in, their interest smitten,  
Captivated with a sense of being alive and full of courage..  
Must  
Encourage, encourage, encourage!*

**Must, to ensure success, give parameters**

*(Just look at the assignment on Roy Henry Vickers).  
Must encourage questions  
That lead to more questions.  
Must encourage the desire for interrogations.  
Must find a balance between being  
Within a community and in isolation creating.  
Idea: do brainstorming first in the community -  
Gather ideas, allow them to talk and interact cooperatively-  
Then send them off to create individually.  
("A balance of support from mentors  
and role models  
and time to be in solitude  
to mull things over and  
digest ideas and create" – Creators on Creating)*

**(We all clap).**

**Sharon:** That was amazing! Thank you both for sharing those poems. I know we are running out of time but if it's alright with you, I have two last questions?

**(All three nod)**

**Question:** *Has the first course heightened your awareness of the Arts in general?*

**(All three nod heads)**

***How?***

**Barb:** I took my daughter to a play at the Surrey Arts Centre. I realized when I went to clean up the Vancouver Sun left on the table, that the kids had removed and saved the Arts sections for me. That's different. In the past it would have been the food sections. I guess I know my perspective has changed when I can see my granddaughter covered with chocolate pudding and think "hey, she's an artist",

**Sarah:** The common book assignment made me very aware of the Arts. I'm reading the paper and the word "art" just jumps out. Then I wind up reading the article a little more critically. I also went to a play which we hadn't done in I don't know how long.

**Jenny:** I went to a play too and I went to the Art Gallery, which I hadn't done in a very long time. I'm also teaching too much Art now. I'm trying to find ways to incorporate Social Studies into Art.

(Barb comments how great she thinks it is that it is Social Studies which Jenny is trying to accommodate in Art, instead of the other way around).

***Question: Now that you've begun your second course (Visual Art Methods) and have been working with your mentors, do you have any comments about the process?***

**Barb:** I found the mentor's Visual Art assignments to be really intimidating. It seems like we didn't have enough time to do them. I appreciate the process more when it's pass/fail. That makes it a little easier.

**Sarah:** It almost feels like I didn't get enough information about the assignment and that added to my stress. I find myself resenting the amount of time necessary to complete even these little projects.

**Jenny:** I'm getting re-energized and am excited about the projects. I am so competitive with myself, pass/fail gives me lots of room.

**Sharon:** I'm really conscious of your time. I know that you need to get back to school. Thank you so much for your contributions. I'm very pleased to be working with you. As you go through the next term, I'd be very grateful if you could think about the following questions: What is Art? (**Barb laughs**). What does it mean to teach Art? Why teach Art? I'd like to use those three questions as the foundation for all of our interviews over the course of the program. Is that all right?

**(Everyone agrees. Jenny and Sarah write down the questions.)**

**(We gather up the coffee cups and leave the building).**

### **A few reflections**

At this initial interview, the teachers fell into a routine of answering questions. I would pose a question, Barb would immediately volunteer, and the others would follow. I felt that the personalities of the participants surfaced and that these personalities helped to articulate their current understandings, experiences, and challenges in the program thus far. In the interview situation, Barb was the most vocal, Sarah was the most reserved about speaking, and Jenny fell somewhere in-between. This articulation of their dispositions towards the Arts and the creating of Arts, highlights one of the difficulties imbedded within Arts research which I have written about earlier in this document (as cited by Eisner, 2002). Specifically, I'd like to draw attention to the individual dispositions toward risk taking and ambiguity that they brought with them into the program. Jenny indicated that she was energized and excited about the program. Sarah and Barb had some reservations because they are currently still unsure of their artistic abilities. This re-energizing of the participant has been previously articulated as one of the effects of engaging in "reflection on action" (Schön, 1983).

As Eisner and Greene have spoken about the transference of an artistic perception into other arenas, the three teachers have indicated that the Arts are beginning to influence other areas of their lives. Jenny articulated specifics from the readings that she feels have influenced her practice. (She speaks specifically about context and environment). Barb found a connection between multiple intelligences and her students' abilities. Sarah, who said she was the least comfortable in the Arts, mentioned that the word "art" pops out at her from the newspaper and she is the first to volunteer an artistic offering (her poem). I find this most interesting. It is Sarah who, when we began the

session, chose to speak last. Barb exhibited lots of energy and enthusiasm and at first dominated the conversation. Jenny seemed determined to get her opinions interjected into the conversation. Yet, Sarah was the first to take a risk and share a personal artistic offering. It may be her courage that inspired Jenny to contribute her own personal poem.

Barb mentioned specifically that there has been a sense of community that has evolved and that that environment has created a “safe” place in which to learn. As we have seen previously in the works of Jalongo, Lave and Wenger and others, the importance of the environment of a collegial learning community is paramount for adult learners.

I was intrigued and heartened by this first interview. I wondered if the excitement and awareness of the skill and knowledge development in the Arts would continue? Would the initial changes they reported be sustainable?

#### **July 12, 2004: Group Interview**

The same protocols were established as in the previous group interview (see data chronology). Questions were audio and video recorded and later transcribed. The location for this interview was my home. The interview took place after the first year of the program. The teachers had completed their course in Issues in Education in the Arts, their methods course in Visual Art, and their subsequent Field Study in Visual Art. They were currently engaged in the Arts in the Community course. The questions and

responses included here comprise the entire interview. When a participant related an anecdotal story that did not have immediate relevance to the question posed, I have chosen to summarize the story. For example, when Jenny tells a lengthy story about a student in her class, I have summarized it into a couple of sentences rather than relating it verbatim. After the interview, we adjourned to the dining room for dinner prior to the theatre visit (a field trip component of their course).

***Question: What does it mean to learn about Art?***

**Barb:** It's more about learning about the language of Art. It's working on establishing the balance between the teaching of skills and the aesthetics.

**Sarah:** My brother was always so much better at Art than me. So I feel that I'm learning along with the kids. The vocabulary of Art is a big part of the process and very important. I've learned that Art ideas are connected by vocabulary and it doesn't have to be a big project that hangs on the wall.

**Jenny:** I got this thank you card from a student's parent. She said I had provided an eye-opening experience for her son in Art. That aesthetic experience is what I'm learning about Art. Students are learning to be much more observant about Art. And that's transferring to other areas of the curriculum. In Language Arts, they are starting to write with much more detail. (Jenny then relates a story about how a student in her class has spent much more time writing which she attributes to the amount of time the class has spent shaping and re-shaping their current Art project: a unit called "In the style of").

***Question: What does it mean to teach Art?***

**Barb:** Before, teaching Art was giving them an assignment, setting some parameters, showing them what I wanted them to do. The end results were very similar in appearance. Now, I give them background, teach them some skills and some vocabulary and let them solve the problem. Let them develop their own ideas. Before I didn't allow them to look at each other's work because I didn't want them to copy. Now, I stop them ten minutes before the end so we can do a little gallery walk like they did with us in the course. They are now sharing ideas, complimenting each other. I brought my own pieces in and the work of the other teachers in the school and they could see how they all were different.

**Sarah:** Before, I'd have an idea and give examples of what it could look like. Now I give the class an idea or challenge E.g. "create different textures". This is nothing I had ever thought of before. But the best part was another teacher came into the room and was so excited about the texture project and I got to explain the theory behind it to someone else. The program has given me the courage to do this. I'm also discovering that I don't have to be an expert myself and I don't have to be a wonderful artist in order to challenge kids to create Art. The course is teaching me to be more creative.

**Jenny:** This program has given me the courage to go one step further in both my own artistic creations and in my teaching of Art. I'm taking time to pursue Art and I think that inspires my kids a little. For those of my students who are good at Art,

they are getting even more encouragement and for those students who are not so good, they are getting better, because we keep practicing. Art is a skill like soccer. You have to practice.

***Question: What is Art?***

**Barb:** Art is so many things. It is communication, self-expression. It is a way of communicating the things we see, feel and experience.

**Sarah:** I've thought about this a lot. I agree it is a way of communicating, but where I'm hung up is that it is still (to me) has to be aesthetically pleasing. It has to have some kind of pleasant quality to it. I guess I'm still struggling to say what is Art? I know that I can decide for myself. I've discovered that the context is really important for deciding whether or not something is Art.

**Jenny:** I agree with Sarah. I think the artist is making a statement. It may not be aesthetically appealing for me, but because he is trying to communicate perhaps it is Art? But I do know that when I know the context, I understand the Arts better. Art makes you stop and think about things in another way.

***Question: Does this program transfer outside of teaching? Can you identify ways in which you (may or may not) have changed?***

**Barb:** I knew that things would transfer over, because I've taken a Graduate Diploma course before. I'm using this term a lot "thinking like an artist". I

think there is much more meta-cognition going on in both my classroom and in my home. I found out that I can do Art! I have some pieces that I am really proud of and that now hang on my wall in my home. The kids in my class notice the difference in me as well. I think my enthusiasm for the Arts had bubbled over into the class. We never used to have the kinds of Arts discussions about history and process that we now have in my class.

**Sarah:** I think the Arts are now impacting on my other subjects. I think so much more critically now about Art. It carries over in other subjects. I look for the creativity. Michael's way of questioning, of holding a discussion has become one of my techniques in class.

**Jenny:** Yes, I see things in a different way. Like the building behind you. (Jenny is speaking of a high rise building which can be seen outside of the balcony doors in my living room). Before I would have noticed a high- rise building, perhaps I would have noticed the color. Now I can see it is made up of geometrical shapes. I don't think I would have noticed that before. I see Art everywhere. I'm trying to integrate Art as a way of seeing into everything. One teacher told me that my students are going to wonder what happened to Art when they leave my class.

**Question:** Name an "AHA" and an "OHNO" moment (if you have had any).

**Barb:** Aha: Hey, I can do Art! I always knew what the IRPs said and what the elements and principles of Art were called, but now I know what they mean. I have made some huge connections,

**Sarah:** Aha: I can do this! I'm doing lot of painting with the kids (even if it is messy). I have become the "teacher who does Art" to one of my classes.

**Jenny:** My Aha and Oh No are kind of tied together. My physical exhaustion started me thinking about the kids and the different places they are at creatively. I can be very creative, but it is not from the same place all the time. This has given my insight about my own creativity and how I get inspired. How can I help my students to gain inspiration? We throw suggestions at them, not really what we should do.

**Sarah:** and we expect them to be finished by 2:30. Okay, now be an artist, okay now finish and we are going to do Math.

**Barb:** that's one thing I've changed. Art is at the beginning of the day so that they can work at it during the day when they have finished other subjects.

**Question:** *Any final comments as you end your first year and begin the second?*

**Barb:** I am excited and anxious to start in September and to take my work into the new class of kids. I have the language and skills now and am looking forward to Music because it is my strongest area. I'm looking forward to using Music in my classroom again.

**Sarah:** Now that I know my Arts vocabulary, I will carry it on. Music is not my strong point. I'm wondering how much I will actually use it in my class, as there is a Music specialist in the school.

**Jenny:** I'll be sad to see this group of kids leave. I'd like to keep the Arts growth happening with them. I want to continue with my own Art. I'm looking forward to the Music course because I would like to write a musical with the new group of students.

### **A few reflections**

The three participants used more Arts vocabulary during this interview. They mentioned by name the design elements of texture and pattern. They articulated context as being important and identified the importance of an Arts vocabulary in their teaching. There was an expression of self-confidence in all three as reflected in Sarah's description of explaining theory to a colleague, Barb bringing in her own artistic works into her classroom, and Jenny taking her own artistic explorations a step further. They used words like "courage" and "creativity" and all three commented on how others viewed

their artistic capabilities. Both Barb and Sarah commented on their own Art and how others reacted to their artistic expressions. Barb and Sarah said that they were originally reticent about making Art. Barb said that she now hangs her own art on her wall, and Sarah reported that she has gained a reputation in the school for being the “teacher who teaches Art”.

There appears to be transference of skills to other areas of teaching. Barb talked about how the environment in her classroom has changed. How students were discussing more and were more supportive of each other. I see this as a parallel to the collegial learning community with which she has been participating in the program. Barb spoke of how she has adapted the timetable to give a more prominent time to Art. She stated that the students have indicated that her enthusiasm for the Arts has transferred into other areas of the curriculum. This transference of dispositions into another academic arena is what Karen Gallas (1994) speaks about in her work. It also is indicative of some of the outcomes of educational action research as previously cited by McNiff (2002), Case and Regan (2000) and others. Sarah has taken the opportunity to share her new- found knowledge with another teacher. This speaks to me of greater self-confidence and self-esteem as Sarah appears to understand the theory she has learned in her classes, well enough to explain them to another. These actions once again support some of Eisner’s research when he comments on the skills of the artist being transferred into the academic and professional world (2002). Jenny’s observation of seeing “Art everywhere”, echoes the words of Greene and Beardsley when they talk about the impact of the aesthetic on personal perceptions, on ways of seeing.

Sarah reported trepidation toward the upcoming Music course. I wonder if this is part of the personal history that she brings to this journey? She talked earlier about how her brother was always better at Art than she was. The previous experiences we bring into a learning situation can help (or hinder) our perceptual frame for the current experience (Eisner,1994). Barb and Jenny appeared to be excited about the upcoming course in Music methods. Both of these teachers have had previous, successful experience in Music.

Once again, it is Barb who took the lead in the conversation. However, Sarah no longer waits to contribute last. She often added her comments second and on one occasion even interrupted Jenny. I see this as an example of the ease they have developed amongst themselves (part of the contribution of a supportive learning community) and of the growth in self-confidence that Sarah has developed.

I can empathize with Sarah's reticence in Music. I wonder how eager I would be to jump into a curricular area in which I had limited or unsuccessful experience. Again, I am reminded of the power of a supportive learning community and the courage such collegial support can provide.

## **February 2005**

The following data was collected in separate interviews conducted with the three participants three quarters of the way through the program. I chose to conduct separate interviews to allow time and space for personal reflections unhindered and uninfluenced by the reflections of the others. At this juncture, the three teachers had completed their methodology courses in Visual Art and Music and were in the process of completing the Movement and Drama course. I have chosen to place the participants' reflections in a table to help facilitate the comparison of their impressions during this stage of the program. I'd like to think this visual representation provides a flow to the conversation to compensate for the separate interview times and places. These interviews followed the same protocols as before and were conducted in local coffee shops close to the participants' schools. Each interview was audio taped and then transcribed at a later date. I also recorded field notes during the interviews. The participant responses were recorded verbatim and comprise the entire interview.

*Question: What are your current thoughts or impressions of the program?*

<b>Jenny</b>	<b>Sarah</b>	<b>Barb</b>
<p>In Drama, I don't know where the breakdowns are. I know what good acting is, but I don't know how to get my students there. I'm trying to get them to a place but I don't yet know the skills necessary to get them there. My goal is to build greater Drama skills. I'm trying to incorporate dance and visual art using the knowledge I now have about the basic elements. I have a much stronger understanding of Arts vocabulary. I've learned that the vocabulary in the Arts is linked. I'm hoping the learning doesn't stop</p>	<p>I have a stronger understanding of Arts vocabulary. I learned how to play the clarinet! I'm feeling a little more comfortable with the performing aspect. However I like the creative dance more because there is no right or wrong, I feel I can have much more success. The final performance of the dance course is to perform a memorized dance to Shania Twain. I'm not really enjoying it, but never in a million years would I have thought that I'd be participating in something</p>	<p>I'm learning how to play the guitar. I did this on my own. Not really a result of the course. I've learned that I've been a music supporter all of my life, rather than a performer. Now I have an opportunity to be a performer and I'm loving it. There is so much communication involved in the Arts. I've learned that music is a language. A way of communicating. And so is dance, Drama and visual art. We need to expose kids to that. This is new for me.</p>

<p>once the courses are over. I don't see Music, Drama or Dance as more accessible yet. I have greater aspirations to put more art into the classroom. I'm approaching other teachers more to look for new ideas.</p>	<p>like that! It is much easier to perform with people that we all know.</p>	
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**Question: Have your views on your teaching changed? (If not, why not?)**

<b>Jenny</b>	<b>Sarah</b>	<b>Barb</b>
<p>I'm enjoying the course, but looking forward to the summer when it's all over! I think my teaching is more creative. I'm looking at other areas of the curriculum and trying to find ways to develop lessons which employ one or more of the Arts. I've developed an opera unit!</p>	<p>I've changed so much. I've learned that failures or flops are okay. That the process is important. That it is not always about the finished project. Before it was all about getting some work to put on the wall. I've moved art into the morning instead of Friday afternoon. This has become practical as well as</p>	<p>Music is back in my classroom again! The music specialists have made it sort of easy not to put music into your lessons. Now I'm singing and we are chanting and doing rhymes all the time. I'm looking at trying other things. I'm looking at concepts now instead of</p>

<p>I'm worried I don't have time to do everything. With the dance/Drama course, there is a space crunch at school and I'm worried that I won't be able to accomplish my goals.</p>	<p>academic. The kids can now help me clean up! The last part of the art class is for journal writing. I've always done journals, but now the kids have something useful and immediate to write about and it gives me good feedback. I see some kids differently. They are good creatively, but maybe not so good at academics. My assignments are starting to be different. I'm starting to look for other ways of representation. I've copied Michael's style of leading discussion. He showed us how to draw people out. Gave us lot of wait time. I have grown as a teacher. I absolutely teach art differently.</p>	<p>projects. I'm finding comfort in knowing the content. I've learned how to set some problems at let the kids try to solve them. I've brought much more art appreciation into the class. The language in the classroom is unreal. Kids are talking with accurate, Arts vocabulary. I know I'm headed in the right direction.</p>
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**Question: Has the program changed you personally? (If not, why not?)**

<b>Jenny</b>	<b>Sarah</b>	<b>Barb</b>
<p>I'm learning to let go of control. After the first Visual Art course, I started painting again. I hadn't picked up a paint brush in years.</p>	<p><b>I think</b> I have a new identity. The other art teachers now recognize what I'm doing with the students. I am much more confident as an artist. I never called myself an artist before.</p>	<p>I go to art galleries now. Before if I went to an art gallery, I'd feel like I was in a foreign country. Now I'm looking at things with new eyes. Now I go alone and we go as a family. The graffiti issue we discussed in class has made a big impact on me. The school was tagged on the weekend. Now I'm thinking about what is making these kids go out and do that. Where is there other creative outlets? I'm recognizing some of the artistic elements in some graffiti. The whole family now looks for graffiti. It's changed our dinner discussions. I have always been a reflective practitioner. But I've also always been very verbal. The visual art course was the most terrifying for me. Now that it is over, I can relax, because Drama and Music are part of who I am.</p>

***Question: What skills (if any) have you found have transferred to other areas of curriculum?***

<b>Jenny</b>	<b>Sarah</b>	<b>Barb</b>
<p>I'm thinking more creatively about other areas of curriculum. I now know that understanding can be represented in other ways.</p>	<p>Music integrates with art. Math drills with music. I learned that rock music isn't so good for math drills. I state on the timetable that we are doing the Fine Arts instead of calling it art. This gives me freedom to do all of the Arts. Visual art is still the most transferable and the most comfortable.</p>	<p>The concept of lines showed up in my math class and in dance. Looking at incorporating the problem solving approach in all of the areas of the curriculum. Setting some parameters and then saying to the kids "go create". Letting go of control.</p>

***Question: What specific experiences (if any) have helped your progress?***

<b>Jenny</b>	<b>Sarah</b>	<b>Barb</b>
Michael 's class. The readings which have helped to provide a foundation of vocabulary.	Michael's way of leading discussion.	The discussion on graffiti. Michael's class.

*Question: What specific experiences (if any) have hindered your progress?*

<b>Jenny</b>	<b>Sarah</b>	<b>Barb</b>
The music course. There was not enough creativity. We spent way too much time on things that were not important. Eg. Administration of class, redoing several times a single game. I was very frustrated. I wanted more knowledge, more transferable activities for my classroom. There were no expectations. It felt as though nothing mattered.	The music course. It felt as though the activities were not meant for all teachers. The music bingo game which was bought. The Halloween song. I'm not confident enough to sing! But then there was a guest speaker who worked with us for a half hour on singing, and maybe if she had continued, I might now be saying I can sing!	I got quite a bit out of the music course, but not because of the course, but because I pursued things on my own. I just decided not to sit and complain, but to make it work for me.

**Question: Can you name three things you have taken from the program so far?.**

<b>Jenny</b>	<b>Sarah</b>	<b>Barb</b>
<p>It's hard to figure out what has come from the program, and what is influenced from before.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I'm more in touch with my creative self.</li> <li>2. I know that I will continue to pursue knowledge in the Arts.</li> <li>3. I'm linking all of the Arts together in terms of vocabulary.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The awareness of the importance of the Arts. Both personally and professionally.</li> <li>2. The personal knowledge that I've gained about the Arts. I'm a better artist.</li> <li>3. My teaching has changed for the better. I know there are ways in which to integrate the Arts effectively.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The knowledge of art appreciation and the confidence to be able to teach the elements.</li> <li>2. Bringing back music into my life as a performer.</li> <li>3. I go to art galleries now.</li> </ol>

**Question: What is art?**

<b>Jenny</b>	<b>Sarah</b>	<b>Barb</b>
Art is expressing yourself. The presence of the elements (pattern, colour, repetition) indicate art.	It's lots of things. It's okay to have questions because questions generate more questions and that keeps you thinking. My biggest disappointment was that Michael didn't answer that question in the first course.	It's making something special. That was one of the definitions from one of the readings in the first course. <sup>12</sup> It is the most relevant one for me. If you narrow it down too much, you risk leaving something out.

**Question: What does it mean to teach art?**

<b>Jenny</b>	<b>Sarah</b>	<b>Barb</b>
It means teaching skills, vocabulary. It means expressing ourselves. And providing an environment which allows us to try and to make mistakes.	Now I am more excited to teach the Arts. I have lots of ideas, just difficulty in picking what to do. I can now justify what I am doing in class.	It means to expose kids to the idea of making things special. It means to open up minds to more than just a project. To teach skills and broader concepts. To take kids into the worlds of the artist.

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<sup>12</sup> Dissanayake, Ellen: *Homo Aestheticus: Where Art Come From*. 1995. (The Core of Art: Making it Special).

**Question: Why teach art?**

<b>Jenny</b>	<b>Sarah</b>	<b>Barb</b>
A lot of the world is visual. Today there is a lot of music out there. The Arts with the different modes of communicating is a good fit for the way in which the world is going. For the enjoyment of performance and creating and for the enjoyment of listening and viewing. Different students learn in different ways and the Arts help them to express their knowledge.	There are so many reasons. Art rounds out the whole person. Some subjects are in the box. The answers are finite. Art is outside of the box. It is more creative.	To expand kids minds. To exercise their brain muscles. I really appreciate Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences. It provides us with the possibility of becoming artists. It is an international language. A wonderful way to communicate.

**A few reflections**

The answers of the participants to the three key questions (What is Art, Why teach Art, What does it mean to teach Art) have become more complex and deeper, perhaps articulating a more profound understanding of the complexities of the Arts. Barb (who initially laughed at the question when we first began) contributed a specific answer

in this interview. Both Barb and Jenny referred to specific knowledge (elements of design and a reference to one of the first academic readings) that originated in the first courses. There is evidence in all three teachers of an ability to communicate their knowledge about the Arts and their intrinsic and extrinsic value.

There appears to be considerable expression of self-confidence. Sarah talked about not liking to Dance in public, but is doing it anyway. Barb has put Music back into her classroom and into her life. Jenny has picked up the paintbrush again and is once more making her own Art. The language used by these teachers continues to reflect the influences of the theoretical components of the courses. There is reference to the elements and principles of design, (a component of study in the Visual Arts Methods course), to conceptions of creativity and communication (issues addressed in the Arts in the Community course) and to the importance of vocabulary and problem solving (elements articulated within all of the methods courses).

Once again, Sarah articulated a specific difference about herself. She called herself an “artist” and identified that this was a “new identity”. She acknowledged that it was okay to fail and that she had changed her timetable at school to give greater flexibility for teaching the Arts. Barb’s classes resounded with the sound of Music, something she appears to be enjoying. Jenny has written an opera. The teachers articulate a change in their teaching and in their understanding of themselves. I would argue that this is an example of Schön’s description of “reflection on action” (Schön, 1987).

There was an expression of dissatisfaction with the Music course and the way in which it was conducted. Jenny and Sarah appeared to have wanted “more” from the course. Barb decided to take her own initiative when she wasn’t getting what she needed from the program. This is in contrast to the one course they unanimously agreed upon as being the most influential (the Issues in Education and in Art course offered at the beginning of the program). I contend this is an example of the importance of rigor and academic integrity that is highlighted by Eisner when he speaks about the requisites for good teaching (2003) and by Sarason when he talks of the performance discipline needed to be an effective teacher (1999). Kincheloe (2003) also writes of the power of action research to elevate teacher understanding and increase cognitive abilities. The participants spoke of the Music instructor as not having provided enough creative activities, not challenging them enough. The Issues in Education and in Art course provided an instructor who augmented theoretical readings with teaching practice that they stated was exemplary (e.g. the instructor’s manner of leading the discussion). The difficulty in providing instructors for the Graduate Diploma program who can combine academic rigor with practical application is a challenge I will explore in greater detail in the following chapter. These three teacher participants have come a long way in their learning journey. I wonder how they will approach the cumulative statements required in their final portfolios?

## **July 2005: PROGRAM FEEDBACK FROM FINE ARTS COHORT**

This survey was created by Field Programs and administered at the end of the two- year program. Responses were collated and summarized without additions or deletions. There were 21 respondents. Each statement given by the respondents has been identified and collated. Some of the statements were mentioned more than once. The complete survey is available in Appendix C.

### **In what ways has this Graduate Diploma program influenced your understanding of learning?**

- Developing a knowledge base. (10 )
- The importance of being a self-directed, life-long learner. (5)
- That questions are a part of the process of learning. (3)
- Learning must be student –led. (4)
- You need a risk free, safe environment. (5)
- Understanding that there are individual ways of learning and expressing. (4)
- Learning happens when you are engaged and open to new ideas. (5)
- Gained empathy for students (3)
- Understand the value of the Arts to learning. (4)

### **In what ways has this Graduate Diploma program influenced your understanding of teaching, of your teaching practice and of yourself?**

- I am more excited, enthused and confident in teaching the Arts (15)

- I have now established beliefs and philosophies about the Arts that reflect the readings done in classes. (4)
- I have changed the ways in which I connect with students. I'm letting students direct the process. (9)
- It has rejuvenated my teaching in all subjects. (4)
- I now reflect on what I am doing and think of ways in which to improve. (8)
- I have changed completely. I am a much better teacher than before. (7)
- I take many more risks as a teacher. (10)
- I have shifted from product to process. (4)
- I see the value of collaboration and working with like minded colleagues. (6)
- I see life as more of a journey. (3)
- I now see myself as an artist. (5)
- This course was central to my decision to move schools and join a Fine Arts School. (1)

**What elements of the program have been particularly helpful to you and should be retained?**

- The visual Art course. (14)
- The issues in education course.(12)
- The Dance/Drama course.(8)
- The Arts in Community course. (5)
- The help of the mentors. (4)

### **What elements of this program should be changed?**

- The music course. (16)
- Inconsistencies in portfolio and mentor expectations. (6)

### **A few reflections**

I have chosen to include the data from the Field Programs' program evaluation to obtain data from the entire cohort that might corroborate what I have learned from my three participants. I do acknowledge that some of the questions posed by Field Programs are leading and may have skewed responses. Later, I will identify which responses coincide with those of my participants and which are different.

The following elements of the program were indicated as being the most valued:

- acquisition of a knowledge base
- more excitement and confidence in teaching the Arts
- taking more risks; the utilization of reflection in practice
- letting students take control of the direction of the lesson.

These elements were also articulated by the three participants as being central to their learning in their Graduate Diploma program.

The two courses in the program that were indicated to be the most appreciated were the Visual Art course and the Issues in Education in the Arts course. The instructors for both these courses had significant experience in teaching adults. The course that proved to be most problematic was the Music course. Most respondents articulated that it was not the

subject matter that was unhelpful, but the choice of instructor and the instructor's choice of pedagogy. Several indicated that they felt the instructors for a Graduate Diploma course, should not only be master teachers, but also teachers who are versed in working with adult learners (Field notes, July 2005). Again, as discussed previously in this chapter, the three participants in my study expressed similar feelings.

The importance of understanding the components of andragogy as articulated earlier by Jalongo, Meizerow and others, will be addressed more specifically in the following chapter, when I speak about challenges inherent in providing consistent and rigorous material in a Graduate Diploma program.

### **July 7, 2005: The Final Portfolio Sharing.**

*We are not, any of us, to be found in sets of tasks or lists of attributes; we cannot be defined or classified. We can be known only in the singular unfolding of our unique stories within the context of everyday events.*

*Vivian Gussin Paley*

These interviews took place in the library of a district school where each of the key participants was to share her final portfolio with her appointed mentor. The responses in quotes are verbatim (as recorded by video and later transcribed). The interviews were separate and were videotaped by a videographer while I made field notes. I have chosen to present these final interviews in a narrative style. It is my intention that this style of presentation will aid the reader in discerning the voices of the participants.

## **JENNY'S STORY**

Prior to the portfolio share, Jenny shares with me her anticipation. She has dressed as a character and will engage in role-play to deliver her understandings. She is excited and says that this best embodies what she has learned: she is taking a risk, she is engaging in art, and she has reflected on how best to creatively express her experience in the Graduate Diploma program.

Artezia Aficionado enters dressed in a large floppy hat and in a flowing, flowery dress. She apologizes for Jenny. Jenny has asked Aficionado to represent her. Aficionado says she has been communicating with Jenny for some time now and believes that she can adequately convey the depth and breadth of Jenny's experience in the Graduate Diploma Program. She brings out of a large satchel, the following items:

- a beautifully bound booklet which contains several letters that document the different stages of what she calls her "voyage of discovery"
- several hand made postcards which also help to document her journey
- two water colors painted by Jenny. One is a painting of a forest, with lots of greens and abstract shapes. The other is a more representational watercolor of a birch tree and a lake. These are paintings completed by Jenny during the program and represent her return to her previous love of Visual Art.
- an original acrylic painting she has completed which she says represents her voyage. This painting is larger than the others and has a sea of vibrant blue with a triangular shaped boat in the foreground. The boat is tossing on the waves and

is surrounding by swirling black circles that are entwined with the words quest and discovery. In the background is a solid, yellow pyramid.

***What do you know (if anything) about the Arts that you didn't know before?***

“There are no right or wrong answers. There is always another perspective from which to see around us. I want to teach the language of the Arts to students. I am excited about Art and I wanted my students to be excited too.”

***What skills in the Arts (if any) have you learned ?***

“I have learned to trust yourself. The golden opportunity you are seeking is within yourself. I learned that you need to experience the Arts in order to teach them. I think I always knew that, but it is clearer now. That context is important. I can't quite remember the quote from John Berger. But because of this, I have a new appreciation of rap and graffiti. I know that I need to do, to learn. I know the importance of building an Arts vocabulary in students. I'm using criteria more. I tend to think outside the box, I learned that about myself. The loss of control, learning to give up control, let students take control of learning, that was all huge for me.”

***Do you feel differently about the Arts in general now? Or about a specific art?***

“That the Arts are a truly an empowering place. I want students to feel empowered and accomplished.”

***Has your teaching in the Arts changed? Has your teaching in other areas changed?***

“I am a changed teacher from being on the sea of fine Arts. I have begun to change the way in which I teach art. That is the thing about change. It sneaks up on me and then you feel the transformation. I’ve changed in so many ways. I’ve changed my teaching by giving my students context. My lessons have changed from simple to more complex. For example, after the seminar in May, the portraits of my students became more layered. I use an art journal. I have taken huge risks. I started painting again. And the biggest risk was working on the opera with my students. That was not something I was comfortable with. I know it is a sign of strength to go to others. I long for true collaborative teaching. This year I had guests come into class and observed them teach and see where they were going. I felt it was courageous to have them in the classroom. One of my goals will be to work together with other teachers. I must learn to trust that everything will work out. To embrace the ambiguity. I have realized that my students came with baggage just as I was coming into the class with baggage. I am still struggling with giving myself permission to give up perfection.”

***Can you pinpoint any specific area or process in the program that may have contributed to this change (if any)?***

(Jenny names the first instructor in her program). “He modeled the process of nurturing. He was such a positive instructor. The more I created, the more creative I seemed to become. The Pass/Fail aspect of the program taught me how to mark. Not to judge only student work but to value the process of the work.”

*Final Impressions: What would you like me to say about the program?*

“This journey is never ending. I have some sense of excitement and confidence and anticipation for the new journey. I have learned to let go.”

Afficianado then proceeded to read from the letters she had written to Jenny, which detailed her experiences in the program, her successes and challenges. The letters and her painting of the ship upon tossing seas were her final portfolio, her representation of her journey in the “sea of the Arts” (Field notes, 2005).

### **Sarah's Story**

Sarah enters the library with a medium size box. She smiles at me and sits down, eager to begin.

#### ***What do you know (if anything) about the Arts that you didn't before?***

“Fine Arts is just the vehicle for the learning. I took a trip to Europe this summer with my family. And before when we went to museums, I would race through the gallery. Sort of with the idea, well I must say I've seen it. This time I went specifically to see “Night Watch” (Rembrandt). And it meant so much to me to actually see the painting that I had read so much about.”

#### ***What skills in the Arts (if any) have you learned?***

“ That questioning is part of the process. The vocabulary is a large part of the skill. You need the vocabulary to be able to talk about the Arts and to take the lesson to the next level. I've learned about the elements and principles of Art and what that means in terms of lesson planning. I've learned that I can sing and dance in front of my peers. This was the biggest risk taking for me”.

#### ***Do you feel differently about the Arts in general now? Or about a specific art?***

“I feel more confident. More sure of my lessons. More creative. Look at my portfolio. I would never have had the knowledge or courage to build something that says so much about who I am”.

***Has your teaching of the Arts changed? Has your teaching in other areas changed?***

“ I take more time with things. I don’t worry about making a mess or time constraints. I’m not worried about having finished Art projects to put up on the wall.”

***Can you pinpoint any specific area or process in this program that may have contributed to this change (if any)?***

“Michael’s classes. Working with the community and learning to ask for help and to share ideas. Finding support from others. The convenience of the course sites in my district was helpful. I learned so much more about myself. About how I’ve changed my teaching. How easy it is to get into a rut.”

***Final impressions: What would you like me to say about this program?***

“I never would have thought that I’d be thinking of myself as an artist. But I do. “

Sarah walks me through her portfolio. It is a box with a personal collage on the lid. In between the pictures are words that she says represents stages of her personal growth. These words are; questions, elements, risks, context, process versus product, integration, confidence, and self-directed learning. Off the front of the box, all by itself on the side, is the word “Music”. Inside the box are mementoes of her work in the program, including her previous portfolios. She points out that her first two portfolios are very simple, and the front of the folders are solid, dark colors. Her third portfolio is a riot of color and she smiles as she shows how this portfolio is more vibrant and visually

interesting. She has included samples of her own art, pictures of her students in her classroom. She has made postcards to indicate different stages of her journey that reflect the words on the front of her box. She recounts her achievements and laughs at her worries and beginnings. One of her most important artifacts she claims, is her picture of herself singing and dancing in her final performance for her Drama/Movement class. She thinks the song title is appropriate “Don’t laugh at me”. Her last item is a copy of the SFU UPASS (a compulsory bus pass that students had to pay for but rarely used). This copy has been edited by Sarah to have no expiry date. She states that this indicates that the journey for her is continuing (Field notes, 2005).

Sarah hugs me as she leaves and hands me a note that contains an expression of her gratitude for my involvement with her journey.

### **Barb's Story**

Barb enters the library a little agitated. The mentor has been falling behind and she is afraid that we won't have the time to finish.

#### ***What do you know about the Arts (if anything) that you didn't before?***

“Now I do feel artistic. Now I want to reach all the learners, not just the artistic ones. I didn't know that anyone can do art. You care about Art. It's not just something you do”.

#### ***What skills in the arts (if any) have you learned?***

“ I am so much more aware of language. I know there are many ways to access your creativity. Many different entry points. I've learned I am an artist”.

#### ***Do you feel differently about the Arts in general now? Or about a specific art?***

“I'm looking at things in an artistic way. I'm looking at galleries. My family says I've totally changed. That because of my enthusiasm about the Arts, they are more aware. Our conversations around the dinner table continue to be so amazing. My daughters have totally picked up on my passion and are so supportive. They say that they are seeing things differently now”

#### ***Has your teaching of the Arts changed? Has your teaching in other areas changed?***

“ I have some really nice art lessons now. In my class, we sing all the time. Music has come back into my teaching. Drama games we play as a matter of course. It's part of my

repertoire. That is totally new. I never would have done that before. I think the flavor of my classroom has changed. The kids are more at ease with each other. There is more community building.”

***Can you pinpoint any specific area or process in this program that may have contributed to this change (if any)?***

“The process of the program. The courses that most effectively balanced the theory and practice components: Visual Art, Dance and Drama. Teachers in the program who role model. The ones who were secure in the belief that this kind of learning works well. That this learning is self-guiding.”

***Final impressions: What would you like me to say about this program?***

“This program was no less powerful than the first one. It was equally life changing. The format of the field study program is life changing. It allows you to grow in leaps and bounds. It is important to remember you are a learner. You need to start where you are and keep going forward.”

Barb shares with me her portfolio. It is in the form of a scrapbook and contains memorabilia from her journey in the course. Each section begins with a title page indicating an area of growth. In the section titled “Confidence”, there is a picture book she has painted with scenes depicting the seasons. There are samples of lessons, pictures of her students holding up their art, photographs of herself in class, as well as samples of her own art. She states that she is proud of her work and tells me that this course was

instrumental in helping her to fight a life threatening illness. Over the past year, Barb was diagnosed with kidney disease and has been through a strict diet regime and finally dialysis. She is waiting for surgery. She says that this program gave her strength and a reason to continue working. I ask her if she can pinpoint one specific reason this course was so meaningful. She replies “The people. I wanted to continue to be part of the community. I missed days at school, but I never missed a class” (Field notes, 2005).

### **A few reflections**

Over the course of the two years, these three participants have demonstrated powerful connections between the experiences provided by the Graduate Diploma in Arts education and their own teaching and learning. As evidenced in the documentation provided in this chapter, all three teachers have indicated that they have changed both professionally and personally. They have articulated changes in their teaching (ways of questioning, lesson planning for creativity, allowing for student led lessons) and in their personal understanding of the Arts and of their own artistic abilities. I too have changed in the course of this study. As the program progressed, I learned to articulate my questions in our interviews more clearly and to get the relevant question and answer period completed at the beginning of our interview time, in order to allow for the digressions and conversations which grew as our relationships developed. The data that has been reported in this document is the relevant data in its entirety. I chose not to include the casual conversations which were evidence of the growing relationship between researcher and participant, but not pertinent to the purposes of the study. These

choices follow the advice of Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) and I include their caution as a disclaimer, “Transcriptions inevitably lose data from its original encounter. Therefore it is unrealistic to pretend that the data on transcripts are anything other than interpreted data. (Cohen, et.al. p. 281). As we continued to meet, I grew to know the participants in greater detail. I watched closely when I saw one dominating the conversation, and noted in my journal the first time Sarah interrupted a conversation to interject her opinion (Field notes, July 2004). I continued to be cautious about imposing my own understandings on the comments of the participants (as articulated by Meyerhoff, 1978) and reminded myself about the dangers of idealizing either participants or their reactions. I tried at all times to keep my own biases and judgments separate from the recording of the data.

In the next chapter it is my intention to look more closely at the findings of this data, draw together some of the underpinning foundations and extrapolate a few possibilities for future educational consideration.

## **EPILOGUE: UNDERSTANDINGS, EXTRAPOLATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS**

*The Arts are among the resources through which individuals recreate themselves. The work of art is a process that culminates in a new art form. That art form is the recreation of the individual. Recreation is a form of re-creation. Those of us who have worked in the Arts contribute to the development of human consciousness and can feel a sense of pride that our legacy is one that attempts to engender life at its most vital level. The Arts make such vitality possible. They are sources of deep enrichment for all of us.*  
(Elliot Eisner, 2002, p. 241)

### **What have I learned?**

And so, I come to the end of the journey. The three teachers in my study have completed their program and earned their Graduate Diploma in Arts Education. Jenny is married and living (and teaching) out of the country. Sarah continues to teach in her district and continues to work comfortably in Visual Art with her students. Barb, after successful kidney surgery, is back at school where she teaches her elementary students with an abundance of Music, Drama and Visual Art lessons integrated into the curriculum.

I began my journey with many questions:

1. How have participants' knowledge, skills and attitudes in relationship to the Arts, as documented in the experiences of three teachers over the length of their participation in the Exploring the Arts, Graduate Diploma Program, changed? Is there evidence of change?
2. How have participants' views of teaching, and their views of themselves as educators, as documented in the experiences of three teachers over the length of

their participation in the Exploring the Arts program, changed? Is there evidence of change?

3. What program experiences may have contributed to any documented changes?

After two years of interviews, observations, and conversations, what (if any) answers to these questions can I conclude? Of what am I confident? This last question is (of course) the hardest. I'll begin with pulling together the understandings I have developed to my first questions.

As documented in the collection of data compiled in the last chapter, Barb, Jenny and Sarah have shown evidence of change in their attitude toward the Arts. All three have described a growth in artistic knowledge, skill and appreciation. During the course of our interviews, these teachers have stated that they have become better visual artists (Sarah and Barb), that they have learned to appreciate the Arts in new and more profound ways (Sarah, Barb and Jenny), and that they have acquired new vocabulary for communicating and understanding the Arts (Sarah, Barb and Jenny). These changes were further evidenced in their final portfolios. The acquisition of these skills mirrors the skills developed by students immersed in an Arts curriculum as described by Gallas (1994) and closely parallel the three tiers of learning outcomes as articulated by Eisner (1999) as previously discussed. I contend that Eisner's direct outcomes of skills and knowledge acquisition as outlined in Tier One, are the Visual Art skills that Barb and Sarah stated they have developed. Barb and Sarah described themselves as better artists. All three of

the participants state that they have developed regular teaching patterns that incorporate Arts vocabulary and strategies. For example, Jenny's repetition and practice in Visual Art translated into her language Arts classes (Field notes, 2005).

Tier Two skills are described in terms of understanding the historical and social context of a piece of art. All three teachers have stated that context has become important to them and has influenced their aesthetic appreciation of Arts in general. The courses called Issues in Education in the Arts, and Arts in the Community appear to have had a profound effect on their perception and understanding of Art, and their understanding of the importance of the historical and social context of Arts (Field notes, 2004). These changes also echo suggestions previously made by Greene (1995) about how exposure to the Arts can change individual perceptions and influence understandings of the world in which we live. They provide an illustrative example of E.F.Kaelin's statement:

to exclude the Arts from the curriculum of our schools is to deprive ourselves of an obvious social good- a wider range of citizens capable of whatever kind of behavior is permitted by heightened sensitivity, imagination and the depths of feeling experienced under conditions of perceptual control (as cited in *Aesthetics and Art Education*, Smith and Simpson, 1991, p.169).

When I first described Eisner's Tier Three outcomes, I said they would depend on the individual's embracing and understanding their journey in the Arts. I believe that all three of these participants have provided evidence that they have utilized a transference of skills (originally learned in the Arts) to other areas of their teaching and to their personal lives. Jenny took a risk and created an opera with her students (during her Field Study following her Movement and Drama course), forcing her to work in the areas of Music and Drama, which she stated were not her comfort zones. Sarah and Barb

started changing their curriculum time- table so that the Arts could be taught during more prominent times in the day, allowing for greater instruction and implementation time. All three teachers reported that they used more Arts based vocabulary and their students were using and learning these words as well. Sarah and Barb found themselves integrating the Arts into more areas within the curriculum: Math and Music, Visual Art and Music, Drama and Language Art. Jenny used this understanding of integrating the Arts into other areas of the curriculum as the basis and justification for her opera unit. Barb and Sarah, who were apprehensive and uncomfortable with their own ability to teach Visual Art, became much more accomplished and comfortable with the subject. Sarah reported that she was becoming known as the “teacher who does Art” (Field notes, 2004). While doing their first Field Study, Sarah learned that the making of Visual Art was “messy and time consuming” (she was doing a print making unit). By the end of the two years, Sarah had determined how to organize a Visual Art lesson so that the students were doing the clean up and the organization was far less intimidating and complicated. I contend that this is evidence that Sarah has changed an aspect of her teaching practice. She has developed organizational skills as well as a disposition toward letting go of overt control over her students. Barb stated that she had brought Music back into her classroom and that she was having her students sing and chant in ways that she didn’t think she was capable of this late in her career. She stated that there was much more discussion in her classes, and a greater feeling of “family” or community, that the students were “looking out for one another” (Field notes, 2005). What follows is a quote from an emailed response from Barb in response to the following question posed in the final survey: *Has your teaching changed since you have begun your Graduate Diploma in the Arts?*

My visual Art program now consists of art appreciation, teaching the elements and principles of art, rather than the individual stand alone projects, I can see my program developing students' artistic abilities and understandings. I regularly include artist studies and students are always talking about how proud they are of their art. I use "gallery walks" throughout my lessons to encourage students to see what others are doing and most art projects are now in "design problem" format so that each student's work looks quite individualized, rather than all looking similar (as was the case in the past.) My dance program now consists of Creative Dance rather than the step-by-step teaching of the past and drama has become part of my daily/weekly activities, rather than a single Story Theatre unit that I used to do once a year.

(Taken from the final survey, July 2005. See Appendix A).

All of the teachers expressed greater self-confidence in their abilities to teach the Arts and to create Art. But there is also evidence of change beyond each teacher's individual classroom practice. Although Barb had always considered herself to be an advocate of the Arts, she found herself learning the guitar after the Music course and now brings the guitar into the classroom on a regular basis. Sarah said that she was never "good at art", but now calls herself an artist. She states that she has a lot of confidence in her ability to teach Art and that confidence is demonstrated in the superior Visual Art projects that her students produce. Sarah danced with her group in front of her peers at the conclusion of the Movement and Drama course, an accomplishment she says she never could have imagined. Jenny, who had stopped painting when she began teaching, began painting again. She had the confidence to present her final portfolio in "role" by adopting the fictional character of Artesia Aficionado (Field notes, final interview, 2005).

All three teachers expressed a deeper awareness of the Arts and a greater appreciation for Art. Jenny and Barb talked about going to art galleries and how they

saw graffiti in a different way. Jenny and Sarah pointed out that they were seeing “art” everywhere (Field notes, 2004). Sarah described a family visit to Europe during which she specifically went to a museum to see a specific piece of art. Barb said her family conversations have changed and that the Arts are now a topic for discussion around the dinner table (Field notes, final interview, 2005).

These pieces of evidence and others listed elsewhere in this document indicate that the three participants have changed in their understanding and practice of the Arts. I contend that these changes reflect the content of the program, the curriculum of the Arts.

My last general question was to try to identify what were the program components that facilitated these changes. As articulated in the final portfolios and in the final program evaluations administered by Field Programs (July, 2005), the teachers involved in this Graduate Diploma indicated that the first course, Issues in Education in the Arts, was highly appreciated and of significant influence (Field notes, 2004). The purpose of this course is to lay the foundation for the program. It is meant to provide the initial environment for building a community of learners, create a base for academic achievement (with the inclusion of course readings covering topics such as aesthetics, advocacy, historical and social commentary on the Arts) and provide a role model for teachers to emulate as they engaged in working in an area of the curriculum that for some, is unfamiliar territory. All three participants cited this class as being fundamental to their learning. This class also rated among the highest (in terms of relevance and appreciation) in the final program survey administered by Field Programs to the entire

cohort. Sarah and Barb pointed out that the way the instructor of this class led discussions, encouraged them to change their teaching practice to include similar dialogical experiences for their students (Field notes, final interview, 2005). I would argue that this is an example of Shöen's theoretical concept of the "hall of mirrors" (Shöen, 1987). Barb and Sarah literally mirrored the interactive style of their instructor as they (in turn) instructed their own students.

In addition to setting the foundation for the program with a dynamic, theoretical base, I contend that the programmatic structure of the Graduate Diploma was also helpful in facilitating teacher acquisition of knowledge and skills. The Graduate Diploma program is configured to set out or introduce a topic or curricular area, a field study is then implemented which encourages the learner to investigate a question related to this topic. This investigation takes place in his/her own classroom and is centered on an area of personal interest. This personal form of action research has been documented in other sections of this document to facilitate teacher change. As the field study continues, any questions, dilemmas or challenges that emerge are addressed at regular mentor meetings. These smaller groups of colleagues meet every six weeks or so and provide a sounding board for the participants in the program. These meetings also provide an avenue for reflection on participant action (a process I have earlier connected with Schön's work). These meetings also parallel the effective learning community parameters as articulated by Mezirow (1990), Lave and Wenger (1991), Jalongo (1991) and others. I believe that success in the Graduate Diploma is greatly enhanced by the deliberate combination of theory and

practice as articulated in the course configuration of Field Programs. The evaluation administered by Field Programs indicates that the mentor groups were one of the program elements participants identified as being helpful. The three participants in my study indicated that the choice of mentors was problematic (they mentioned the disparity in mentor assignments and expectations), but all three stated that the cohort model, learning together with a group of colleagues, making sense of the theory in subsequent class or group discussions, was very helpful to their understanding and growth (Field notes, 2005).

As reflection is a key component of the theory behind Field Programs, I looked for evidence of a reflective disposition being developed by the participants. As we have seen in the last chapter, and as evidenced in the remarks at the conclusion of their Graduate Diploma program, my participants mentioned that they felt they had become more reflective teachers and one (Jenny) indicated that she believed it was the process of combining special topics with the field study sessions which helped her to develop the habit of “thinking about what she was doing” (Field Notes, 2005). I would argue that this metacognitive awareness of her teaching practice also illustrates Schön’s (1987) connection between researcher-in-practice and teacher renewal. The understandings and emotions expressed at the end of the program (Field notes, final interview, 2005) indicate that all three participants had a renewed vigor about their teaching and increased confidence in their skills attributes which Schön contends accompany teacher reflection.

I would like to take a moment to look at the nature of these changes, these transformations. The literature involving transformative learning is extensive and there is

not the time nor space within the scope of this research to do it justice. I would like however, to mention the work of two specific scholars because I see the conditions that they articulate as being foundational to transformative learning, and I contend, are closely connected to some of the changes of the participants as already discussed. Jack Mezirow (1990) and subsequently Patricia Cranton (1996) have written on a particular understanding of transformative learning theory as it applies to adult education. While I will not go into the theory itself, I do think it is pertinent to note that the conditions listed as optimal for transformation to take place contain the components of self-directed learning and critical reflection as espoused by the components of the Arts Graduate Diploma. The opportunity to transform, to change, to shift your thinking about practice and self, exists within the structure of this program. I have seen, and I hope have documented some of these participant transformations within this document. I have heard my participants state that they have changed their teaching practices and that they view themselves as “different”. At the final portfolio share (July, 2005), Jenny came dressed as a character from her journal. She said that prior to completing this program, she would “never have had the courage to do something so dramatic and out there” (Field notes, July 2005). Barb stated very clearly that it was the personal connections, collegiality and the program which kept her focused and on track as she dealt with life threatening kidney disease. She often missed school, but never missed a program session (Personal communication, July 2005). Sarah was the most succinct. She said “I think of myself as an artist now” (Final interview, July 2005).

### **What are the challenges?**

When the process or program infrastructure of the Graduate Diploma program broke down (as evidenced in the responses to the Music course), there seemed to be a direct correlation between the quality of the instruction and the expectations (or lack thereof) for the accompanying field study. Two of the three participants in my study (and others as indicated in the final program evaluation), state that they were unhappy with the type of instruction in this class. Sarah felt that she didn't learn enough Music theory to be able to teach anything of substance in her field study (Field notes, 2005). I believe that this is an important lesson for Field Programs, and also for teacher education programs in general. Rigor, discipline and the elements of strong pedagogical instruction are necessary for participant growth. These conditions mirror the understandings Elliot Eisner articulated in his book *Arts and the Creation of Mind* (2002) where he asks for recognition and acknowledgment of the intellectual rigor demanded for artistic creation and within the boundaries of good teaching. I quote again Eisner's recommendations for strong teaching:

- engage student imagination
- master technical requirements (including subject knowledge and materials)
- provide constructive and supportive feedback from an aesthetic foundation
- model the language and skills of the art
- understand when to direct and when to sit back and allow for exploration
- know how to manage material distribution and class organization
- set a problem that allows for personal interpretation and clarity of focus
- make scope and sequence clear, set up scaffolding learning opportunities.

(Eisner, 2002, p. 52-56)

All three of my participants agreed that the first course (Issues in Education and in Arts) challenged them the most academically, and that issues raised in the course Arts in the Community (E.g. What is graffiti?), continued to be influential in their thinking about Visual Art (Field Notes, February, 2005). However, they also expressed the belief that the practicality of the methods courses was welcomed when taken in context with the everyday demands of their teaching professions. And therein lies another dilemma for Field Programs. How do you design a program of study that maintains the academic rigor and accommodates the intense physical and emotional demands of full time teaching? It is my opinion, based on the evidence and documentation of the past two years, that the Graduate Diploma has made a strong attempt to serve those two masters. By employing faculty members who embody a strong ethos for practice as well as a depth of theoretical knowledge, participants are exposed to role models for their own emerging practices. When engaging practicing teachers to instruct the methods courses, once again, the courses that appeared to be the most successful (as indicated on the final surveys) were the ones conducted by master teachers who not only knew their discipline, but who could also work effectively with adult learners. The element of academic challenge appears to be necessary in these courses as well (Final survey, 2005). I would caution Field Programs therefore, to continue to remain vigilant in maintaining the academic rigor in the program, as the teachers inevitably succumb to the tyranny of the urgent which is regrettably always present within their classrooms.

The recruitment and selection of the mentors is also a critical part of the equation. Sarah mentioned (Field notes, 2004), that she sometimes resented her mentor assignments and didn't see the connection to the work she was doing in her class. I contend that if the academic rigor is continued in the courses, the mentor component could be monitored to ensure that this element of the program remains one of a sounding board for ideas, facilitation for practice and provider of educational resources. The temptation for some mentors may be to morph into an instructor role, thereby providing possible dissonance with instruction already given in previous courses. As previously mentioned, the final program evaluation indicates that there was a difference in the expectations and instructional abilities of the mentors. This caused some disparity and confusion among the mentor groups (Final program evaluation, 2005). The need for that collegial, dialogical space has been documented in the literature previously cited by Jalongo, Sparks-Langer, Colton and others. I would argue that monitoring that space is crucial for an effective program.

One of the components of the Field Programs infrastructure that does appear to be working extremely well is the cohort model. The opportunity to work with a group of colleagues who teach within the same district and to take classes within that same geographical areas (thereby reducing travel time and stress) was almost unanimously appreciated by the participants (Final program survey, 2005). When asked on the final program evaluation survey if they thought they had sufficient access to individuals and Field Programs in general, 93% of the cohort surveyed indicated that they had felt sufficiently supported (see Appendix C). I believe this is strong support for the original intent of Field

Programs, which was to bring quality in-service education to the school districts within the province (Field programs promotional brochure, undated).

As seen on that final survey as administered by Field programs (July, 2005: see Appendix C) the majority of responses indicate that risk-taking, reflection, working collaboratively and thinking creatively were all skills that the teachers felt had transferred to their teaching practice. This corroborates the statements documented in the final portfolio interviews with my three participants. In my opinion, this indicates that overall, this structure and program works well for the majority of participants.

### **What does Field Programs have to say?**

I would be remiss if I didn't include the voices of some of the current practitioners and architects of the Field Programs at Simon Fraser University. I sat down with the Coordinator of the program (identified as SA) and the Faculty Associate for the Fine Arts diploma (identified as KN) to ask for their responses to some of my questions. The interview took place in my office at SFU and the responses were recorded in field notes and later transcribed. This was an informal interview. Only the responses to the pertinent questions were recorded. The date for this interview was February 2007. I have included this interview not only to record the opinions and understandings of the current administrators of the program but also to see if their statements support those of my participants.

***Do the Arts promote a transformational aspect to teachers' practice?***

KN: “I see the Arts clearly as a facilitator of transformation of practice. It makes assessment a different kind of process. Teachers go from ‘we can’t assess a child’s art’-to- ‘oh, yes we can’ because they are taught the skills with which to set criteria. Like perspective and line. They learn to perform themselves and this had led to them seeing performance in other areas of the curriculum.”

SA: “They learn to see reading or math as performance. Sometimes they actually restructure their teaching approach to other areas of the curriculum” (I relate Barb’s experience of teaching Math through Music).

KN: “They develop different notions of identity. What do they know? What do they think? These are all the beginning questions as they start their inquiry. The curriculum becomes part of the social context of the program that encourages them to examine what they believe and value about the Arts. Once they know the value of a subject, then they can transfer some of that knowledge onto another subject.”

SA: “The Arts are the medium through which to get at the language of understanding their own values and beliefs about education.

***So what is special about the Arts? Is this curricular area different from other areas of the curriculum?***

SA: “We use the Arts as a medium to teach other curricular areas. Partly because of the influence of the multiple intelligences theory (Howard Gardner) and partly because we advocate for a variety of different ways of representing your learning through the individual portfolios. The portfolios are often extremely aesthetic and that’s in every Graduate Diploma, not just the Arts.”

KN: “Curriculum integration is a natural in the Arts. You start with a stereo-typical unit of building pyramids in social studies but that changes and progresses as you learn Arts techniques. The units become more substantive and profound. The Arts instructors demonstrate different ways in which to use the Arts. You can study the Arts specifically for their own sake (learning the skills of the Arts), you can learn about different art forms (working on understanding the context of the Arts), you learn how to integrate the Arts (to work with other areas of the curriculum), you understand how important community building is to the Arts (in order to take risks and push yourself further), and how to manage those Arts classrooms (the social aspect of the Arts). You don’t see other curricular areas doing all of those things.”

***So, if the Arts are unique in these ways, is there a difference in the final program evaluations? Do Arts program evaluations differ greatly from other curricular programs?***

SA: “No. All the teachers who “get it”, feel that they have transformed. The difference is that in the Arts programs, they feel that they have been personally transformed. They are

much less afraid. They become personally intrigued by the arts and begin to practice the arts personally”. (I relate Barb starting to play guitar).

KN: “I believe there is more of an opportunity for personal transformation in the Arts. It’s more emotional. They get to discover another side of themselves. They get to find their inner artist.”

SA: “For some teachers, an Arts advocacy is developed. Because of the fringe nature of the Arts in the curriculum, this is their first opportunity to really get acquainted with the power of the discipline and it can change them. Three teachers have moved to the Masters of Educational Practice program, after completing their Graduate Diploma, and their final papers were all on advocacy.”

KN: “Teachers see the transformation in their students when they engage in the Arts. They see that a powerful way to learn is through their senses. This is not easily done in other curricular areas”

SA: “Teachers report a realization of other skills and strengths in their students. By using different (perhaps broader, more holistic) benchmarks, the students can achieve in ways that weren’t accessible before. For example, the kid who can’t read but who is brilliant at Art. We have wept at some of teachers’ final presentations which have showcased some of these stories.”

KN: “One of the key learning areas is a huge and generalized one. They learn that they can let go. That they don’t have to be in control all of the time. And that can transfer to other areas of the curriculum.

SA: “This is also a hugely popular Graduate Diploma. It has been offered 12 times since 2000. More times than any other curricular area (except TLITE).”<sup>13</sup>

### **A few reflections**

I would argue that the statements made by the current administrators of the Field Programs Graduate Diploma support many of the findings of this study. These educators state that they believe the Arts Graduate Diploma promotes both personal and professional transformation. They indicate that the journey of the Arts program is more emotional than other curricular areas and that this program is one of the most popular offerings for Field Programs. They also state that they believe that all Graduate Diploma programs afford some measure of transformation. I contend that this supports my statement that the programmatic structure of the program (which is central to all of the curricular offerings) assists in the transformational journey of the participants.

### **Of what am I confident?**

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<sup>13</sup> TLITE: Teaching and Learning in an Information Technology Environment

In a recent study of teacher education (*Studying Teacher Education*, 2006), editors Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Ken Zeichner state that there is very little research on subject specific curriculum courses and the impact on teacher education (except in the area of Mathematics). They see the implementation of subject specific courses (or methods courses) as being complex and unique sites where instructors work collaboratively with students in identifying teachers' beliefs, teaching practices and identities. They describe the implementation of teaching practices (as identified in methods courses) into teacher classrooms as being neither linear nor simple. The transference of theory to practice is supported when the classroom ethos is congruent with the teaching practices advocated by the course instructors (Cochran-Smith, Zeichner, 2006). Although Cochran-Smith and Zeichner are speaking about pre-service teacher candidates and teacher education programs, there is a connection with the work of Field Programs and in-service education. The connections spoken of here between theory and practice, the development of new teaching practices, beliefs and even identities is made a little clearer because the teachers are transferring these skills into their own classroom. They have the opportunity to create their own teaching agendas (within the confines of the expected curriculum, the parameters of the school calendar and the dictates of the parental and student community). It is not a perfect scenario, but it is an opportunistic one. If a participant in the journey of the Arts Graduate Diploma embraces the experience, takes the risk to try something new, squeezes out the time to reflect on his/her own success and failures and engages in honest conversations with colleagues, changes can and will be made. I am confident that the programmatic structure of the Graduate Diploma program at SFU facilitates these conditions. I am

equally certain that in the case of the Arts, the changes are deeper and more profound, not because the Art are better than another curricular area, but because they fundamentally exist in the emotions. An emotional connection is a strong connection. As articulated by the current administrators of the Arts program, participants in the Arts regularly exhibit intense, personal reactions to their learning. They also get the opportunity to practice these new- found artistic skills in other areas of the curriculum, something that is more difficult in other curricular areas. It is much easier to incorporate a dramatic presentation into Social Studies than it is to find a way to bring Math into Language Art. My study has also indicated that the Arts tend to transform students personally both in terms of how they view the world (e.g. seeing graffiti differently) and how the Arts become part of their lives outside of the classroom (e.g. going to galleries, taking up painting). I'm not sure how this transformation could happen in another curricular area.

### **What are my recommendations?**

Teacher educators of both the pre-service and in-service varieties could take heed of the lessons learned by Field Programs and the participants in this study.

- Create an instructional infrastructure that combines theory and practice with ample opportunity for reflection and conversation.
- Provide experiences that allow participants to learn new skills, practice them in supportive environments, and discuss their progress in small groups of collegial colleagues.

- Employ instructors who have strong theoretical knowledge and can embody the teaching practice, and who have experience working with adult learners.
- Encourage participants to represent their learning in on-going documentation and in a variety of ways.
- Ensure that the academic rigor is maintained and that the intellectual capacities continue to be challenged.
- Provide abundant opportunities for learners and teachers to work together, to openly communicate and to engage in co-constructing their learning.

It has been my pleasure and my privilege to have worked with these teachers and to have followed their progress in their journey. It has of course, also been my journey. I know that I come away from this experience with a richer appreciation of the importance of the connection between theory and practice and with a stronger sense of the importance of the Arts in the education curriculum. I leave you with one last quote:

**“Is there not an art, a music and a stream of words that shalt be life, the  
acknowledged voice of life?”**

**William Wordsworth**

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## Appendix A

### Arts Diploma Survey

#### Identifying baseline understandings and feelings connected to the arts.

1. Identify any educational background you have in the arts. Identify any experiences (personal or educational) which have influenced your teaching practice in one or more of the arts. Please identify each/all of the arts.
2. Which (if any) of the arts are you most comfortable teaching? Why?
3. Which art form (if any) makes you most uncomfortable? Why?
4. What do you see as the value of arts education (if anything)?
5. What do you hope to achieve with the completion of this program?
6. Identify what (if anything) that intrigues you about the arts. Is there a specific reason you have chosen this particular graduate diploma?
7. How long have you been teaching?
8. What grade(s) do you teach?
9. Is this your first graduate diploma program?

Yes, I would be interested in participating further in this research \_\_\_\_\_

No, I will not be able to participate further in this research \_\_\_\_\_

Name: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Research Instrument (Final)**

**Identifying summative understandings and feelings connected to the arts.**

1. Identify any educational background you have in the arts prior to the beginning of this program. Which (if any) of the arts were you most comfortable teaching? Why?
2. Which art (if any) are you most comfortable teaching now? Identify any reasons why you think you may have gained in confidence and comfort in this art.
3. Which art form (if any) makes you most uncomfortable? Is this a change from when you began the course? Why are you uncomfortable teaching this art(s)?
4. What do you see as the value of arts education? Has this view changed or expanded?
5. What did you hope to achieve with the completion of this program? What have you achieved?
6. Has your teaching changed upon completion of this program? If yes, please identify how and if possible why.
7. Now that the program is completed, have your understandings and feelings about yourself as an artist changed?

**The following questions help me to determine demographics:**

8. How long have you been teaching?
9. What grade(s) do you teach?
10. Is this your first graduate diploma program?

## Appendix B

# Exploring Fine Arts Education

2003 – 2005

*The Graduate Diploma in Advanced Professional Studies in Education is a 30 credit hour program of study in courses at the 500 level for experienced teachers with a Bachelor's degree whose primary focus is classroom-based educational practice. It provides these teachers with an opportunity to engage in focused, sustained reflective inquiry into classroom practice. The Graduate Diploma is an alternative to degree programs offered at the Masters' level.*

*All courses are graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory. Evaluation is based on a cumulative demonstration portfolio referenced to established criteria, rather than on a comprehensive examination or thesis. Completion of the Diploma allows teachers to move from TQS category 4 (professional) to TQS category 5, or from category 5 to 5 +15 (in districts which have this salary category).*

### **EXPLORING FINE ARTS EDUCATION: LEARNING TIMELINE**

- **3-DAY SUMMER INSTITUTE 2 credits**  
(Foundations of Inquiry into Fine Arts Education)
- **SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 5 credits**  
(Issues in Education in the Arts)  
Field Studies: (Exploring the Fine Arts: Issues)
- **JANUARY-JUNE 6 credits**  
(Exploring the Fine Arts: Visual Arts)  
Filed Studies: (Exploring the Fine Arts: Visual)
- **SUMMER INSTITUTE I 4 credits**  
(Arts in the Community)

- **SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 5 credits**  
(Exploring the Fine Arts: Music)  
Field Studies: (Exploring Arts in the Community)
- **JANUARY-JUNE 6 credits**  
(Exploring the Fine Arts: Drama and Movement)  
Field Studies: (Exploring the Fine Arts:  
Music/Drama/Movement)
- **5-DAY SUMMER INSTITUTE 2 credits**  
(Reflections on Teaching and Learning)

The Graduate Diploma, Exploring Fine Arts Education, is intended to provide practicing teachers with a seamless, comprehensive professional development experience. Designed for both specialist and non-specialist teachers, K-12, the program aims to foster the following teacher competencies:

- 1. Reflect on and learn from experiences as a teacher/learner**
- 2. Make thoughtful educational decisions**
- 3. Demonstrate educational leadership**
- 4. Understand and respond to student diversity**
- 5. Value and practice collaborative learning**
- 6. Draw on community resources to support learning**

The Diploma interweaves different types of learning experiences, including: Special topics courses that examine issues related to teaching and learning in the arts. These courses explore curriculum and instructional practices in the area of Fine Arts, as well as the research, theories and pedagogical principles upon which these practices are based.

Advanced Field Studies where participants develop an inquiry plan around an issue or curricular area in Fine Arts education of particular importance to them. Participants implement the plan in their classrooms and critically reflect on growth and changes in their practice.

Topics of Inquiry will include:

- examining contemporary issues in Fine Arts
- examining the content of the BC Fine Arts curriculum
- designing learning activities in the Fine Arts strands of Music, Art, Drama and Movement, and integrating these strands
- designing learning activities that effectively integrate Fine Arts and other disciplines
- evaluating, creating and reflecting on relevant resource materials to implement Fine Arts curriculum
- exploring and using various strategies, styles of assessment and evaluation in the Fine Arts
- developing deeper understanding of personal artistic processes
- developing appreciation of the role of arts in the community and society

Baseline Portfolio Baseline Portfolio Baseline Portfolio Baseline Portfolio Working Portfolio

## Appendix C

Program: **Fine Arts II,**

Semester: OS-2 SS

**Simon Fraser University**

**Faculty of Education, Field Program**

**8888 University Drive Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6**

### **Program Feedback: End of Program**

Graduate Diploma programs are designed to create a seamless professional development experience which creates opportunities for participants to critically examine their practice over time. Please respond constructively to the following questions to assist us with program revision and development.

#### **In what ways has this graduate diploma program influenced.....**

your understanding of learning?

your understanding of teaching?

your practice?

your understanding of yourself?

your relationships with your colleagues?

What elements of this graduate diploma program have been particularly helpful to you and should be retained?

What elements of this graduate diploma should be changed? Why?

Other Comments:

## **Appendix D: DVD-Data**

The DVD attached forms a part of this work. It contains the final portfolio sharing as articulated in Act Four.