

Editorial

Tapestry: Art Education, Explorations and Critical Constructions

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In this non-themed issue of the *Canadian Review of Art Education (CRAE)*, we are very pleased to publish a book review and seven double-blind reviewed articles (each article had two reviewers). You will find the work of both Canadian and international art educators. Some authors are emerging scholars, while others are established academics.

The articles are arranged like a tapestry. If, at the center there are learners, teachers and art in classrooms (Pohio), then assessment of teaching and learning is woven throughout and alongside (Anderson & McLeod). The drape of the fabric is shaped by how teachers prepare for instruction (Etheridge), the professional development opportunities available (Trudel & Oliveira) and the strengths of teacher education programs (Lemieux). Central threads connect us to the contemplation of ideology, morality, and politically-motivated art education curricula (Fitch). Leavy (2017) argues that “arts-based research is a transdisciplinary approach to knowledge building that combines the tenants of the creative arts in research contexts” (p. 4), and the tapestry’s finishing edge, an arts-based account of the process of becoming a researcher, secures the whole cloth (Pickett).



Figure 1. Tapestry. Image includes material from 14 early childhood centres digitally remixed by Veronica Garcia Lazo and a derivative work of Richard Laschon, 2016 © 123RF.com

Lesley Pohio investigates the response of early childhood teachers to young children's cultural and ethnic diversity. Presenting the teacher participants' understandings of culture and ethnicity, as well as their interpretation of the complex ways children's artwork expresses their cultural and ethnic identities, the author concludes the visual arts are a vitally important means by which children can communicate and make visible their cultural ways of knowing.

Jennifer Anderson and Heather McLeod examine an educational programme in a provincial art museum complex. For teachers, the programme promoted observation and reflection. When assessing student achievement however, the data gathering method revealed tensions between the arts community and the notion of standardization. In response to this tension, the researchers defined achievement and measured the essential program goals of the curriculum ("21st century competencies"). They argue museum-based experiential programmes make a worthy contribution to educators' discussions about 21st century education policy.

Julie Etheridge inquires into the online resources and lesson contents that four Canadian art museums offer secondary school art teachers. Using the lens of a teacher/researcher, the author's content analysis highlighted how these materials presented differences in curriculum and fostered self-reflection in students. Etheridge argues that to better understand the relationship between the art museum and the school teacher, as well as to increase pedagogical possibilities, further research should be conducted.

Mona Trudel and Adriana de Oliveira explore a professional development program involving art teachers and pedagogical advisers of the Commission scolaire de Montréal (CSDM). The goal of the program was to promote the emergence of new practice approaches by supporting teachers to develop art projects that bring together contemporary art, intercultural education and students' cultural references. The authors located elements that facilitate the integration of intercultural dimensions in teaching visual arts. As well, they noted obstacles. They explain that in visual arts classes contemporary art appreciation can function as a pivot for intercultural dialogue.

Amélie Lemieux takes a narrative auto-ethnographic approach in an account of film, empathy, and teacher education. The author taught through film in a Canadian university course (French communication for English as a Second Language undergraduate pre-service teachers). Following the viewing of *Monsieur Lazhar* (2011), in-class discussions tended to focus on morals and values, specifically empathy and caring, in relation to the importance of embodying a "good teacher". Lemieux presents the implications of these discussions for teacher education.

Sebastien Fitch uses ideology, morality, Dewey, and activism as keywords in an argument for a critical re-examination of contemporary trends in art education which, the author explains, support the adoption of inherently politically motivated curricula. Examining the historical impact of postmodernism upon the fields of art and education, Fitch reasons that since art can serve as a conduit for ideology, a significant number of art educators blend their moral role as teachers with an impetus to communicate personal political beliefs.

Sarah Pickett contributes to growing knowledge about researcher identity development. Adopting arts-based research methods, including auto-ethnography and narrative performance can enhance readers' awareness and through performance-based frameworks and personal evocative writing the author weaves together theoretical positioning and specific interactions

while focusing on a collision of discourses. Vulnerability and critical reflection enabled Pickett's journey towards "becoming a researcher."

In her review of *Printopolis*, (2016), edited by Tara Cooper and Jenn Law, Haley Toll finds much to appreciate. Based on an international symposium hosted by Open Studio, Toronto's artist-run printmaking centre, the book is a compilation of diverse theoretical articles, transcribed interviews and print artwork from leading Canadian and American artists.

The continued creative strength of the arts in teaching, learning, and research requires multiple critical constructions and explorations. The writers whose work is published in this issue offer robust contributions to this on-going project. Our next issue of CRAE will focus on the theme of art and poetry. Please consider making a submission.

Heather McLeod, Editor-in-Chief, *The Canadian Review of Art Education*

References

Leavy, P. (2017). Introduction to arts-based research. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *Handbook of arts-based research*. (pp. 3-21). New York: Guilford.