

“cathARTic”: A re-contextualization of a doctoral journey

Dr. Liz Ashworth, Schulich School of Education, Nipissing University
liza@nipissingu.ca

What is “cathARTic”?

- ❖ mixed-media assemblage of dissertation pages, research notes, travel journal entries, images, memorabilia, ephemera, etc. (in progress)
- ❖ combination of arts-based and narrative inquiry to interrogate a doctoral experience (the personal journey within the research journey)
- ❖ visual representation of lived experience at University of Glasgow (2005-2010)
- ❖ title based on the OED definition of catharsis: “purgation; outlet to emotion afforded by drama or by free expression”
- ❖ reveals identities as artist, scholar, teacher, tourist, writer
- ❖ critical reflection, art-therapy tool, teaching aid, memory aid, communication piece, etc.
- ❖ created with Barone and Eisner (1997) in mind, with more of a visual arts “spin”

Barone and Eisner (1997): arts-based educational research is based on the presence of seven elements:

1. the creation of a virtual reality,
2. the presence of ambiguity,
3. the use of expressive language,
4. the use of contextualized and vernacular language,
5. the promotion of empathy,
6. the personal signature of the researcher/writer,
7. the presence of aesthetic form.

How was “cathARTic” constructed?

- ❖ base layer of 216 12” x 12” paper (scrapbook paper, maps, calendar images, etc.); colours based on a “mosaic” version of a photograph of artist/author
- ❖ typed dissertation with research notes/travel journals hand-written between its lines/around its figures and tables
- ❖ photographs taken by me or by my travel companions (permission to use)
- ❖ memorabilia (postcards, study weekend docs, graduation tickets, etc. to inspire a memory)
- ❖ ephemera (bottle labels, beer mats, boarding passes, subway ticket stubs, etc. to represent place/culture/etc.)

Note: the work, when finished, will be scanned and made into a “digital tapestry” with links to individual pages, full texts of dissertation/research notes/travel journals/related articles/etc.

Who is “cathARTic” for?

- ❖ the artist/author
- ❖ anyone who wants to know more about a doctoral experience and/or study abroad
- ❖ anyone who wants to know more about mixed media works, altered books, scrapbooks, etc. as formats for expression
- ❖ anyone who wants to know more about combining inquiry methods

A few helpful resources:

- Banks, M. (2001). *Visual methods in social research*. London, England: Sage.
- Barone, T., & Eisner, E. (1997). Arts-based educational research. In R. Jaeger (Ed.), *Complementary Methods for Research in Education* (2nd ed.), (pp. 73-116). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Bruner, J. (1987). Life as narrative. *Social Research*, 54, 11-32.
- Bruner, J. (1991). The narrative construction of reality. *Critical Inquiry*, 18, 1-21.
- Chilton, G. (2007). Altered books in art therapy with adolescents. *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*, 24(2), 59-63.
- Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience*. New York: Putnam.
- Diamond, C.T.P., & Mullen, C. (Eds.). (1999). *The postmodern educator: Arts-based inquiries and teacher development*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Dolphin, L. (Ed.). (1999). *Evidence: The art of Candy Jernigan*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.
- Irwin, R., & de Cosson, A.F (Eds.) (2004). *A/r/tography: Rendering self through arts-based living inquiry*. Vancouver, BC: Pacific Educational Press.
- Knowles, J.G., & Cole, A. (Eds.). (2008). *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kuipers, J. (2004). Scrapbooks: Intrinsic value and material culture. *Journal of Archival Organization*, 2(3), 83-91.
- Lowenstein, L. (1995). The resolution scrapbook as an aid in the treatment of traumatized children. *Child Welfare*, 74(4), 889-904.
- Pearse, H. (2007). Sketchbooks/workbooks/journals: All in a day's work. In R. Irwin, K. Grauer, & Emme, M. (Eds.), *ReVisions: Readings in Canadian Art Teacher Education*, 3rd ed., (pp. 224-231). Thunder Bay, ON: Canadian Society for Education Through Art.
- Pink, S. (2001). *Doing visual ethnography: Images, media and representation in research*. London, England: Sage.
- Richardson, L. (1997). Fields of play: Constructing an academic life. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2(1), 15-28.
- Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.), (pp. 923-948). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rose, G. (2006). *Visual methodologies: An introduction to the interpretation of visual materials* (2nd ed.). London, England: Sage.
- Shacklock, G., & Thorp, L. (2005). Life history and narrative approaches. In B. Somekh & C. Lewin (Eds.), *Research methods in the social sciences* (pp. 156-163). London, England: Sage.
- Tucker, S., Ott, K., & Buckler, P.B. (Eds.). (2006). An introduction to the history of scrapbooks. *The scrapbook in American life* (pp. 1-25). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- West, D., Quigley, A, & Kay, J. (2007). Memento: A digital-physical scrapbook for memory sharing. *Pers Ubiquit Comput*, 11, 313-328.
- Williams, K., & Lent, J. (2008). Scrapbooking as an intervention for grief recovery with children. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 3(4), pp. 455-467.