Heating Up Online Learning: Insights from a Collaboration Employing Arts Based Research/Pedagogy for an Adult Education, Online, Community Outreach Undergraduate Course

Joe Norris 1,* and Mary Gene Saudelli 2,*

1 Department of Dramatic Arts, Brock University, St. Catharines, ON L2S 3A1, Canada
2 Faculty of Professional Studies, University of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford, BC V2S 7M7, Canada
*Correspondence: jnorris@brocku.ca (J.N.); mary.saudelli@ufv.ca (M.G.S.)

Received: 2 May 2018; Accepted: 17 June 2018; Published: 25 June 2018

Abstract: This article examines a three-stage collaboration in the design and implementation of a community outreach online course for an adult education program at a Canadian university. The collaboration used a participatory arts-based pedagogy approach that is designed to evoke thought rather than prescribe meanings. This manuscript has been structured to parallel a script format with Act I reporting how a group of university drama students employed the ‘playbuilding’ research/pedagogical methodology to devise a series of tableaus and video vignettes that examined concepts of community development that would be used in the design of an online community outreach and adult literacy elective course. Act II argues for and provides the devised script as evidence (data) of student learning. Act III discussed how an adult education instructor designed the new course, incorporating the vignettes as a central component and what was observed from delivering the online course over several iterations. Embedded in the discussion were: the processes involved in both instructional environments; and an examination of the impact of the dramatic pedagogical approach in the digital environment, particularly in relation to transformation, meaning making, and community outreach. The insights, however, are not coded in an etic analytical style. Rather, the authors used an emic approach with themes embedded within the narrative structure. Given its collaborative nature, the co-authors employ a polyvocal format through which their individual voices are made explicit.

Keywords: community; adult education; transformation learning; arts-based approaches

1. Prologue: The Impetus and Introducing the Characters

Joe: This specific project evolved from an adult education meeting that Mary and I attended in the fall of 2012. I went on the advice of a dramatic arts colleague who believed that there might be some collaborative opportunities. She introduced me to the group, briefly explained my work and I extended an invitation to work with any in attendance who might be open to explore the use of drama as a pedagogical tool, an instrument for social change and/or as a research methodology. Two expressed interest and Mary was quick to follow up. We met to find common ground.

I outlined the nature of my work, explaining that it can be considered both a research methodology and pedagogical approach simultaneously. A director/actor/researcher/teacher (Norris 2018) facilitates groups of actors and/or non-actors (Boal 2002) exploring their lived experiences through telling of stories and their subsequent dramatization (Norris 2009). It most often takes an axiological focus with the participants examining a social issue that pertains to them. Bullying, prejudice, human sexuality, first-year university system, substance use/abuse, and relationships in the health...
care system are but a few. Over a few sessions they begin to construct a play, often a series of vignettes, that can be formed solely for themselves or intended for a wider audience. If presented to others, there is often a participatory element that employs a variety of ‘forum theatre’ (Boal 1979) techniques. Rohd (1998) encourages the creation of “activating scenes” where “people must want to effect change in what they see” (p. 97). Audience members can make suggestions from their seats and/or come on stage to try it themselves. There is potential that when audiences rewrite the play, they rewrite themselves, making its dissemination a pedagogical act.

The playbuilding approach that I take can fall under the umbrella term, ‘applied theatre’, (Prentki and Preston 2009; Prendergast and Saxton 2010). “Theatre for social change, popular theatre, interventionist theatre, drama in education, theatre for integrated rural development, participatory performance practices, process drama/theatre, prison theatre, theatre in health/education, theatre for development, theatre for conflict resolution/reconciliation” (Prentki and Preston 2009, p. 9) are but a few. Typically it takes a working ‘with’ approach in which all are considered collaborators. Those involved join the cast in becoming producers of knowledge (Freire 1986).

Mary: Besides discussing the theories underpinning playbuilding, Joe also provided examples of his previous work to experience playbuilding first-hand. I later attended a performance that Joe’s class, DART 3F93—Social Issues Theatre for Community Development—presented on themes found in the Blue Room (Hare 1998). It had a strong audience participation component and I saw potential in its structure for a new elective, ADED 3P41—Community Outreach and Adult Literacy—that I was designing.

Joe and I had another meeting exploring how his class might dramatize concepts and themes I planned to use in the design of this online elective course for our university’s Centre for Adult Learning and Community Outreach. I was curious as to how the pedagogy of this arts-based research approach would translate for meaning making in digital space.

Joe: So was I. By far, the majority of my over 70 applied theatre projects were live. This approach allowed for immediate audience interaction. While I have directed the creation of a few vignettes for video distribution (Norris and Theatre 1999, 2000, 2001), these were facilitated by others. I was not experienced in web facilitations and was exited to try a new approach, recognizing that audience participation would take a different form. Collaborating with Mary would provide that opportunity.

I had just received a grant to explore the possibilities of disseminating applied theatre projects online. The grant provided equipment and a videographer/editor to record performances but what needed to be created was an approach that would evoke meaningful discussions and interactions rather than didactic explanations. I was curious as to how this would play out without the traditional live ‘forum theatre’ format in which audience members directly interacted with the cast members. Since participatory theatre was not possible in this case, I welcomed Mary’s expertise with an online format to assist in this application. Bringing applied theatre to an online setting was new to me.

Mary: I have taught using online and hybrid approaches for many years and I am always seeking new ways to create engaging digital spaces for meaningful learning. I believe that online pedagogy should embody the principles that Kayler and Weller (2007) believe to be effective: building a community of practice (Wenger 2005); independent learning; making sense of theory; and understanding of self and discussion forum dynamics (Kayler and Weller 2007, p. 136). I am an advocate for adult education’s role in democratizing education, social justice, and building community. I was impressed with the vignettes from the student production, Who are We to Judge? which fostered discussions that problematized beliefs about sexuality. I believed that I could facilitate discussions applying the dynamics from dramatic pedagogies in the online elective that I was designing.

Joe: For the past 20-plus years, I have employed variations of playbuilding (Weigler 2002; Norris 2009; Perry et al. 2013) in the creation of now over seventy applied performance/workshop programs on a variety of social issues. We covered a myriad of topics including bullying in schools, violence in the workplace, human sexuality, substance abuse, the stigmas of mental health, and dealing with conflict. In most cases, these projects were created at the request of community members who had heard of our work and approached me with issues for us to explore. While I had understanding
of developmental aspects of applied theatre (Kidd 1982; Plastow 2014; Prentki 2015) I came into this project looking to learn more about community development in general.

Mary: As an adult educator, community, social justice advocate, and curriculum and course designer, I love the power of the story as pedagogy. I use stories in my teaching practice, regardless of format: in-person, hybrid or online. I believe the learning potential of story is transformative which has led me to embrace an approach to course design that emphasizes design based literacies and learning (Sheridan and Rowsell 2010) particularly as they relate to meaning making and real world transferability in learning. I define my approach as emphasizing narratives, case studies, and authenticity of resources and learning experiences (Saudelli 2015) and what these mean in relation to personally or collectively constructed meaning making. As I was thinking through the design of this course, I was highly attuned to the need to integrate various opportunities for learners to examine community outreach programs, issues, controversies, and processes through personally relevant, storied approaches. My intent was to allow learners to examine community outreach in ways that could foster change in self and self in relation to community in a critical and knowledgeable way (Kurantowicz and Nizinska 2014) that would promote a sense of social responsibility to our global community. This I see as potentially transformative for learners. Using a transformative learning theoretical approach (Illeris 2014; Merriam and Ntseane 2008; Saudelli 2015), I was determined to make this online course highly experiential, as learners delve into complex issues and storied meaning making in relation to their individual identities, their place and space as members of various communities, and community outreach in Canada and in international community contexts. Thus, I strive to create learning opportunities that foster Illeris (2014) conception of transformative learning as embodying change and students’ identity, which “includes the cognitive, emotional and social dimensions” (p. 161).

Joe: Building upon Barone (1990) belief that narratives should evoke thinking rather than provide conclusions, my casts and I seek to devise scenes in which the characters are faced with some sort of decision and later reexamine those decisions mostly with live audiences. I have found that some social justice practices can be quite didactic, dictating what is deemed to be ‘appropriate’ behavior. The plan was to generate vignettes that would go beyond explaining the ADED 3F41 course concepts to problematizing them, thereby eliciting multiple perspectives from Mary’s students.

2. Act I, Scene I: Methodology: Devising the Text within DART 3F93—Social Issues Theatre for Community Development

Joe: I teach DART 3F93 in an emergent fashion (Osberg and Biesta 2008). While I am over-prepared with possible activities and readings, each year, I adapt this course based upon the needs, interests and abilities of the students and the requests of the community. My adage, which I articulate to my students, is, “I don’t know where we are going but I do know how to get there”. It is founded upon the belief that, if students should be both producers and consumers of knowledge (Freire 1986) and that if student choices create democratic classrooms (Morrison 2008), highly prescriptive and planned lessons leave little room for student input. Like a painter who lets the first brush stroke determine the next one, I determine my ‘lessons/activities’ based upon the previous ones. While sometimes frustrating for some students who have come to rely on the predictability of a dogmatic predetermined structure, most eventually appreciate the opportunity to become interdependent learners. My teaching could be considered constructivist (Phillips 1995), mutualistic (Norris and Bilash 2016) and democratic (Henderson 2001).

As usual, this year’s course began with a series of ice-breakers and warm-ups to develop a sense of self in relation to the other.

Mary: Joe invited me to his class and I took part in several of the ice breaker activities together with the students. This allowed me to explore and connect with the students in a relational manner—I was there as a learner of dramatic arts, as a potential client, as a colleague of Joe’s in a different department and as an advocate of community outreach. I prepared a PowerPoint that shared with
students the details of the course I was designing. I presented this information sitting with the students in the class around the room, and hoped they would become intrigued and wish to be involved.

**Joe:** We openly discussed Mary’s invitation and elected that this would be the second of our two projects. In this project, first we would have to become learners of information, mostly unfamiliar to us, and then translate abstract concepts into plausible live situations. We found that attractive. In addition to their interest in the topic, a number welcomed the opportunity to move to video, something that their program had not previously offered.

**Mary:** I provided Joe with a copy of the textbook and he and I went through, listing a number of key concepts in community outreach. These would be the potential topics of vignettes.

**Joe:** Mary also provided a list of political ideologies that existed. These could assist us in establishing character motivation for the scripts students would create. The political ideologies that formed part of the course content were: anarchist, feminist, ecological, conservative, liberal, and colonial. See Appendix A for resources associated with these political ideologies that were provided to students in both classes.

**Mary:** These ideologies were a prominent feature of the course I was designing. Community outreach is inherently political—it has a prominent place in civic culture and democracy (Blaustein 2012). Ultimately, learners in the course that I was designing would need to explore the connection of the political to storied experiences of social advocacy and how these positions impact meaning making of an experience in community outreach. In addition, I raised a number of ‘running issues’, including Indigenous history and communities, history of community development in Canada, internationalization and advocacy, vulnerable communities, adult literacy, volunteerism, and religiosity and community outreach relationships.

**Joe:** In a short period of time, the students and I had to learn a number of new concepts in order to effectively portray them. It was as if we were taking a condensed version of ADED 3F41. The devising was a ‘working for’ relationship. When we would perform with workshops and audience participation, we moved to a ‘working with’ relationship (Norris 2015). With Mary, the power of the typical client–consultant relationship shifted to some extent. She possessed vital information and we required her expertise. She was simultaneously a client and a resource. Such can be the nature of collaborative work.

**Mary:** While I attended a number of Joe’s classes, I did not partake in the creation of the tableaus and vignettes. I consulted on the concepts. I noted how the dramatic arts students took creative control over their creations, ideas, and enactments; they democratically constructed their learning. They were coming to understand the complexities of my course’s concepts through their explorations.

As an observer, I found this process of creating the theatrical vignettes fascinating and often imagined how I might invite such a creative process with my future students in the course that I was designing. I hoped the impact for my course design would be: (a) modelling creative expression in digital space; (b) enlivening the abstract concepts with storied meanings; and (c) since stories beget stories, serve as stimuli to evoke stories from those in the class. I wanted the online course to be a place of creative, transformative, storied meaning making about community outreach and adult literacy.

**Mary and Joe:** As a result of our collaboration, both Mary and Joe became co-learners as each brought different resources to the table and consequently learned from one another. Joe left with a greater understanding of community outreach and Mary left with a greater understanding of dramatic arts-based pedagogies. Both increased their understanding of how drama can be employed in online settings.

**Joe:** While the students did have much artistic control, the process required and included negotiation and collaborative skills. Rough drafts would be presented to all for feedback. Like action research (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988) all scenes went through spirals of plan, act, observe, and reflect. This was our devising/rehearsal process. Because of previous dramatic arts courses, they were well-versed in the process. It was rewarding to see how they employed their newfound skills and knowledge to this task, applying some basic principles to guide their work.
Key to devising is the creation of what (Rohd 1998, p. 103) calls activating scenes. In this case, the material was not meant to dispense information i.e., explain the concepts but was to stimulate open-ended, discussion. Over 30 photos of tableaus and 11 vignettes and were created.

3. Act I, Scene II: Creating Tableaus

Tableaus can be a powerful form of participatory theatre that addresses issues of social justice (Powell and Serriere 2013). During one class, small groups were given an approach (See Appendix A) and a concept (See Table 1 below) and instructed to create a tableau depicting its perceived meaning. These were presented to the class for discussion (See Figure 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accountability</th>
<th>Diaspora</th>
<th>Functionalist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Ecologism</td>
<td>Oppression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Exploitation</td>
<td>Radical Adult Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action System</td>
<td>Feminism</td>
<td>Restorative approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anarchism</td>
<td>Fieldwork</td>
<td>Social Animation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charismatic Authority</td>
<td>Focal System</td>
<td>Social Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coercive Power</td>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Social Control Function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonization</td>
<td>Grass Roots</td>
<td>Social Network Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>Green Revolution</td>
<td>Social Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiation</td>
<td>Group Think</td>
<td>Soft Currencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>High Mass Consumption</td>
<td>Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict mediation</td>
<td>Hierarchy of Needs</td>
<td>Subsystems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatism</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>Super systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookie Cutter Approaches</td>
<td>Liberalism</td>
<td>Traditional Societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Consciousness</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Treaties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Blindness</td>
<td>Legitimate Power</td>
<td>Under Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Competence</td>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>Welfare State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Destruction</td>
<td>Referent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Imperialism</td>
<td>Reward</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displacement</td>
<td>Preventative Social Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Class Tableaus.
Both then and here in this text we avoided providing titles or captions that would predispose the viewer to the author’s frame. Rather, we employed evocative questions/statements to elicit responses from the audience:

If this were a museum sculpture, what might its name be?
Stand behind one of the characters and give her/his inner thoughts.
Stand behind one of the characters and state what the character might say next.
Think of a song lyric that could provide a meaning to the tableau.
What is the power dynamic portrayed? Is power being used, misused, and/or abused? By whom?
Is there a sense of status in the tableau?

While the concepts instigated the tableaus, we recognize that audience responses would not necessarily, if ever, connect the tableaus to the initiating concepts. Trying to find an exact match tends to narrow the conversation into an act of determining ‘the’ correct answer. Rather, we asked for interpretations. The above suggestions widened the discussion, creating space for personal interpretations, as each student will ‘read’ the photo differently. The tableaus are evocations and their strength is in the conversations they generate. Such is the power of metaphors.

We tried this approach during rehearsals to (a) assist us in understanding some of the complexities of the concepts and (b) determine their efficacy for future use. Later, the tableaus were reenacted and polished for use in the online course. They are provided here, without captions (See Figures 2–7), so that the reader can experience such a dialogic experience and draw their own interpretations.

Figure 2. Interpretive Tableau.

Figure 3. Interpretive Tableau.
Stand behind one of the characters and state what the character might say next.

Think of a song lyric that could provide a meaning to the tableau.

What is the power dynamic portrayed? Is power being used, misused, and/or abused? By whom?

While the concepts instigated the tableaus, we recognize that audience responses would not necessarily, if ever, connect the tableaus to the initiating concepts. Trying to find an exact match tends to narrow the conversation into an act of determining ‘the’ correct answer. Rather, we asked for interpretations. The above suggestions widened the discussion, creating space for personal interpretations, as each student will ‘read’ the photo differently. The tableaus are evocations and their strength is in the conversations they generate. Such is the power of metaphors.

We tried this approach during rehearsals to (a) assist us in understanding some of the complexities of the concepts and (b) determine their efficacy for future use. Later, the tableaus were reenacted and polished for use in the online course. They are provided here, without captions (See Figures 2-7), so that the reader can experience such a dialogic experience and draw their own interpretations.

4. Act I, Scene III: Vignettes Created by DART 3F93 Students

Using the list of concepts chart, the ideologies list (Appendix A) we explored what types of situations might serve as settings and what style of presentations might we use. The following composite photograph (See Figure 8) depicts one of our brainstorming sessions that were written on a white board.

Figure 4. Interpretive Tableau.

Figure 5. Interpretive Tableau.

Figure 6. Interpretive Tableau.
4. Act I, Scene III: Vignettes Created by DART 3F93 Students

Using the list of concepts chart, the ideologies list (Appendix A) we explored what types of situations might serve as settings and what style of presentations might we use. The following composite photograph (See Figure 8) depicts of one of our brainstorming sessions that were written on a white board.

Students decided a town hall meeting, parent-teacher meeting, hockey game, and a bank were some of the sites where these community outreach concepts might be played out with characters portraying different political ideologies. Small groups chose different scenarios, roughly planned them, cast each other and through improvisation, created the vignettes. The scenes were repeated a number of times with salient points noted and complexities explored, so that they could be brought into the next iteration if appropriate.

A major guiding principle was “Don’t play your attitude, play each character with dignity”. An individual might have a differing opinion about an ideology but should play it with conviction. For example, a reenactment of a protest event that was posted on YouTube, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGMTm3QRwEc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGMTm3QRwEc), required the actor to believe that Officer Bubbles was justified although
the student might not personally believe this to be the case. Following another principle of exploring different presentational styles, the scene was extended to two versions of ‘back to the station’ with an exploration of what might have taken place between the officer and his partner.

5. Act II: Scripts as Data

Joe: Haven (2007) claims, “People are eager for stories. Not dissertations. Not lectures. Not informative essays. For Stories” (p. x). Reason and Hawkins (1988) also support narrative forms by distinguishing between research that expresses (shows) and that which explains (tells). They encourage researchers to create texts with more expression. Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer (1995) believe that the structuring of raw data into a Readers Theatre script is an act of analysis. With the rise and acceptance of arts-based research (Barone and Eisner 2011; Leavy 2009, 2018), expressive forms of research have found a legitimate place writing academic writing. Poetry (Faulkner 2010; Leggo 2012), and novels (Dunlop 2002; Leavy 2013; Sameshima 2007) are but a few. Scripts by themselves are also considered research documents (Norris 2009; Conrad 2012; Goldstein 2012; Harris and Sinclair 2014; Saldaña 2005).

But there exists a systemic bias against scripted research. When it comes to journal publications, statistics can be reduced to tables and interviews into selected quotes. In other arts-based research genres, images and photographs are not included in the word count. Whether they are a result of an ethnodrama or a playbuilding process, scripts can be lengthy and their inclusion will often exceed word length. We argue that scripts are the research results that must be disseminated in their entirety as the power of this form of research and pedagogy is greatly lessened if scripts are explained rather than expressed. The entire script, with a URL link to the video performance, is therefore a fundamental component of our reporting arts-based research and make up approximately one-third of this text.

(The enacted scenes can be found at http://www.joenorrisplaybuilding.ca/?page_id=954)

Note: The website was funded by the 2011 competition of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Insight Development Grant for: Reuniting Form and Content: Generating, Mediating, & Disseminating Social Science Research & Arts-based Performance Genres through Digital Media.


1—Playground Change

Mom #1: (Sitting on a park bench sipping coffee from a paper cup.)
Mom #2: (Enters and addresses her imaginary children.) Alright okay, okay go have fun with them okay see you later Anthony. Alright now you be a good boy. Alright, Mommy loves you.
Mom #2: Hey how’s it going?
Mom #1: Hey. Oh you know same old same old.
Mom #2: Yeah. OH I always love these play-dates that we have because honestly it’s so nice to get away from the kids.
Mom #1: Oh I know you can watch as they are just a few metres away.
Mom #2: Hey at least they are having fun. So did you hear about the new park that they are going to be putting here? I’m so excited for that they are changing it from wood to metal.
Mom #1: I don’t know. I’m not too keen on it. I mean, it’s fine the way it is. It’s stable. It’s made of wood. I mean, it’s fun, the kids enjoy it. Why do we need to waste our money on something new and shiny?
Mom #2: Well, the thing is, it’s so much better for our community and it will probably bring in even more kids. Also, it’s a lot safer. So they are not going around getting splinters yelling mommy, mommy, I got a splinter!

Mom #1: I don’t know. The way I see it is that if they get a splinter it’s their tough luck. They learn from it. It’s an experience and come on. Wood! That’s what we used to play on. It’s so stable. You don’t have to worry about getting new permits or anything like that. It should just stay the way it is.

Mom #2: Yeah but then they get rid of the sand and they put rubber down instead. It’s a lot more fun for the kids to jump around on. It’s great to have and believe me it’s a lot better than telling your kid, hey don’t you dare play with that sand. There is cat poop or cat pee or dog poop or pee. It’s so much better to stay away from that.

Mom #1: I don’t know. I think either way you’re going to have filth in a playground, Jimmy, Jimmy! Put it down.

Mom #2: (Laughs).

Mom #1: Sorry okay.

Mom #2: That’s alright I understand. I just dropped the other kid off at school and now we have Anthony here. It’s fine, it’s great. Two boys it’s hard work I know.

Mom #1: They’ll learn eventually right?

Mom #2: Yeah, eventually being key. Well what else. Oh yes the best part is, is they might even get more diversity within this area and it will be a lot safer to play at night.

Mom #1: I don’t know. I feel like the ratio of the old people verses younger is just fine the way it is. We don’t need any new youth coming in, wrecking and destroying something brand new that’s already built and just disrupting the whole diversity we have already have in this really nice and quiet neighbourhood.

Mom #2: Yeah, I guess?

Mom #1: Oh look Jimmy don’t climb that pole.

Mom #2: Okay.

Mom #1: Jimmy what did I say! Jimmy don’t make me count to three. Jimmy One! (Sorry, sorry spoken to Mom #2) Two! Two and a half, three quarters!

Mom #2: (Whispers to her imaginary son) Anthony let’s go.

Mom #1: Jimmy that’s three! I’m coming!

2—School Fundraiser

Planner #1: Well how about we do a bake sale?

Planner #2: But, there are food allergies within the school.

Planner #1: Yes! But we could have food delivered from a company.

Planner #2: Well why don’t we have a walk-a-thon?

Planner #1: Yes! And it promotes healthy activity.

Planner #2: Yes and we could even sell bottles of water to raise more funds.

Planner #1: Umm well what about a book fair?

Planner #2: Yes and we can promote reading for fun.

Planner #1: Yes and we can clear the shelves for newer books!

Planner #2: What about a kegger? (beer keg party)

Planner #1: Yes but it could be very sloppy and unprofessional.

Planner #2: Yes but it can be fun and effective way to fundraise for the more responsible and legal patrons.

Planner #1: A carnival!!

Planner #2: Yes but we have to worry about safety around the equipment.
Planner #1: Yes but, but we can promote a fun family environment.
Planner #2: Oh! What about a car wash?
Planner #1: Yes but, it can show women in a negative light.
Planner #2: Yes but, it can be modified to show a more appropriate body image.

3—Literacy
Teacher: Good evening, thank you so much for coming tonight. I really wanted to discuss with you about your daughter’s literacy levels.

Mother: Whispers to her husband.
Mother: What, what is the umm literacy?
Teacher: Literacy yes. I think that she needs to do more reading at home in order to practice.
Mother: Nods her head.
Teacher: Reading (opens her hand in the gesture of a book)
Mother: Oh. This is lesson oh (pause) oh.
Teacher: Yes she needs to do more reading in order to bring up her literacy levels.
Mother: Talks in different language to her husband.
Mother: Continues to talk to her husband in exasperation in another language.

4—Homework
Teacher: Okay! Good morning grade eight’s. We are going to take out our homework and I’ll check it.
Teacher: Very good!
Teacher: Perfect!
Teacher: Casey, I see you haven’t done your homework.
Casey: Sorry.
Teacher: I noticed that you haven’t done your homework for the entire week.
Casey: I know. I’ve been working late all week.
Teacher: Working late at your age?
Casey: Yeah. I had to pick up extra hours at work because my mom lost her job this week.
Teacher: Okay. I’m going to have to call your parents but don’t worry. It’s not going to be anything bad I just need to talk things through and make a plan for you. Okay?
Casey: Nods her head yes.

5—Homework Help
Daughter: Mom! Mom! Can you come help me with my homework?
Mother: What is it dear?
Daughter: Well I have this essay to write and I’ve got the introduction down but I’m really having trouble with the thesis statement I really need help writing it in a good way.
Mother: Um honey what’s a thesis?
Daughter: Ugh God!

6—Town Hall Meeting
Chair: So the next topic for tonight’s meeting is the prison possibly being built. So we will hear from the Head of the Prison. George?
George: Okay, so yeah, umm we plan on building this prison. The positive is that you guys will still have a forest. We are only going to take a little bit out. And we’re building a community within a community so the prison won’t actually associate with society. They will be their own little community within the community.
Chair: Why thank you for that George. Now we will hear from the Head of the City’s Environment Team. Emily?

Emily: Thank you, I just want to state that the residents here have been living in Evergreen Development and they pride themselves with having a forest as their backyard. So you’re saying the prison is going to cut down all these trees and move to that space. These residents will have a prison in their backyard. That’s what you saying? Ah what’s that going to do for our property value?

Chair: That’s a good question and we have Megan from the Tax Payers Association to talk about that.

Megan: Well thank you for bringing that up Emily. So the value of the houses right now will be decreasing because the properties that are there right now in our Evergreen Community are of the highest value. It’s a gated community there so they are the people that are least likely to go for this idea of having a jail in their backyard.

Chair: Oh yes ma’am, do you have something to say?

Sarah: Hi I’m Sarah. I’m a member at this community and I moved here from another town that had a prison just a couple blocks away from a hospital. And every time there was be a break out, which happened more than you think, the hospital with sick people would have to lockdown and that’s terrifying. I’m not for this prison coming here.

George: I would just like to say there is no hospital in this town so you don’t have to worry about that. Your society should already be in lockdown because we don’t have enough prisons to hold prisoners. We’re dropping charges, where do you think the prisoners are and go? In your community. So not only would the hospital be in lockdown but your homes should be in lockdown.

Chair: Emily, yes?

Emily: Umm okay just going off that point then. I would like to ask you a question. How are you going to alarm, arm, and protect the prison and keep it self-contained so breakouts don’t happen?

George: Well as you know it’s going to be in a forest so it’s already segregated from the community; also we will have a huge alarm system.

Megan: That is a huge cost for the community.

Emily: For sure, not to mention it’s killing habitats of the animals that are around this area.

George: Sir, do you have kids?

Sir: I do. I am a local resident and I have an eight year old and a six year old. Their childhood is built in this forest and the ravine. They have made their entire childhood based on in this area. They go there every night, and every day. They play all their games back there. You cut that down and they will lose their community and be playing in the streets with prisoners in close proximity and I do not want that at all.

George: Listen to me sir did they grow up in this forest?

Sir: Well . . .

George: They can work in the forest, they can work in the prison. I’m not saying that they can be guards or associate themselves with the actual prisoners but what I’m saying to you is they can help build the fence for security. They can work in the cafes. They can maintain, they can be in maintenance. They could have jobs.

Sarah: They are six and eight.

Sir: They are eight and six years I don’t think they will be building any fences right now.

George: Sir are they going to be ten. And sixteen and eighteen at some point, in ten years.

Sir: Even then, their prison is going to have its own contractors and they are going to have everything set up with blue prints. I can’t see that happening at all.

George: But they will have part time jobs.
Sir: Yes but not at the prison.
George: It will open more jobs for the community is what I am saying.
Emily: So ah going off that jobs. So now we have to build infrastructure to get outside people inside to our close gated community, so what does that mean more cars, more emissions.
Megan: Gas prices are very high.
George: And more work for you guys. You guys don’t have that much work in your community.
Megan: That’s still more money. Where are you getting this money from?
George: The prison will have the money to pay the workers who are working inside the prison.
Sarah: Excuse me, I have a question. You mentioned before how there’s no room for other prisons. Have you seen Canada? There’s tons of agriculture that you can build on why don’t you put it there and not in our community?
George: Yes let’s just send all the prisoners from your community up north to Nunavut, lets send them to other towns.
Sarah: Sounds good to me!
George: Yes how are we supposed to get them there that’s more money?
Sir: Get them out of our neighborhood. We don’t want them here.
Emily: Yeah keep it eco-friendly.
Chair: Well we’ve heard a lot of discussion today and we will definitely take it this all into consideration.
Emily: Keep it eco-friendly.
Chair: Keep it simple.
George: More jobs! More money!
Megan: And a lower property value and taxes will go up.
Sarah: Move them up North!
Sir: Not in my backyard!
Chair: I will take this all into consideration. Thank you all.

7—Officer Bubbles

Girl: (Blowing bubbles. Then begins to blow bubbles in the direction of a female officer.)
Female Police: What’s your name?
Girl: (Still blowing bubbles) It’s a mystery.
(Gently blows bubbles in female’s direction.)
Male Police: Ma’am you need to stop blowing bubbles at this officer right now.
Girl: (Disregards the warning and continues to blow bubbles.)
Male Police: Ma’am if you continue to blow those bubbles, that’s a detergent it can get in her eyes and it can harm her. If you don’t stop I am going to arrest you. Do you understand me?
Girl: (Silent).
Male Police: I said do you understand me?!
Girl: Yes.

8—Bubbles: Back at the Station

Male Police: Hey you know what I think? I was too rough on that girl today. I shouldn’t have arrested her for blowing bubbles.
Female Police: No! She was totally out of line she deserved it!
Male Police: But they are just bubbles.
Female Police: Yeah, but she was doing it to the authority and kids nowadays don’t respect authority (claps hands together)
Male Police: Yeah I guess but I’ve just been irritated and it’s been a long day and I think I crossed a line today. I just want to go home and call it a night.

Female Police: Okay.

(Take Two—Clapboard shown)

Male Police: I bet your glad I saved your ass from bubble freak today.
Female Police: No you interfered. I totally could have handled it!
Male Police: No, no. These kids need fear and intimidation and let’s be honest someone of your size that’s not going to happen.
Female Police: Ha-ha! Fear and intimidation isn’t going to help any situation. Kids need to be talked to, need to be communicated too, to hear their voice.
Male Police: You’re wrong! Kids need fear, kids need to be intimated because if they don’t have it, then they get out of line and do this crap!
Female Police: Don’t do it again I can handle it!

9—Foreclosures: Three of Infinite Possibilities

(All Mimed.)

Version 1

Banker: (Facing Husband and Wife. Opens file folder and holds up a sign saying, “Foreclosure”.)
Couple: (Banker Face.)
Husband: (Angrily takes sign from banker and throws on floor.)
Couple: (Storm off.)
Banker: ( Watches them exit. Shakes head.)

Version 2

Banker: (Facing Husband and Wife. Opens file folder and holds up a sign saying, “Foreclosure”.)
Couple: (Banker Face.)
Husband: (Holds out arms in dismay)

Version 3

Banker: (Facing Husband and Wife. Opens file folder and holds up a sign saying, “Foreclosure”.)
Couple: (Banker Face.)
Husband: (Lowers head, despondent. Turns, holds wife’s hand and they walk away.)
Banker: (Goes after them and raises hand in a ‘wait-type’ gesture.)
Couple: (They turn.)

10—I Just Wanna Play Hockey

Blue Jersey: (Mimes skating in front of hockey player #5, falls and screams.
Coach: Number five two minutes, rough.
Coach: Referee?
Ref: Yes coach?
Coach: That player took a dive.
Ref: It’s not the way I saw it coach.
Coach: Well she doesn’t deserve a penalty.
Ref: It was a rough. That’s what it is. I wear the stripes, I make the calls. She’s going to be in the penalty box for two minutes. Now you have four players let’s go.

Coach: Alright.

#5’s Mom: I don’t think so! Coach that was unfair. What are you going to do about this?

Coach: I can’t say anything. I have no say in this.

#5’s Mom: Referee do you have any eyes? Did you see that play?

Coach: Miss.

#5’s Mom: I don’t understand!

Ref: Would you like to referee for me?

#5’s Mom: Listen I was just . . .

Coach: Miss!

#5’s Mom: Coach, you really have to do something about this. She can’t sit in the penalty box!

Coach: I can’t. My hands are tied. I can’t do anything.

DM: Excuse me! What’s going on?

Coach: Alright the District Manager’s (DM) here. She’s going to sort it out.

#5’s Mom: Listen! Did you see that? That was unfair. This is biased refereeing.

DM: What was the call?

#5’s Mom: Roughing. She wasn’t roughing she was just playing. Let them play.

DM: That’s what the referee saw so that that’s it.

#5’s Mom: They are down a point that’s the only reason that call was made.

DM: Ma’am the referees know what they are doing. They’ve been doing this before.

#5’s Mom: Coach, you really have to do something about this.

Coach: I can’t do anything.

Ref: All of you have to get it under control or get out of my arena.

DM: Yup.

DM: Let me go get my book.

Player #5: I just wanna play.

11—What’s News with You?

Girl: (Picks up newspaper from seat and throws it on the ground before sitting down.)

Boy: (Rolls his eyes and girl giggles at something she is reading on her phone.)

Boy: Did you hear about the latest Middle East Conflict?

Girl: No, I haven’t really heard much about it.

Boy: Huh! Well then what are you looking?

Girl: Oh I’m just on Twitter. I follow all the latest celebrity news and entertainment gossip.

Boy: And do they educate you?

Girl: Yeah, I guess. It’s all I really care about.

Boy: But they don’t tell you about what’s going on around the world?

Girl: I guess not. I really don’t care about what’s going on in the world right now. I guess all I really care about is Lindsay Lohan and Honey Boo Boo. It’s entertaining. It’s all that really matters to me.

Boy: Lindsay and Honey is all that matters to you?

Girl: Yeah.

6. Act III, Scene I: The Design and Online Implementation of ADED 3P41

Mary: This course was designed as a third-year elective in the Bachelor of Adult Education undergraduate program using a fully online delivery mode. Over a 12-week period, 36 credit
hours, learners explored and were required to make connections with community outreach programs, principles, relationships, and social advocacy through authentic and digital artifacts of community outreach. Videos, photographs, TED Talks, and websites were inclusions in the design of the course as aspects central to students’ learning and meaning making. Using Canada’s case studies from various regions, learners explored exceptional community outreach programs, issues, and controversies in enacting outreach ideals. Students were expected to examine the digital artifacts included in the course content, the tableaus and vignettes created in DART 3F93, construct some form of personal meaning, story or interpretation, connect to a political orientation, and express their ideas in a dialogical forum and via digital presentations.

Joe: Constructing and examining stories are powerful tools for meaning making and thus for learning. Using applied theatre to examine community outreach practices and devise vignettes for use in digital learning spaces was new for me; I welcomed this opportunity. Norris (2009) claims that “In the creation of scenes, Playbuilding operates in the world of the plausible/possible; the vignettes are an integration of the actual and the imaginary” (p. 28). In this case, Mary and I used abstract concepts to generate hypothetical scenarios that would depict various perspectives when citizens interact. A hockey game, parent teacher meeting, protest rally, town hall meeting, a bank, and park bench became the sites in which the course content were dramatized. The production, as Leavy (2011) posits, blurs the genres of fiction and nonfiction. They are a verisimilitude as “the materials writers use in fiction comes from real life and genuine human experience” (p. 21).

Mary: Exploration of the human experience through creative expression was evident in the online community outreach course. Throughout my implementation of the course, I specifically stated many times that students had complete creative control over their expressions and communication of their connections to the course content. Even doing so, students taking the online course seemed confused at first by this freedom to express and frequently asked if their various ideas about communication would be acceptable. I have delivered this course several times since the inaugural iteration in 2013 with the most recent in 2017. This observation has been present in each iteration—confusion over creative control of academic expression. Once learners realize that creative expression was encouraged, and as they were exposed to the course content that showcased human experiences of community outreach storied and imagined by the applied theatre students, the community outreach students invoked a similar and creative approach to the showcased, storied and imagined responses in their communications and assignments online. Creativity mirroring creativity. For example, at first, the online forum demonstrated typical text and references common to most online discussion forum postings. About week 3, learners began to experiment—locating online vignettes, creating their own tableaus and uploading them for discussion, locating graphics and some uploaded photographs they took that represented meaning for them. As the facilitator, I watched the discussion forum come alive with various forms of expression and dialogue. This continued until the end of the course and in every iteration.

7. Act III, Scene II: Online Forum Debates

Mary: The primary assessment task was a digital presentation: students were to choose a community organization that interested them, visit the organization or the website, describe the organization and make connections with the concepts in the course, and develop this information into a digital presentation using any tool or creative outlet they wished. Each learner was to review and respond to each digital presentation in whatever form of creative expression they wished. Students were expected to become involved in their community of learners in an ongoing way and to share their thoughts, identify connections between contributions and personal experiences, interrogate and share changes to personal thinking, and/or indicate how the discussion added to/expanded/challenged their personal understandings. Students were free to communicate, challenge, and be challenged in relation to their storied experiences, their storied learning, which at times involved controversial themes, expressions, and debates.
Joe: While some educators and students may shy away from controversial discussions, these were embraced by both me, as facilitator of the dramatic arts students, and Mary, as course designer and facilitator of the adult education community outreach students.

Mary: Ultimately, controversial discussions appeared to have been embraced by the community outreach students as evidenced in their course evaluations at the end of the semester, and from electronic communications sent to me. There were many heated debates in the online discussion forum as students responded to the storied learning. Particularly controversial, were the discussions focusing on political orientations, power and control, community outreach vs. development, and empowerment of vulnerable communities. These were the dominating ‘hot topics’ but were also the most interesting moments of the online dialogue as learners explored meaning making in relation to these issues and interrogated themselves and others’ thinking processes. I considered this heated interaction as a positive sign of engagement—I did not want students to shy away from the evocative nature of the texts nor was I too concerned at the tension that emanated. To illustrate, the Officer Bubbles vignette resulted in a very heated debate between two students online in relation to issues of power, authority and control. One of the students spoke to the nature of civil disobedience and the role of civil servants being complex and sometimes feeling forced to engage in control behaviours that may be unpalatable. The other student spoke to concerns about violation of civil rights guaranteed under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the Constitution Act (1982). Both students were making very strong, critical points and the online forum was alive with powerful and personally felt commentary.

During another iteration of this course in 2017, with the Officer Bubbles forum, a student was speaking of nationalism and patriotic discourses. In response, another student raised the issue of the Residential Schools systems that functioned in Canada and connected them to abuse of power and control and racism. Later, a student personally directed an email to me with the following excerpt:

I got really angry with [student’s name] photo of a Residential School with a Canadian flag and blood dripping off. I was thoroughly [profanity] until I was challenged to explore why I was angry. I grew up close to a Residential School and never paid any attention to it. As a devout Catholic, a patriotic person, I don’t want to think about it. But, I guess all of us have to. I never really thought about the systems involved: politically, legally, educationally, religiously, that created and maintained this system.

Joe: Mary and I discussed this and we both considered these moments to be representative of transformative learning as the vignettes and tableaux evoked reactions that required learners to process their thinking about self, self in relation to community, and self in relation to issues both local and global. This form of examination aligns with Illeris (2014) discussion of transformative learning and identity. The representations mirrored the reality, the online dialogue challenged beliefs and understandings and framed opportunities for shifts in identity, and the students experienced all of this online through a dramatic pedagogy approach.

8. Act III, Scene III: The Engagement

Mary: While facilitating the online course, two scripts specifically were the catalysts for heated debates online. These two scripts were “Officer Bubbles” and “Town Council”. In several situations, both the online discussion board and the peer response task elicited strong personal connections, stories of personal interactions that were connected to the script, advocacy, politics, and/or connected experiences that were revealed. Narratives became connected narratives; the enacted became very personal. In some cases, the enacted became so personal—and heated—that I had to step in and mediate to ensure a respectful space of storied differences.

“Officer Bubbles”—Several contributions disclosed students’ life histories: military backgrounds, previous engagements with the law, political demonstrations, reactions as parents to teenage angst, and circumstances of patriarchy and control in relation to the work force were some of the storied dialogues that comprised the online discussion forum. These storied dialogues were presented in
relation to evidencing and relating to the course content, the vignette and personal meaning making. As these storied lived experiences were presented, several students engaged in vigorous debate related to the issues portrayed in the vignette such as: coercive power, control, domination, legitimate power, indigeneity, feminism, conservativism, advocacy, free will, and critical consciousness—all of which were also central concepts in the course design. Everyone it seemed had a controversial story to share that related to these themes and the vignette that was the catalyst for the forum. Several students in the class emailed me personally to say that this was the most engaging activity they had ever had in an online course.

“Town Council”—The “Town Council” vignette lead to many storied discussions among the dramatic arts students and the community outreach students. Dramatic arts students related the scene to development in their localities and some of the personal experiences that they encountered as residents in localities undergoing change: the building of a new women’s prison, a new hockey arena, and the havoc resulting from a devastating hurricane that caused great damage in an Ontario, Canada city.

Joe: These storied dialogues emphasized political orientations influencing the decision-making process, responses to civic mindedness, proactive vs. punitive orientations to crime, and community fear. The political became very personal, very storied.

Mary: The online discussion of stories related to this vignette focused on personal experiences related to themes of powerlessness, environmentalism, inclusion and exclusion, authority and control, systems and change, groupthink, helicopter parenting, and fear. Many of these concepts were features of the course design, but groupthink and helicopter parenting were not and represented examples of extension of thought in storied meaning making. Students’ stories were far more personal but also had a strong connection to the power of positive change particularly in relation to crime and civic responsibility from this particular vignette. It was heartening to see the class as a collective focus on positive change for betterment and engage in mutually supportive, storied, and reflective dialogue. Again, this vignette generated heated debate as students expressed various positionings and interpretations. Interestingly, responses to this vignette had students linking their thoughts to songs, YouTube videos, movie scenes, plays, and other theatrical performances. As an educator, I have never seen an online response to a discussion forum which engaged as many outside performance-based resources as students expressed their positionings.

Joe: Heated debates can occur in an in person or online environment and they can be indicative of learning—perhaps more so in an online forum than in person. A debate in an in-class format requires that the learners respond to each other in a synchronous fashion—which is not required in an online forum where learners have the time and opportunity to search, design, delete, edit, or wait to respond to a comment or query. Thus, when the debate becomes heated online, it demonstrates that the students are engaged in presenting their point or position, it is passionately shared, firmly held, and creatively expressed and critically reexamined.

Mary: Heated, personal, storied dialogue characterized this online course and these engagements directly emanated from students making storied connections to the vignettes and tableaus in addition to community outreach. Stories beget stories as students watched the vignettes or reflected on the tableaus, thought about the course content and the discussion questions, and then shared very personal narratives and belief structures. It is interesting to note, not only did the vignettes and tableaus inspire storied dialogues, but they also inspired students in the online forum to mirror creative, arts-based meaning making expressions of their own.

Joe: Mary’s experiences in using dramatic vignettes in the teaching of this community outreach course can be classified as effecting the affect through the infusion of creative elements. Mary’s hope in infusing creativity into the virtual environment was that it would have a democratizing effect as students would make choices as they researched, selected, created, and responded to the digital vignettes and other elements of the course design. Rather than looking for and providing the predetermined ‘right answer’, the vignettes and tableaus had the potential of evoking strong
reactions and emotional responses including empathy, affinity, anger, hope, resistance, and opposition. This could encourage the articulation of personal voice and with it comes intrinsic motivation. The question: “How does infusing creativity through the integration of drama in this online undergraduate course effect the affect of students’ contributions to the course?” is a democratic one as students begin move beyond compliance to agency (Morrison 2008).

**Mary:** As the course designer and facilitator who values both narrative and creative expression, and as a facilitator who strives to embrace andragogy that evokes meaning making and expression, I believe that the tableaus and vignettes offered a democratizing effect to the learning as students interacted with the dramatic elements and responded with their own creative expressions.

The tableaus—At first, students were confused as to how to create meaning from tableau photos. In the discussion forum, I replicated some of the questions Joe posed to the Dramatic Arts Students and also included a few of my own:

- Imagine you are standing behind one of the characters and give his/her thoughts?
- Think of a song, lyric, story that can give some meaning to the tableau?
- What does this tableau mean to you?
- How is power portrayed?

The photos provided little context and visual interpretation, not prevalent in most text-based courses. However, as the activity continued throughout the semester, it became a lively aspect of conversation with differing interpretations and critical discussions.

This addition did not disappoint. Not only did the vignettes and tableaus feature prominently in the online discussions, but also aspects of the vignettes and tableaus were mirrored in the assignments students generated and students responded to the online discussion forum with their own tableaus, poems, songs, photographic art in a manner and with a frequency I had never seen in an online course. Almost all presentations employed media that embraced multiple modalities (graphics, pictures, animation, sound effects, and movement) and all contained dramatic affect whether in video, tableau, or vocal expression. The typical PowerPoint with text and pictures was swept aside as students engaged their creative spirit.

**Joe:** The drama course modeled a way of meaning making through creative dramatic expression. Students taking the online community outreach course mirrored back creative elements in their assignments. The applied theatre course walked the talk, heightening the democratization of creativity and students mirrored the talk back in their digital presentations and other forms of discourse. The infusion of dramatic arts in the online course has positively influenced meaning making in digital space (Norris 2017).

**Mary:** Learners, during both the teaching of the course and afterward expressed their attachment to the course. On course evaluations, overwhelmingly, learners commented on how the course was “different” from other online courses and they “appreciated” having assessment tasks they described as “authentic” and “engaging” and “different” and “powerful”. Many students commented on the course evaluation and in personal interactions how much they “got” from the experiences students shared with each other and from the digital presentations—both in their creating their own digital presentations and in the way others’ digital presentations affected them. The presentations became personal artifacts of meaning making. Pahl and Rowsell (2010) assert that in meaning-making every object tells a story and the digital presentations that students created told a new story—one they invested in and one they appreciated creating. Students mirrored the dramatic affect in both their digital presentations and their communications online. The online forum became, in effect, a form of community theatre—one that students clearly found engaging. As the course designer, I was thrilled to encounter students, none of whom were drama majors, take their own risks with creativity. One comment from a student was “I am far too shy to perform in public and I usually hate giving presentations. I liked doing this presentation as I explored different ways to express my ideas”. One student stated in bolded text “the best online course I have ever taken”, and “I did not expect this”. 
9. Epilogue—Transformative Learning in Digital Spaces

This collaborative initiative between Joe and Mary highlights several areas of further dialogue and research inquiry. First, the means and nature of supporting transformative learning in relation to community outreach in higher education. How do students respond to the nature of transformation, identity and change in relation to meaning making, self and the various communities for which an individual is a member? How can teaching and learning in higher education create and support examinations of self and community outreach? Second, these particular educators and their collaboration highlights the role of democratizing the nature of the curriculum. Joe and Mary strove to engage learner voice in designing the learning content in both courses, a process often referred to as the negotiated curriculum in higher education. In a negotiated curriculum (Brown 2012), students drive the process of their learning (Saudelli 2015). In the dramatic arts course, learners drove the process of creating their dramatic expressions in relation to the social justice and community outreach themes. Learners had creative input over the process. Learners also had the option of refusing the nature of this collaboration, but chose instead to see it to fruition, giving permission for its public online display. In the community outreach course, learners drove the process of interpretation of the vignettes and the tableaus and responded with their own vignettes and tableaus that they designed for the forum discussion space and also in their digital presentations.

The collaboration between Joe and Mary demonstrated an exciting way to “democratize” creativity through two undergraduate courses. Dewey spoke to Democracy and Education as a means for society to engage with novelty and shared interests. Baldacchino (2008) argues that democracy for education “has to do with thought, and it has to do with people who think freely and emerge in their autonomy as capable of communicating with each other in an active as well as a novel way” (p. 152). First Joe’s dramatic arts class created the tableaus and the vignettes that would form central components of the online community outreach education class. They no longer participated in a ‘banking model’ of education (Freire 1986). Rather they became producers of knowledge creatively bring their voices to the larger society. Not only did they learn more about the playbuilding process, they learned a lot about other aspects of community outreach.

The virtual classroom environment provided an outlet for students’ to take control and express their storied experiences through a transformative (Illeris 2014), design literacies approach Sheridan and Rowsell (2010) with creative digital expression for their contributions. The traditional online discussion forum, quiz, and essay style paper are not the only mechanisms for active and constructivist learning opportunities. An important consideration is that as students create storied experiences with this approach, the learning became intimate, which created moments of heated debate and discussion. While this may have been uncomfortable, and some instructors may be concerned about internalizing of the learning journey, both instructors involved in this learning experience believed that this was a positive outcome of learner control of the learning experience and storied meaning making. We believe that this storied meaning making was the manifestation of transformative learning through creative expression, democratizing the learning, and digital interaction. If we want learners to construct personal meaning and include storied experiences, then we have to allow for this intimate process of learning to be controversial, emotional, and personally relevant. That heated debate is in indicator that the learning is important.

Collaboration between and among departments at a university with both professors and learners offer opportunities for reciprocity and engagement for all in the learning process. This collaboration between to two different professors, in two different departments, with two different groups of learners, created an opportunity for learners to engage in new learning: the dramatic arts students and professor deepened their learning about adult learning, community outreach and devising for video. The community outreach professor and students learned about the potential for creative expression and dramatic pedagogy in digital space. Students embraced the approach and turned their contributions into storied experiences. It is hoped that this dialogic case study can provide a forum for educators to consider infusing performance and creative expression into their teaching and learning moments.
Author Contributions: J.N. directed students in the writing and performing of the vignettes for video and discussed the devising process. M.G.S. designed and taught the online course and discussed those experiences. Since the article is in dialogue, it is easily discernable who wrote what. Both provided each other feedback on their sections.

Funding: This research was partially funded by the 2011 competition of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Insight Development Grant.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anarchist</th>
<th>Institute for Anarchists Study</th>
<th><a href="http://www.anarchist-studies.org/node/54">http://www.anarchist-studies.org/node/54</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ecological</td>
<td>Community Colleges and the Green Movement</td>
<td><a href="http://www.richlandcollege.edu/greenrichland/docs/EcoFriendlyEdu.pdf">http://www.richlandcollege.edu/greenrichland/docs/EcoFriendlyEdu.pdf</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness</td>
<td><a href="http://nbard.wordpress.com/2013/03/08/conservatism-the-definition-update-03-08-13/">http://nbard.wordpress.com/2013/03/08/conservatism-the-definition-update-03-08-13/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>PDF file: Conservative versus Liberal Worldviews and Introspective Thought</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References


Leavy, Patricia. 2013. *Fiction as Research Practice: Short Stories, Novellas, and Novels*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.


Perry, Mia, Anne Wessels, and Amanda C. Wager. 2013. From Playbuilding to Devising in Literacy Education: Aesthetic and Pedagogical Approaches. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 56: 649–58. [CrossRef]


© 2018 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).