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TEACHING FOR CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING: A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE CLASSROOM EFFORTS OF THREE US ARTS EDUCATORS

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TEACHING FOR CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING: A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE CLASSROOM EFFORTS OF THREE US ARTS EDUCATORS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

Misunderstandings continue to exist between cultures. Across space, continued social inequalities involving unequal power relations create lack of understanding between cultures; this has led to oppression, dominance, and even death. Education, especially arts education, may be one means of helping build cultural bridges. Thus, this study examined three college teachers' efforts to use the arts to promote cross-cultural understanding in the United States. The teachers were known for using non-Western or multicultural arts in their teaching. The attempt of the researcher was to understand the possibilities of promoting cross-cultural understanding through use of the arts in education. The inquiry method involved critical qualitative research. The data were examined through the lens of Maxine Greene's "The Dialectic of Freedom." From Greene's point of view, education itself is a dialectical process that can be realized, in part, through a relational use of the arts. Collectively, the findings suggest that these teachers promoted cross-cultural understanding by providing pedagogical spaces conducive to recursive discussion of personal and collective experiences related to stereotypes and the affirmation of diversity. Implications and applications were discussed for use of the arts in education in general.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Research Problem

I am a person of American citizenship, born in Nigeria. Working, schooling and living permanently in America, raising six children in America, and traveling internationally over and over again exposed me to misunderstandings due to cultural and linguistic differences. “Where are you from?” I have heard this question almost every day. Some feedback suggests it is because of my accent. In other instances, I presume it is because of my skin color, my cultural otherness, or my personality. In such moments, my internal struggle is to not be treated differently because of these differences.

I came to the United States in 1992. I came to present a paper at a conference and as a visiting artist-scholar to present on a collection of prints I had curated. My ulterior motive, however, was to enroll for a doctoral degree in art. Through the years, I have taught college art and art education courses not only in a historically Black college but also in two colleges of predominantly European American populations[1]. In the course of college teaching and exhibition projects, I have repeatedly experienced misconceptions regarding my intentions mainly due to the accent in my spoken English and the differences in my cultural background. The need for teaching and interacting in culturally sensitive ways is always apparent.

The need for cross-cultural understanding is not unique to America. Even before coming to the United States, I experienced cultural misunderstandings due to linguistic

[1] Along the way, I created and exhibited bodies of artwork in numerous museums and university galleries on the East Coast.

differences and importunate ethnic dominance. As a young man I experienced cultural immersion as a participant in the National Youth Service Corp in the 1980s, a program developed to address continued ethnic misrepresentations in Nigeria. These unequal balances of power and privilege among ethnic groups had led to a 30-month civil war that ended in January 1970.

The National Youth Service Corp was developed in 1973 in Nigeria to immerse recent university graduates in a cultural region other than their own as a way of trying to resolve ethnic differences. The project's goal was to promote cross-cultural understanding by focusing on the geographical- and language-based stereotypical conceptions between the northern, western, and eastern regions of the country. As a way of trying to promote cross-cultural understanding and unity, the participants engaged in a one year-program of paramilitary camp training and primary service in different cultural settings.

I served between 1987 and 1988. By serving in the mid-central region rather than the southeastern region of my birth, the stereotypical knowledge I had of others was challenged. The immersion also provided valuable cross-cultural skills development needed for work in a nation of 450 diverse language groups. Thus, the need for promoting understanding across cultures comes to me as a lifetime project.

I am interested in studying cross-cultural relationships; however, I am also aware of the difficulties. Kilbourn (2006) writes on how important it is to identify and disclose the assumptions the researcher brings into the study. Humans function from certain philosophical assumptions. It is important to disclose the researcher's assumptions, or

default positions, to enable readers to separate the researcher's views from the views of those who are being studied. Clearly, the philosophical assumptions I hold as one who grew up in another culture before living and working in the United States for almost twenty years are different from others who have not had this kind of exposure.

One thing I bring to the study is the belief that arts education is an important resource to promoting cross-cultural understanding. I believe teaching for cross-cultural understanding demands cross-cultural awareness, interaction, and communication, and in some cases a combination of all of these conditions. These observations are a product of my reflexivity. They address my understanding of the problem and my view of myself as a knower.

Based on these experiences, I have drawn three cross-cultural suppositions which, Kilbourn (2006) cautions, need to be disclosed so they will not interfere with a more objective interpretation of my research. The first supposition is that misunderstandings often exist among peoples from different cultures. Since some people are not exposed to other cultures, they may lack basic knowledge and skills in dealing with human differences. As products of our own innate and cultural upbringings, each of us sees the world through a different lens. Simply stated, perceptions can be different and are often selective. Perceptual differences exist not only between different nations but also among people who share the same geographical, ethnical, moral, ethical, religious, historical, or political identity. We may be ignorant or biased toward the practices and perspectives of cultural others, and we may be oblivious of our prejudices.

My second supposition is that some people may be resistant to social change

because the dominant systems in which they live favor them substantially. Historically, divisive systems of power and privilege along the line of class, gender, and racial difference have existed in world cultures. Affirmations of the superiority of dominant cultures are so imbedded in the structure of society that they are often indiscernible (Freire, 2006; McIntosh, 1989). Also hidden is the invisible assertion that being of European descent is correct while other cultural ways can be seen as substandard (Nieto & Bode, 2008).

My third supposition based on the above experiences is that the arts can promote cross-cultural understanding. For example, I have participated in several cross-cultural artist workshops in five countries. In most of the workshops, we lived and worked together on art projects over a two-week period for artistic and cultural reasons. On my part, the interactions, presentations, informal dialogues, observation of other's creative process and continued communication have led to empathic awareness and some understanding of the content of their works. The supposition is not just for the visual arts, it is consistent with Eisner (2001) that presents the arts in general as a resource for teaching for empathic understanding of a situation.

Regrettably, those who are favored by dominant systems are often oblivious to the conditions experienced by people in the disfranchised group. They are unaware of the conditions because they are outsiders to such a realm of experience (McIntosh, 1989; Nieto & Bode, 2008). They often perpetuate their ways as normative rather than see their ways of living as just one of many possible alternatives. There is a tendency to stay in the comfort zone of "that's just the way things are" because it is often hard work to shift our

fundamental thoughts and actions.

This study addresses the continued inequalities of power relations that create lack of understanding between cultures in North America. Across North America, social inequalities continue to exist involving unequal power relations regarding race, ethnicity, and culture (Zinn, 1995; Anzaldua, 2007). These unequal relationships often lead to oppression, dominance and even death. Yet, these unequal relationships are not always intentional. Sometimes they result simply from a lack of cross-cultural understanding. Nor are social inequalities limited to the Western domination of ethnic minorities.

Nonetheless, Western domination does continue to be a problem, and it does need to be addressed. One way to address this problem is through the development of cross-cultural understanding, which may be accomplished through a variety of means, including arts education. In this chapter, I will identify cultural inequalities that continue to exist, discuss the potential role of arts education in promoting cross-cultural understanding, and articulate the questions that will guide the study.

The Persistence of Cultural Inequalities in Society Today

Many political and cultural inequalities have existed historically and continue to exist in society today. One powerful example involves the continued misunderstandings between people of indigenous cultures and people who practice modern Western ways of life. These views are often in direct opposition to one another. However, haven been born in Nigeria, I was quite stimulated by the work of the novelist, Daniel Quinn.

Quinn (1992 & 1997) uses a fictional setting to give insights into the nature of

this opposition and continued inequalities in our society today. Quinn presents the concepts of “Leavers “ and “Takers” to distinguish between Indigenous peoples, who historically tended to *leave* control of the world to nature or the “gods” (metaphorically speaking), and the rest of humanity, which has *taken* responsibility for controlling world affairs, including even who shall live and who shall die.

Quinn argues that the “Taker” lifestyle, which began in the Fertile Crescent (and possibly also a few other places) about ten thousand years ago, has gradually taken over the globe—north, south, east and west. The only “Leavers” left are a few remaining Indigenous peoples. There is an important historical dimension to Quinn’s viewpoints. He points out how Takers have constructed a view of human history that denigrates Indigenous cultures:

> The Leavers were [seen as] chapter one of human history- a long and uneventful chapter. Their chapter of human history ended about ten thousand years ago with the birth of agriculture in the New East. This event marked the beginning of chapter two, the chapter of the Takers (Quinn 1992, p. 42).

Quinn (1992) rejects this view of history, arguing that species that have been around for hundreds of thousands of years are evolutionarily stable. They have survived because they work. He then applies this idea to indigenous peoples. He argues that they survived over countless generations because they were evolutionarily stable until finally, about 10,000 years ago a new culture emerged. In a very short time this new culture expanded exponentially and displaced or subsumed almost all of those cultures that were evolutionarily stable for all those millennia. On the strength of Quinn’s argument we are

encouraged to learn from those who have demonstrated for millennia that they know how to live in the world without destroying the world. Quinn contrasts the wisdom of Indigenous peoples with the less sustainable practices such as overpopulation and over-consumption which are seen in modern Taker society.

Quinn uses the term “takers” to collectively refer to one group of humans in modern society who have chosen to see themselves as the center of the universe. The cultural mind-set of industrialized society, the “Taker” culture, commonly operates in exact opposition to “Leaver” ways of life. Taker society emphasizes unlimited competition rather than peaceful co-existence, rugged individualism rather than a sense of community, and a humanistic worldview rather than a systems worldview. Modern cities such as Singapore, Amsterdam, Seoul, Accra, Lagos, and New York exemplify Taker traditions.

Quinn points out the ironies of Taker society. One culture has expanded to become a world civilization that is based on an economy that locks up the food and other natural resources humans need to live. Now that this system is beginning to break down, we assume it is all humans rather than this system that is fundamentally flawed. Quinn says it is not *humans* that are flawed but rather just one *group* of humans that is flawed. This group is what he calls Takers, a culture that has expanded for thousands of years (because of their agricultural practices) and has now taken over most of the world.

However, some Leaver cultures still exist. There are the few indigenous people still around who do not lock up the food and try to control everyone else in the world. Indigenous tribes such as the Maasai in Tanzania and the Oromo in Somalia are a couple

of examples. Quinn says the Leaver mind-set tends to be more communal and egalitarian than Taker culture, and they often practice more sustainable ways of living. Leavers also provide each other cradle-to-grave social support, have belief systems that connect all aspects of life to one another, and give sacred meaning to all aspects of life. History has shown what happened when these two cultures came in contact (Zinn, 1995), but we have a lot to learn from those who knew (and still know) how to support each other and live in the world without destroying it (Quinn, 1992, 1997).

Conflicts between Indigenous people and Western civilization are important in our history, but these conflicts between cultures in North America did not begin with European colonization. Cultural misunderstandings existed even in pre-Columbian times. The different Native tribes interacted through trade, and they generally maintained tribal autonomy. Each group referred to itself as "the people" but referred to other groups as simply "others" or something even more despicable. Often, tribal conflict broke out among the disparate Native groups. Bands of Native people used what Quinn (1997) calls "erratic retaliation" to resolve their tribal conflicts. Although erratic retaliation appeared to be warlike, it had a different purpose than modern wars. Modern wars try to annihilate the enemy, but erratic retaliation mainly tried to maintain tribal autonomy and respect. It was not erratic retaliation that ultimately brought Native tribes to near extinction when the Europeans showed up in their harbors. Tribal sovereignty and a lack of willingness to unite might have prevented the Native peoples from saving their lands, but the genocides that occurred were committed at the hands of the Europeans colonizers.

According to Zinn (1995), American social history has been inundated with

cultural conflicts caused by the imbalance of privileges and power between the dominant European-derived cultures and marginalized cultures in North America. Such inequalities were inherent from the beginning of European contact with Columbus' arrival in the Americas. Zinn (1995) presents American social and cultural history from the lenses of those people who have been largely neglected in conventional history books, such as Indigenous Americans, Black slaves, women, the working poor, and immigrant laborers.

Beginning with the arrival of Columbus, Zinn describes gruesome conflicts based on first-hand accounts from Christopher Columbus' own journal as well as Spanish clergy and others eyewitnesses. Columbus' exploration and "civilization" of the New World were enacted by enslaving and killing the Native population when they were unable to produce the gold he believed existed in their lands. Arriving with a colonial (Taker) mindset, he and those who followed came with conquest and gain in mind.

The stakes were high for the colonist because they had made unrealistic promises to their financiers so often their acts were desperate. When Columbus and his men could not obtain sufficient gold, they forced the Natives into slave labor on huge plantations and chose some people from the Native tribes for export as slaves to repay the king and his Spanish financiers. Therefore, Columbus (and his followers) saw the Indians not as hospitable hosts but as a source of revenue and as subjects who would make fine servants (Zinn, 1996).

Unequal power relations persisted as European explorers began to colonize the North and South American continents. The result was wars even among the diverse cultures that subsisted of the European settlers, such as Queen Anne's War, the French

and Indian War, the Revolutionary War, and other wars in North America. Some of the wars were to prevent European powers from regaining control. In the end, the French colonized what later became Canada and the English colonized what later became the United States. All of these wars were about who would control the land that first belonged to the Native Americans.

Social inequalities involving race lingered as people of European descent continued to populate the Americas. One example involved the Trail of Tears. The Trail of Tears recounts the forced relocation of Native American tribes from their homelands in the Southeastern United States to modern Oklahoma (then called Indian Territory) by the United States Government between 1831 to 32. The forced emigration was justified by the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which was designed to gain more land for white settlers buy putting Native Americans in one territory for continued dominance. Some tribes went peacefully, but others, including some of the Cherokee living in Georgia, resisted. Many died along the way. On the basis of the deaths and associated hardship along the trail, it came to be called the Trail of Tears (or Nunna daul Isunyi, meaning “the Trail Where We Cried” in the Cherokee language).

Another cultural conflict based on power and privilege involved the annexation of Mexico. Originally a district of Mexico, Texas became independent after the Battle of the Alamo in 1836. As Texas joined the United States, a fight over the placement of the border with Mexico led to the Mexican War that left Mexico with about half of its original North American territory. Misunderstandings continued to grow between European settlers and the Mexican government. Part of the problem was that the

European settlers were not converting to the Catholic religion. Another problem was that some of the settlers brought slaves, which Mexico prohibited. On the European settlers' side, there was discontent with the Mexican government which some of them perceived as crooked. But whatever the causes of the differences were, the result was that the United States ended up taking about half of the original territory of Mexico.

Today, cultural tensions still exist along the border between the United States and Mexico, and within the United States in general where strong feelings are held about immigration, the speaking of Spanish, and other issues. As a multilingual person of Indian and Spanish descent born in the "borderlands" between the United States and Mexico, Gloria Anzaldua (2007) tells of the struggle for identity she has experienced as a person caught between three cultures: mainstream American, Native American; and Mexican. Anzaldua's autobiographical account portrays the United States-Mexican borderlands as an atmosphere of oppression, a historical and unending clash of cultures.

Anzaldua is outraged by the United States' annexation of Mexico and the imposition of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. This illegal act of aggression instantly made people of Mexican descent whose families had lived in this territory for generations into the "other." In spite of the border lines and wire fences that continue to lead to borderland conflicts, she claims: "This land was Mexican once, was Indian always, and is. And will be again" (Anzaldúa, 2007, p. 3). This stance for resistance and identity provides an insight into the Chicana Mestiza realities of historically embedded social inequalities regarding race, gender and culture. She goes on: "It's not a comfortable territory to live in, this place of contradictions. Hatred, anger and exploitation are the

prominent features of this landscape" (2007, p.19). But Anzaldua has not given up. Even though the borderlands are a place of contradictions, she says they can also be a place of growth and possibility.

Even though Anzaldua's borderlands are between the United States and Mexico, her story relates to others as well. Her story is a window to the ordeals of many others who live in different borderlands, including people who are still immersed in the contradictory cultures of the Taker lifestyle and the ancestral ways of the Leavers.

Jim Crow Laws provide still further insights into continued inequalities in North America. When slavery became illegal following the American Civil War, there were still means of enforcing cultural domination and oppression. After the war, most states in the South passed anti-African American legislation. These acts became known as Jim Crow laws. They discriminated against African Americans with regard to attending public schools and using facilities such as restaurants, theaters, hotels, cinemas, and public bathrooms. Trains and buses were also segregated, and in many states marriage between Whites and African American people was illegal.

Still another example of cross-cultural conflict and misunderstanding involves racial profiling. Harris (2003) proffers that racial profiling is a tool for continued White dominance. This may be true, but McIntosh (1989) notes that White privilege is as much a psychological matter as a material one. Many are used to thinking of privilege only in monetary terms but it involves much more than that. Interracial conflicts continue to stem from often hidden advantages some have over others because of race, gender or national origin. McIntosh says Whites have the luxury of not having to worry that their race is

going to mark them negatively when looking for work, going to school, shopping, looking for a place to live, or even driving for that matter. But she says these are things that people of color can not take for granted.

Harris (2003) enumerates numerous problematic incidents of racial profiling throughout American history. He warns that racial profiling is not only a violation of our constitutional and human rights but also that it creates tension among the diverse races that make up our society, which puts all of us at risk. As a systemic practice, racial profiling makes people in some communities feel racially targeted. Racial profiling has historically resulted in excessive use of force, in some cases leading to death, particularly among young Black males (Harris 2003).

Unfortunately, the scope of racial profiling is widening across the country. In 1995, after the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City, Timothy McVeigh, the white male assailant, fled. The law enforcement officers looked for "Arab terrorists" whom they thought responsible. Similarly, following the September 11 incidence, misplaced fear fueled intense racial profiling even in other Western nations, rounding up masses of Arab, South Asian and Muslim men for profiling.

Even at the point of this writing there is an ensuing debate over the voting for Obama as United States President. This debate reveals continued racial conflicts. There are at least two anti-racism positions involving this election. One is an activist group that assumes voters of Barack Obama only voted for him because they perceived him as being "White-like". As a graduate of an Ivy League university and a man raised by a single White mother (and her extended family), they believe his policy thoughts have been

driven by influenced by a culture of White privilege. Another view is that voters only elected Obama because he is racially Black and they believe this will positively influence his thinking in the White House. These racial assumptions seem to dismiss the intelligence and forethought of American people, Black and White, suggesting that they only utilize color as a basis for their decisions.

We may never know all the factors that drew people to vote as they did. It is clear that the factors that influence human actions are often complex. The roots of injustice and cultural misunderstanding are very diverse. This is why we need education, to help us learn more about each other. One way to learn about others is through the arts.

Arts Education as a Solution to the Problem of Cultural Misunderstanding

The literature indicates that arts education may be a useful way to promote cross-cultural understanding in Western settings. Various analyses and studies present arts education as means to promote cross-cultural understanding. Davenport (2000), for example, provides an analysis of current literature on multicultural education emerging in the field of art education. Davenport found that there is confusion over what constitutes multicultural, international-comparative, global, and community-based education. There is a need to clarify the differences between these four conceptions of art education because each of the approaches offers a different lens through which to view the intersections of culture and education.

According to Davenport (2000), (1) multicultural education teaches students about the diversity of cultures within a specific state or country. (2) Comparative-international approaches focus on understanding international educational systems and

curricula in light of the global forces that contribute to cultural differences across the world. (3) Global education is neither national in scope nor continental in focus. Instead, it considers the interconnectedness or universalism of people and things on the entire earth. Finally, (4) community-based education deals with particular local factors and people marked by common ownership such as the same geographical area, residential district, and neighborhood.

Davenport says that failure to distinguish among these four approaches leads to ineffective practices of art education. Understanding these approaches can assist art educators in developing comprehensive curricula. Davenport believes a blended approach, such as an intercultural perspective that presents each student's own culture as one of many worthy of study, is worthwhile.

Stinespring (1996) also draws on general literature to suggest that education through use of the arts may be a useful way to promote cross-cultural understanding. This article proffers tentative modes that the teacher can adopt in teaching about culture in the field of art education. Stinespring discusses three prevalent stages of art educator competency in implementing cultural diversity approaches in classrooms.

The first stage of art educator competency involves including examples in teaching to suggest that representatives from previously excluded others, such as women and peoples of marginalized cultures, can make equally appealing works of art. Art teachers at the second stage of competency apply cultural diversity pedagogies in the art classroom to teach about human diversity and its impact on artistic expression. They present the arts of diverse cultures as having equal aesthetic worth as dominant cultural

standards. This is what Blocker (2004) calls “relative equality”. At the third stage of competency, teachers seek knowledge about the overlooked meanings of the works by engaging in ways to teach art that will serve as models for art critical discourses. Stinespring says the teachers should select works based on the uniqueness of the experiences of previously marginalized groups to engage in a more theoretical analysis of the interconnections between the arts, historical context, and culture.

Many studies draw on K-12 and community-based fieldwork. An example by Adu-Poku (2002) looked at participants' perceptions of the education system and its effects on Black/African-Canadian learners. The study was conducted in response to the historical experiences of Black/African-Canadians and the literature on systemic exclusion of their artistic and cultural perspectives from mainstream education contexts. Data were generated in two settings in Vancouver, including a commnunity center and a public school. Data were generated over two years of participatory observation within an art education workshop.

Analysis of the data revealed seven problems, including curricula deficiency, racism in institutional contexts, lack of relevant art and cultural education models, inadequate teacher training and exclusionary teacher recruitment practices, lack of positive role models, inadequate family and community support, and gender issues. Findings from the study further suggest that culturally relevant curriculum can provide effective means of positive attitudinal change and increased self-confidence among Black/African-Canadian students. Thus, Adu-Poku recommends an African-centered multicultural art education as an alternative curriculum and pedagogy in North America.

There are also analyses on promoting cross-cultural understanding specifically at the K-12 level of education. One example is given by Fairbrother (2000), which examines the various and competing proposals for school reform with reference to language arts classroom at the high school level. Fairbrother takes on the problem of the selection of literature for the high school students that seeks to place multicultural emphasis over the "high-status" canon texts synonymous with the hegemonic control of the dominant culture. Fairbrother presents two common arguments against the inclusion of cultural diversity content in the language arts classroom.

The first argument portrays multicultural language arts education as having lower education merit, which implies that the knowledge is inferior in quality to the established Western canon. The second argument is that it is conventionally done to raise the self-esteem of minority peoples at the expense of those of the dominant Eurocentric culture. Fairbrother views a conciliation of both sides of the argument as a necessity and suggests that it is possible to expose students to the conventional canon and still allow them to experience the diversity of North American and world arts.

Ozbarlas (2008) did a comparative case study of American and German educational systems. The focus of the study was on two female minority teachers, one from each country. It was a naturalistic case study that borrows methodoloy from critical theory, critical race theory, and feminist theory. The need for the study arose from the observation that American and German educational systems have records of increase in ethnic groups in classrooms that is not matched by the population of minority teachers. For this reason, interracial tensions and conflicts, increasing percentages of second

language learners, and gaps in minority student achievement continued to be a problem. The study, therefore, sought to understand the two minority teachers' perspectives on, challenges of, and immediate opportunities regarding multicultural education.

Over a two-month period, data were generated from observations, semi-structured interviews, daily field notes, lesson plans, telephone conversations, emails, and the researcher's reflections. The information was analyzed using a constant comparison method. The emergent themes entailed life and classroom experiences, opinions related to differences and similarities, and participants' subject positions as female. The American and German cases both pointed to the fact that it is important to use a culturally sensitive pedagogy in dealing with minority students.

I also found relevant analyses that focused on college level art education. For example, Desai (1995) gave a critical analysis of racial ideologies underlying multicultural art education curricula in the United States in the mid 1990s. The focus was on two of the most discussed approaches that are produced, reproduced, and circulated in multicultural art education. These are issue oriented and theme oriented pedagogies. Desai critiqued the mainstream model of multicultural art education. His general idea was that the politics of representation of ethnic culture in multicultural art curricula involving teacher education produces the educational practice of presenting culture as a commodity to be displayed, performed, and admired.

Desai's main argument is that multicultural art education in schools neither served the function of understanding ethnic groups nor created measurable social change. Desai suggests that multicultrual art education taught this way actually restricted viable

solutions to racial inequality by partially suppressing issues of power and domination.

Another article that has to do with multicultural education at the college level was written by Henderson (2004). Henderson has *teaching for cross-cultural understanding* as sub-title of his paper, which shows his focus. He provides an overview of the major themes and debates about teaching for cross-cultural understanding with specific reference to Asian students. First, he presents his idea of the meaning and significance of cross-cultural understanding, as used by educators. Then he reviews some previous discussions and debates on how cross-cultural understanding can be achieved. Then he offers that global and regional realities indicate that students require cross-cultural understanding for the rewarding and complex challenge of engaging 'the other' in the settings involving Asian students.

There were two significant themes that emerged from Henderson's coding of the range of arguments. One advanced teaching about commonalities of human experience and interrelatedness of different cultures; that is, this view seeks to promote a more cooperative and sustainable global relations. The second theme was that an understanding of Asian cultures depends on acknowledging and respecting for what is distinctive about other cultures and recognizing the cultural lenses through which these observations about others are made.

Another article has *teaching for cross-cultural understanding* as the title. This was about Arlington County Public Schools (1978) and was a compilation of materials used for a staff development workshop that was designed to inculcate cross-cultural

understanding in junior high school and non-teaching employees. The workshop was designed to engage about 2,000 participants in an open discussion relating to race and cultural issues pertaining to fostering human relations. The document is divided into and presented in six sections. For example, the first section entails definitions of relevant terms, and recommended activities for teaching for cross-cultural understanding in the district. The section contains the workshop program and other pertinent information.

There was also evidence of a variety of literature that exist outside the official arts education curriculum. Reisberg (2006) studied six multicultural children's book artists whose works have garnered some awards. Reisberg referred to the study as a/r/tography, and the themes of the books that were analyzed related to race, place, and art. The research methodology included analyses of a/r/tography, critical multicultural education and analysis, place-based education, cultural production, and visual culture studies. The goal was to explore the interconnections between race, place, and art in the participants' lives and art. Reisberg proposes an integrated teaching of art that combines place-based and critical multicultural art education in line with the idea of the pleasure principle.

In general, the literature suggests that teaching and learning in the arts proffer solutions to the problem of cultural misunderstandings in society. In practice, however, classroom arts teaching for favorable understanding of human differences in diverse and democratic society can be a problematic project. It is problematic because cross-cultural understanding requires personal struggles with challenging, often unavoidable, issues and perspectives. For example, stereotypes participants bring into the classroom can perpetuate in one person’s mind negative assumptions about others. This can lead to a

devaluing that reinforces unequal power relations.

Seeing that a lack of cross-cultural understanding can be one cause of continuing cultural inequality, Freire (2006) propounds repositioning arts education as an aesthetic event. Greene (1988) advocates engagement with arts practices (including arts education) in a dialectical context. Other scholars have expanded visions of these ideas.

Freire (2006) calls for a revolution in education practice in which the oppressed demand that they be treated as subjects rather than objects. Freire talks about oppressive power relations in society and how they can be overcome through critical dialogue, community pedagogy, theory, the arts, and activism for collective social change. Freire's world view conceives our society as consisting of two broad groups, the oppressor and the oppressed. He used terms such as director/dependent, author/silent, subject/object, and invader/invaded as references for these two groups. Freire says that "Functionally, oppression is domesticating" but:

> To exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new naming. Human beings are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection (p. 88).

For Freire, therefore, learning and teaching through the arts should be dialogical. This implies that arts education for cross-cultural understanding should draw on interaction and mutual conversation between human beings. To Freire, this "dialogue further requires an intense faith in humankind, faith in their power to make and remake,

to create and re-create" (p. 90). Freire calls this concept an aesthetic event, which he used to imply a context in which the flow of the event takes precedence over the agents or audience who are present within it.

Freire's idea of an aesthetic event has been explored in arts education as a solution to the continuing cultural inequality in society. The Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal, 1985) is an example of such an exploration that serves for liberation of oppressed persons. As an artistic form for social engagement, the Theatre of the Oppressed creates performances committed to bringing about liberation of the oppressed in specific communities. The dramaturgy practiced at these theatres of social intervention becomes activism because, as the audience community creates the theatrical event, the processes of social oppression are demystified. The creation of the theatrical arts leads the audience to awareness of social constructions which, in turn, encourages them to question situations they had earlier accepted as inevitable, as "just the way things are". As the audience begins to see that reality is not (in Freire's words) static, but is changeable, they begin to imagine alternative solutions to daily problems.

Another way to promote cross-cultural understanding is to approach arts education in dialectical context. Greene (1988) explains this by saying that engagement with an artistic form can lead, as no other engagement can, to a recapturing of our authentic perspectives on the world. Greene explains that interaction with literature and other art forms can provide experiential opportunities to see the world from multiple perspectives. Through the arts people can expand the scope of their lived realities in order to experience empathy with others.

Arts processes and criticism can help people develop new ways of seeing, enter new aesthetic spaces, and locate themselves in an inter-subjective reality as they reach backward and forward in time. In this way, the product of the process can act as a mirror to the self and as a window to the other. Greene further explains that human beings are capable of imaginative and reflective thinking to see the world critically from a variety of perspectives. People's perspectives are colored by their personalities inherent from birth, their cultural conditioning, and their education and goals in life. These are always changing and all the time incomplete. The arts in their pluralities can, as Greene maintains, enable people to integrate the self with the world and other people. The result can be personal growth and empowerment, the freedom to make real choices as all kinds of connections with otherness begin to take place.

Anzaldua (2007) extends Greene's ideas of freedom and her focus on the arts in their pluralities. Specifically, Anzaldua talks about what she calls "invoking art". This is the idea that art is "alive, infused with spirit" (pp. 88-9). Art is process, it is functional instead of just ornamental, and it relates to everyday life. Also, for Anzaldua the arts are interrelated. In her words:

> In the ethno-poetics and performances of the shaman, my people, the Indians did not split the artistic from the functional, the sacred from the secular, art from everyday life. The religious, social and aesthetic purposes of art were all intertwined. Before the Conquest, poets gathered to play music, dance and sing and read poetry in open-air places around the *Xochicuahuitl, el Árbol Florido*, Tree-in-Flower (p. 88).

Anzaldua's idea of "Invoking Art" has a degree of affinity with John Dewey's aesthetic theory, which also situates art within ordinary experience. Dewey (1934) says that art and everyday life are inseparable. His view of "Art as experience" implies that the creation and consumption of art must be something of personal and knowledgeable value. This reminds us that art is an experience that reaches beyond the performance or the museum exhibition of paintings or sculptures. An art object does not exist as art until it is perceived this way by humans. The perceptive process involves integrated relationships between the art object and its medium, subject matter, expression, as well as the active audience who encounter each other, their mental environments, and their cultures at large. Dewey believed aesthetics exist in everyday experiences like woodworking and gardening, and he thought there was contiguity between the "refined" experiences that are considered works of art and the experiences of everyday life.

The aesthetic experience begins in our captivation with an activity. One example is fascination with the rhythm of a fond place in which every part flows into what follows. This happens when a problem is solved or a game is played out to its conclusion. In the same way a skillful cobbler who does his work with proclivity is "artistically engaged." Dewey's idea of everyday art as experience and his breaking down of hierarchical distinctions between "high art" and "low art" is different than how art historians and fine arts museums usually see art. In these settings art products are external and physical and ideal whereas Dewey views aesthetics in everyday experience.

Elliott Eisner (2001) also believes the arts can teach empathy, or the feel of a situation, thus leading to critical understanding and empowerment. He writes about

various forms of pluralism in art education and says the arts can help people see aspects of life that normally go undetected. In painting for example, the feel of ones brush touching upon the canvas, the surprise of witnessing changing colors and hues, the experience of wet dirt sticking to ones fingers can lead to empathic understanding, feelings of empowerment, and mastery of the medium. Learning from the arts can provide intuitive, creative, descriptive, and purposeful insights that cannot be obtained through more mechanistic and prosaic approaches to teaching.

Several specific approaches in art education are common currency for promoting understanding across cultures. Approaches to arts education for favorable understanding of human differences evolved in North America following the Civil Rights Movement in the late the 1960s and were reinforced by subsequent multicultural movements (Efland, 1990). Pedagogical approaches range from the Multicultural standpoint (Delacruz, 1995; Stinespring, 1996; Davenport, 2000; Adejumo, 2002; Poku, 2002) to Visual Culture Art Education which is synonymous with the postmodernist movement[2] (Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001).

Multicultural standpoint is commonly a part of the studio approach and Comprehensive Art Education[3] (CAE). While the studio approach emphasizes personal-

[2] Postmodernism is a response to modernism. It is centered on critique more than on content. Postmodernism is not a philosophical system; rather, it is a critique of philosophy. Most types of postmodernism deconstruct the premises and values of older philosophical systems such as Romanticism, Marxism, and capitalism, turning them against themselves. Certain kinds of postmodernism such as feminism, environmentalism, and neo-Marxism reconstruct new premises, values, and ideas in place of the old ones they have deconstructed. In this way they attempt to move previous value systems to the periphery and bring new ones to the center.

[3] An outgrowth and maturation of discipline-based art education (DBAE). DBAE focuses on making art, art criticism, aesthetics and aesthetic inquiry, and art history. CAE incorporates additional strategies and understandings. There are various forms of CAE, but all are discipline-centered, cognitive, thematic, interdisciplinary (as appropriate), and life-centered. Art for life is one model of CAE.

practical knowledge and skills through creative expression, CAE considers art in its multiplicity (e.g., we make art to make sense of things and to give meaning to self and collective existence). The visual language of art, consisting of compositional, technical, and conceptual tools and strategies, helps artists connect ideas and emotions through the physical act of constructing aesthetic forms to represent their meanings. The eye, the mind, the heart, and the hand interact and inform each other symbiotically when we make art, intrinsically. Proverbially, the art product is as good as the process that goes into it.

The point of visual culture art education (VCAE) is to learn to "read" the meanings of expressive visual artifacts and performances in everyday life in order to be informed and critical-thinkers in a consumer-based society. VCAE includes visual artifacts and performances of all kinds of popular art forms, as well as new and emerging technologies, inside and outside the art museum. It focuses on beliefs, values, and attitudes imbued in artifacts and performances by the people who make, present, and use them. The primary means of understanding visual culture is critique (Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001). Typical activities in such a classroom might entail the creation of art, art appreciation, observation, interpretation, critique, and philosophizing about the arts along diverse competing ideological camps. The idea is that diverse conditions and critiques will continue to beckon political, economic, cultural, and educational change.

Stout (1997) adds that teaching and nurturing critical thinking in art can promote appreciation of diversity and multicultural understanding because of its role in fostering multilogical reasoning. Stout's tripartite conception of context entails the interpretive context of students and teacher, the aesthetic context of artist and artwork, and the

cognitive and affective contexts that define thinking in a critical mode. All three operate synergistically in the critical arts-based classroom. One solution to the continued inequalities that promote a lack of understanding between cultures in North America is an arts education teaches and nurtures multicultural reasoning.

Thus, Western dominance and oppression continue to exist in North America. I personally have experienced these misunderstandings because of my cultural and linguistic differences, as have many other people of similar backgrounds within our society. Arts education may provide valuable opportunities for students to see the world from diverse pathways. By approaching arts education critically (Freire, 2006), dialectically (Greene, 1988), and experientially (Dewey, 1934) we may begin to develop greater understanding and empathy with others.

Research Questions

Historically people have been divided according to cultural differences. Although we do not have to be, it has often been so in North America. The dilemma is this: What do we do with our diversity? Must we allow it to continue to divide us, or can we use it to unite us as a society? What must we do in the classroom if we wish to benefit from our diversity? Arts education may be a good response to the problem, but what if the educator is of a different cultural background teaching in predominantly White schools, as I may soon be?

In light of these social questions and concerns, this study focused on the classroom efforts of three college teachers who were known for using the arts to teach in culturally sensitive ways. The purpose of the study[4] was to gain insights into their

[4] This is commonly referred to as the "object of study" or the "focus of study".

classroom efforts and the possibilities and challenges of promoting cross-cultural understanding through arts education. As a Nigerian born American citizen, I also wanted to know how this was done by teachers from culturally diverse backgrounds in Western settings. Thus, the research questions were:

(1) What can be learned from three college teachers about how to teach the arts to promote cross-cultural understanding?

(2) What goals were the teachers trying to achieve with the multicultural arts?

(3) How did they explain their experiences, including the challenges and possibilities?

So far I have identified an important social problem, a possible educational response, and the focus of the study. In chapter two I will discuss the theoretical lens that was used to interpret the data. Chapter three will be about the research method. Then, chapter four present the findings. Chapter five will conclude with the analysis and a discussion of implications for education in general.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL LENS

The Dialectic of Freedom

There are diverse ways of looking at the question of how art education can be used to promote cross-cultural understanding. One of the ways is to examine it through the lens of Maxine Greene's "The Dialectic of Freedom[5]". Greene views society as a community in which personal freedom is to be found only in relation to others. Greene says the quest for freedom entails the process of society becoming a true community, not a dominator society. The process ought to be critical in the sense that it can question justice and collaborative in that it requires our coming together. The process is also an existential project in that it requires figuring out the meaning of all these complex dialectics as they relate to our self development as individuals in community. From Greene's view, education itself is conceivable as a dialectical process that can be realized through relational use of the arts.

It can be argued, from Greene's perspective, that education is a dialectical process in which personal freedom is negotiated in relation to collective freedom. To say that your freedom can only be found in interdependence with my freedom and vice versa is a paradoxical statement. This presents education as a relational dialectic, a woven kind of thing that could happen in a community. This is necessary for what Greene calls positive freedom, which is critical, collaborative, constructive, and existentially negotiated. Positive freedom is "freedom to" imagine and achieve new possibilities. This is different from negative freedom which takes the form of individualism and is seen as "freedom

[5] Greene, M. (1988). The dialectic of freedom. New York: Teachers College Press.

from" social responsibilities for one another.

The notion of education as a dialectical process presents education as freedom in practice. It suggests that the activities of educating or development and growth of a person's mind does not occur in isolation. Rather, education is a dialectical process involving individuals as members of larger societies and cultures. Greene notes that, in fact, education is the product of the dialectical process of interaction between students and students, between students and teachers, between physical, social and emotional environmental factors, and between personal and collective freedom in society. By questioning the dichotomy between educator and learner, it can be said that nobody simply educates another and that nobody simply educates oneself. Rather, people educate each other through their interactions with and within the world.

Greene (1988) extends Paulo Freire's concept of "humanization" as the primary vocation in education. Freire's basic argument in the concept of "humanization" is that true freedom is the essential aspect of humanity. Oppression involves "dehumanization" which occurs through the constraining of freedom to become fully conscious and fully active in shaping ones own realities and conditions. Dehumanization affects both the oppressed and oppressor (Freire, 2006). When one oppresses another, consciously or unconsciously, this helps define the reality not only of the oppressed but also the oppressor. As Greene states, humanization as the primary vocation of education involves overcoming alienation and upholding men and women as persons rather than objects.

The idea that the oppressed and oppressor are both affected is consistent with the common saying: "None one is free until all are free". Freire argues that education should

raise the critical awareness of students so that they become subjects, rather than objects, of the world. This means that they can act upon and shape their world rather than simply waiting for it to act upon them. While the educational thought of Freire emphasizes the concrete reality of oppression and the oppressed, Greene's shows how it can be done in education from multiple cultural perspectives and through the use of the arts.

Greene talks about educating for positive freedom in human thought, feeling and action. She views individualism and freedom as dialectical aspects of a shared world. She argues that naming and overcoming material and ideal obstacles to achieve freedom is a dialectical process. The relationship is dialectical in that neither individual freedom nor community responsibility can be resolved nor abandoned. Greene sums up the text of "The Dialectic of Freedom" by saying that there is a:

> dialectical relation marking every human situation: the relation between subject and object, individual and environment, self and society, outsider and community, living consciousness and phenomenal world (p. 8).

Greene is saying that we and our situations are simultaneously present, each modifying and shaping the other. We all struggle to be free from limitations, oppressive conditions, distortions of our inner and outer origins. However, freedom is elusive. It is not a given, it is not always obtained in concurrence with others. The conditions that subsist in freedom are constantly evolving. Yet, freedom is so precious that it can not be abandoned. We constitute it in a thematic manner and symbolize it by language, by naming it. The naming is not carried out in silence, but through words, actions and reflections in relation to the lives and circumstances of ourselves and others.

What does Greene say that could provide windows to understanding the efforts of United States college teachers who use multicultural arts in their classrooms? Greene says: (1) it is necessary for individuals to become situated in the quest for freedom, but this freedom can only be attained in the social context of community; (2) there is also a dialectical relationship between the role of education and the responsibility of the educator, and educators share societal responsibility for helping students question what is going on around them in order to start their own journeys toward freedom; and (3) the arts, broadly defined, can be a valuable resource in this journey. Regarding this final point, Greene argues that creation and appreciation of the arts can provide experiential opportunities to see the world from multiple realities or perspectives. Thus, they can enable individuals to experience empathy with others. In the following paragraphs, I will describe these key ideas and explain how they orient the study.

The Role of Personal Freedom and Social Responsibility

In the text, Greene says that freedom relating to individualism[6] and social responsibility are in a dialectical relation in our shared world. Drawing on philosophy, the arts, history, and feministic pedagogy, Greene (1998) portrays the actual struggles of women, immigrants, and disenfranchised cultures that have historically embraced social freedom. She says that the role of personal freedom and social responsibility in North America has historically involved a dialectical tension. According to Greene, there is a dialectical relation in the sense that individuals need to become situated in the quest for personal freedom. The paradox is that personal freedom can only be attained within the social context of community.

[6] Feelings of entitlement to do as one pleases.

Greene argues that the pursuit of community often leads to alienation in an individualistic world. The search for freedom can lead to self-alienation unless it is negotiated in concern with others because each modifies and shapes the other. In fact, nobody liberates anybody else, and nobody liberates oneself all alone. People liberate themselves in fellowship with each other.

Greene explains that freedom, in the temporal context, is not a given. It is an achievement which frequently involves resisting oppressive social conditions, including the pressures of rugged American individualism. It is also about choosing to pursue critical life "projects" or goals in collaboration with others and to transcend oppositional forces that negate their completion. Freedom, herein, implies:

> freedom developed by human beings who have acted to make a space for themselves in the presence of others, human beings become 'challengers' ready for alternatives, alternatives that includes caring and community. And we shall seek, as we go, implications for emancipatory education conducted by and for those willing to take responsibility for themselves and for each others (p. 56).

Greene emphasizes that it is only in the presence of others that we can create legitimate collective change. Greene may be understood to imply that in the world my positive freedom is robbed by others' negative freedom. Yet, none of us can afford to be indifferent towards our responsibilities as members of the larger community. This view of freedom encourages a systemic 'relational' notion of intrapersonal (inner) freedom and interpersonal (outer) freedom[7] in our interconnected world. Greene argues that freedom is precious and that it comes through responsibility for our selves in relation to others.

[7] Interpersonal entails relating to others, occurring among or involving interactions between people.

Personal freedom comes through the understanding of the objective necessity for autonomy and choosing to act to specifically change the circumstances that limit attainment of the *projects* that subsume personal completion in communion with others.

The dialectic process is recursive. The dialectic of freedom entails the recursive process of people imagining and carving out possibilities for positive freedom in democratic public spaces. This is suggestive in the use of phrases such as “what might be, and what is not yet”, “perceived through reconciliation between the Self and the Other”, and “repositioning the self in relationship to others”. Many dialectics or tensions coexist between individuals and society in the quest for freedom and may re-present themselves as the people in community strive toward their collective completion. This recursive process, in the words of Greene, is “a striving that can never end”. It is dialectical.

The Role of Education

Maxine Greene also emphasized educating consciously for positive freedom. According to Greene (1988), education in a free society involves: (1) individuals desiring to think and speak by their own words; (2) a sense of collaboration and connectedness in community; and (3) the opening of spaces and perspectives in the classroom and the world. All of these are important in “discovering together a power to act on what they are choosing themselves to be” (1988, p.12). Greene specifies that “it is through and by means of education, many of us believe, that individuals can be provoked to reach beyond themselves in their intersubjective space” (p.12).

According, to Greene, there is also a dialectical relationship between the role of education and the responsibility of the teacher. Education is a dialectical process in which

teachers enable students to move between private knowing and public discourse. It is also a process in which students move between the role of student and the role of teacher and from positions of dependence to positions of interdependence as a member of the larger society and culture. Growth and change, thus, depends on ones proclivity to understand these ambiguities. Again, Greene argues, there is:

> a dialectical relation marking every human situation: the relation between subject and object, individual and environment, self and society, outsider and community, living consciousness and phenomenal world. This relation exists between two different, apparently opposite poles; but it presupposes a mediation between them…There are the effects of environment, class membership, economic status, physical limitations, as well as the impact of exclusion and ideology (p. 8-9).

Essentially, Greene says education and society need to become immersed in the pursuit of freedom. For her, education is a key to achieving dialectical freedom. On the role of experiential education, Greene explains:

> It is through and by means of education, many of us believe, that individuals can be provoked to reach beyond themselves in their intersubjective space. It is through and by means of education that they may become empowered to think about what they are doing, to become mindful, to share meanings, to conceptualize, to make varied sense of their lived worlds. It is through education that preferences may be released, languages learned, intelligences developed, perspectives opened, possibilities disclosed. I do not need to say again how seldom this occurs today in our technicized, privatized, consumerist time…

> Reforms or no, teachers are asked to teach to the ends of 'economic competitiveness' for the nation. (1988, p. 12)

In this quote, Greene paints a picture of schools in society showing signs of losing ground in some ways. Greene contends that *public space*s to discuss possibilities are needed in education in North America today. Greene stresses that too little "is done to empower students to create spaces of dialogue in their classrooms, spaces where they can take initiatives and uncover humanizing possibilities" (p.13). She questions the hidden school curriculum (from grade school to graduate level) of commonly teaching students to pursue money and self-interests.

In her view, education is also about our collective freedom. It requires a process of continually carving out practical "alternatives that include caring and community". At its base, Greene's notion of experiential education is a social constructivist process that takes place from the inside out and the outside in, helping diverse people make sense of the world in collaboration with one another. In consequence, the dialectic of freedom entails a recursive process of individuals consciously carving out possibilities for freedom in democratic public spaces. Such spaces require the provision of possibilities for the expression of "what might be an always open world" (p. xi).

Greene further says that teachers have a responsibility for helping students question what is going on around them in order to start their own journey toward freedom. Greene's principal project in the book has to do with making known the role of education and the responsibility of the teacher. She thinks that collectively, teachers should enable students to coordinate their views with those of the society in order to start their own journey toward

personal and collective freedom. Greene maintains that teachers have a profound influence on students which can be either empowering or disempowering. Education for true freedom has to be emancipatory.

The observation that education for true freedom is emancipatory is what Freire (2006) means by dialogical education. Freire distinguishes between dialogical education, which is empowering, and anti-dialogical education, which is disempowering. Freire says that dialogical education is pedagogy for true dialogue that leads to critical consciousness and liberation in a shared world. Central to dialogical education is the transformation of teacher-student relations and the way all of s think about knowledge. Whereas anti-dialogical education treats the student as an empty vessel to be filled with knowledge or a bank in which knowledge should be deposited, dialogical education investigates the ways in which knowledge is socially constructed. Anti-dialogical education creates classroom environments that are exclusive where language is elitist and only the 'experts' are really allowed to talk. In anti-dialogical classes, new members are intimidated, afraid to ask questions, and feel intellectually inadequate. The result, to quote Freire, is that we 'domesticate' rather than 'liberate' the student.

Greene sees it as expedient to wake society through transformative teaching. Obviously, she is encouraging those committed to education to start seeing the diversity within our society from gainful standpoints. This is because people, irrespective of race, class or gender, have the unique "capacity to surpass the given and look at things as if they could be otherwise" (Greene, 1988, p. 3).

The Role of the Arts

Greene also presented the arts as a resource. According to her, the arts provide experiential opportunities that enable us to see the world from multiple perspectives. Greene demonstrates how empathy can be achieved through creation and appreciation of the arts. Greene also presents the arts as an alternative for critical awareness. Greene's focus on the arts, especially literature, offers a way for people to achieve critical awareness. Greene further explains that the arts can help expose and push back the invisible bars in society. We are reminded how arts education can lend to transformative practice in the classroom.

According to Greene, the arts provide experiential opportunities that open us up to diverse ways of thinking and doing. Greene may be taken to imply that "the story is always partial[8]" unless it is recounted from its multiple vantage perspectives. Greene says that we should "recognize that no accounting, disciplinary or otherwise, can ever be finished or complete. There is always more. There is always possibility" (p. 128). Seeing that the human being exists within a band of experience in which all things are interwoven, Greene thinks problems for education in society are therefore in plurality. For this reason, any effort to understand or change an aspect of a society must involve an analysis of its interrelations.

Even so, Greene demonstrates how empathy can be achieved through creation and appreciation of the arts. She says empathy can be realized through reconciliation between the self and the other by reorganizing the sense of self in relationship to others. In creation and appreciation of the arts, empathy can be evoked through a recapturing of the

[8] A common idea in Postmodern discourse.

authentic perspectives embedded in the processes of creating art objects—not only literary texts, but music, painting, poetry and dance. In this way, works of art can act as a mirror to the self and as a window to the other. When authentically attended to, they are dialogical spaces wherein multiple voices and multiple discourses intersect and interact.

Greene also presents the arts as a resource for critical awareness. Greene's focus on the arts offers a way for people to achieve critical awareness. The critical awareness often proffers transformative and liberating effects not only on the makers but on the public in general. Thus, literature draws new audiences. Specifically, the arts:

> have the capacity, when authentically attended to, to enable persons to hear and see what they would not ordinarily hear and see, to offer visions of consonance and dissonance that are unfamiliar and in deed abnormal, to disclose the incomplete profiles of the world. As importantly, in this context, they have the capacity to defamiliarize experience: to begin with the overly familiar and transfigure it into something different enough to make those who are awakened hear and see…Jazz and the blues (as does women's novels) have long had a transformative, often liberating effect on many populations...The growing ability to look at even classical works through new critical lenses has enabled numerous readers, of both genders, to apprehend previously unknown renderings of their lived worlds. (pp. 128-129)

By saying "they have the capacity to defamiliarize experience," Greene may be understood to imply that when authentically attended to, the arts enable persons to reach

beyond the familiar. They enable persons to hear, see or feel what they would not ordinarily experience, and to question and critique the inevitability of that which they have long taken for granted.

Greene further explains that the arts can help identify and push back the invisible bars in society. Greene says it is not only the domain of silent cultures or disfranchised cultures that push back the invisible bars, but also that the arts can unearth new possibilities within which transformations of our experience can take place. Greene cites cases from the history of art wherein artists thrust away the dominant auras and broke away from past artistic modes. In painting, the works of Giotto, della Francesca, Botticelli, Michelangelo, Raphael, Poussin, Constable, Monet, Picasso, and others opened fresh vistas for those choosing to see the world anew through the visual arts.

Greene's notion that the arts can help identify and push back the invisible bars of society by unearthing new possibilities that can transform our ordinary experience is similar to John Dewey's view of "Art as Experience." Traditional art history and fine arts museums present artworks as existing external to our experience, whereas, in Dewey's view, "art" exists within experience, much of which occurs in our everyday lives. Greene says inauthentic visions of the arts perpetuate incomplete profiles of the world. Dewey (1934) views experience as a phenomenon that occurs continuously in space.

Thus, Dewey (1934) presents art, art works, and experience together as a unified aesthetic experience. He thinks it is a mistake to define art solely as art objects. In spite of the variations of its constituent parts, Dewey says that individual art objects are inextricable from the experiences of the local cultures that give them birth. The real art

may therefore be the process of making or encountering objects and actions as complete and unified experiences in which every successive part flows freely into what follows. In fact, Dewey claims that a true work of art is a refined and intensified form of experience beyond the intent of the maker. When the work is separated from the experiential realm, it is separated from life.

Arts education can be used as transformative practices in the classroom. Greene maintains that art forms should be seen as ever-present possibilities. The arts have emancipatory potential and can be counted on to help liberate the human mind. Greene grieves that such ideas are not widespread to most of our classrooms; few people are informed or courageous enough to actually see art's potential (p. 131).

Interaction with works of art in these ways is an experience about which people can ask questions and think about challenges and possibilities. By asking about challenges and possibilities, they can decide to act to overcome the obstacles that limit their own completion as humans and to expand the scope of their lived realities.

In this chapter I have shown that Greene (1988) represents the growth of freedom as a socially situated dialectical struggle. The struggle for freedom entails "the coming together" of an elusive self with elusive others. This is much more than assimilating into a cultural melting pot. In this literature, the principal themes involve teaching to enable human acts of consciousness and to enable the experiential process of seeing the world through multiple realities. Greene is optimistic about education, including the arts, and its place in promoting personal and shared societal freedom. She discusses schools in a changing society, educational reform, critical thinking, and the significance of the arts in

democratic education. We are encouraged to consider that human freedom is not a given in some preordained sense but comes through conscious efforts in the context of community “to open spaces for persons in their plurality, spaces where they can become different, where they can grow” (Greene, 1988, p. 56).

Collectively, Greene views the challenges and possibilities of resolving the tensions between negative freedom and the needs of society as a major issue of current concern. She further views education, including arts education, as a part of the solution. In the next chapter, I will discuss the methodology that was used to study how three arts educators attempted to teach for cross-cultural understanding.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, I used critical qualitative research methodology to examine three United States college teachers' perspectives of their classroom efforts. I wanted to know how the three educators were using the arts in their college classrooms to enable their students to understand cultural differences in a Western setting. The main research question was: What can be learned from college teachers about how to use the arts to promote cross-cultural understanding? In an attempt to answer this question, I conducted a critical qualitative study of three college teachers' perspectives and practices. After collecting and analyzing the data, I decided to use Maxine Greene's "The Dialectic of Freedom" as a theoretical lens through which to view these teachers' efforts. I have already given an overview of her theory, which sheds light on the problem of cultural misunderstandings that continue to exist in North America.

In this chapter I will discuss the critical qualitative methodology that was used in the study and give my justifications for this choice. First, I will discuss the basic ideas of qualitative research and critical theory which are the conceptual basis for the term critical qualitative research. Then I will discuss the particular critical qualitative research methodology used in this study. In the first section the following questions were used to guide the discussion: "What is qualitative research? What is critical theory? Why was critical qualitative research used in this study? In the latter section, I described my methodological approach, including a description of the participants and setting, the research plan, means of data collection and analysis, and questions of confidence and

trustworthiness.

Research Approach: Critical Qualitative Research

What is critical qualitative research? First, what is qualitative research? Qualitative research uses a non-quantitative mode of data that cuts across disparate disciplines and topics. Collectively, qualitative research is describable as an attempt to obtain an understanding of "the how and why" of people's perspectives and attitudes, behaviors, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, cultures and lifestyles. It is more than just the production of a quantitative measurement of their characteristics or behaviors. It relies on qualitative interpretations of smaller but focused samples rather than statistical analyses derived from experimental studies based on large random samples as is the case with quantitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

There are diverse research traditions that fall under the qualitative mode of inquiry. The major ones are case study, grounded theory, phenomenology, historical research, and ethnography (Creswell, 2007). The main methods of data gathering are participant observation, interactive interviewing, collection of field notes or written descriptions provided by participants, artifact collection and content analysis. Some qualitative research methods may be combined in order to provide comparative results. Thick descriptions are another essential ingredient of the qualitative methodology. The goal of the thick descriptions, synonymous with the qualitative research process, is to gain insights into the meanings and definitions of the situation presented by participants within the study.

The qualitative research tradition tends toward perspectives, insights, and understandings of contents rather than striving to identify and generalize absolute truths. Thus, for many qualitative researchers, the subjective beliefs of the people being studied have explanatory primacy over the theoretical knowledge of the researcher. In consequence, Jorgensen puts forward:

> While the researcher may have a theoretical interest in being there, exactly what concepts are important, how they are or are not related, and what, therefore, is problematic should remain open and subject to refinement and definition based on what the researcher is able to uncover and observe. (1989, p. 18)

What is critical theory? In the general literature, critical theory is used interchangeably with critical social theory and critical theory of society. A theory, in the scientific sense of the word, is an analytic structure meant to explain how things actually work under specific conditions, or why certain things happen as they do on the basis of generally accepted hypotheses. Critical theory, as a critique of society, refers to a series of pathways for intellectual inquiry in diverse disciplines that aim at rigorous intellectual explanation, precisely accounting for and meticulously justifying the theoretical and critical influences upon and determinants of aspects of our modern society. This signifies that such mapping of the present social conditions is a complex task that can only be achieved through a multi-disciplinary approach that combines perspectives drawn from different fields of study.

But critical theory is more than a theoretical explanation of just anything. Rather, it is an explanation of problems and possibilities associated with social classes in

capitalist societies. Ingram & Simon-Ingram (1991) indicate that the term "critical theory" was coined as early as the 18th century during Age of Enlightenment that emphasized the use of reason and individualism as the primary source and legitimacy for authority, but most scholars now consider it a 20th-century phenomenon that came out of the Frankfurt School of Social Research. Essentially, critical theory is self-reflective in its nature and value driven because it purports to underscore the theoretical basis of such fields as literature, philosophy, art, history, and the social sciences, particularly social theory, politics, and anthropology. Each critical theorist or "criticalist" uses disciplinary-specific skills, talents, and knowledge to contribute to the massive endeavor of critical theory. This endeavor, as Greene (1988) suggests, is to transform our present society into a more just, rational, humane, and reconciled society. What I mean by "critical qualitative research" is simply qualitative research that draws on critical theory to interpret the findings (see, for example, Anderson, 1989; Carspecken, 1996; and Quantz & O'Connor, 1988).

Why was it important to use critical qualitative research in this study? One aim of the study was to use critical theory[9] as a contextual basis to generate critical understanding of how United States college teachers use the arts to promote multicultural understanding. Using individual interview methodologies and participant observation of classroom actions, I attempted to uncover the teachers' goals and challenges in relation to hidden privileges of power operating in local educational settings. I examined the data through the lenses of a critical theory of society (Greene, 1988). Critical theories of

[9] Or a "critical theory of society" which holds that social life in Western societies must be understood as having been constructed in contexts of power.

society such as cultural diversity theory or multiculturalism presuppose that cultures are positioned unequally in their power relations[10]. They further assume that what is needed for long-term social sustainability is more equal power relations. I wanted to explore my findings in relation to prevalent social and cultural misunderstandings and to consider the possibility of arts education as a means of narrowing gaps of misunderstandings between cultures and civilizations.

Maxine Green's (1988) "The Dialectic of Freedom" is an appropriate theoretical lens for critical qualitative research. Greene draws on a variety of fields, including philosophy, literature, political theory, economics, history, feministic pedagogy, and the arts to portray the actual struggles of women, immigrants, and minority groups in North America. She suggests that there has been a common currency of tensions between "negative freedom" (freedom *from* social responsibility and communal obligations) and "positive freedom" (freedom *to* discover and assert ones own voice in collaboration with others in search of a more just and equity world for all). What is needed, in view of the hard realities of 21st century daily life, is a changed perspective; and education can help, especially through use of the arts (Greene, 1988).

Specific Research Design

The critical qualitative processes of generating data, analyzing the data, and writing about social issues were intricate processes that engaged the teacher informants, the participant observer's perspectives, and the literature. Like other forms of qualitative

[10] This is the antecedent to teaching the arts in multicultural ways in North America. One cannot talk about teaching to build cross-cultural communication without alluding to these hidden privileges.

research, the primary data-gathering "instrument" in this study was the researcher. Data were gathered through semi-structured interview questions, participant observation of the teachers during their classes, artifact collection, and content analysis.

Selection of the participants and settings were critical aspects of the research design. The population of the study involved United States college educators who used the arts in culturally sensitive ways to promote cross-cultural understanding. Three participants were purposefully selected through the sampling frame of snowball[11], that is, through recommendations of people who knew them and believed they would be good examples for the study (Creswell, 2007). Two of these participants taught at one site, and the third participant taught at a different site.

The three participants were Rosa, Jim, and Mariama. Rosa is female and of European Descent. Mariama is also female but of African American descent. Jim is male and of Native American descent. While Rosa taught at one large university within the state, Mariama and Jim taught at another large university within the state. (Chapter four provides a summary of each participant's background in relation to their classroom efforts to use the arts as a means of promoting cross-cultural understanding.)

The choice of data generation and analysis procedures was also critical to the research design. The critical qualitative research procedure was a suitable choice in the study because it provided the thick descriptions needed to illuminate the complexities that impact on teachers' pedagogical choices. It was important to illuminate dialectical relations between conformity to convention and transformative efforts. I also wanted to

[11] Also known as chain sampling.

examine dialectical relations between Western and non-Western worldviews in light of power and privilege. These were critical ingredients in the methodology. Thus, the data generation included several procedures adapted from Carspecken (1996).

Carspecken (1996) enumerates five integrated and overlapping stages for gathering and analyzing critical qualitative data. The first stage involves compiling a primary record through observation to gather monological data through note taking, audio taping, and video taping. The data are monological because the researcher speaks alone[12]. At the second stage the researcher begins to analyze the primary record as it exists so far, simply to bring forth tacit themes and factors that may be oblivious to the participants. This is possible through raw coding, grouping codes, allocating meaning fields, delineating the type of claims being made, and other techniques for grounding the participants' claims.

From the third through the fifth stages, the researcher ceases to be the only voice in the data generation and analysis. The third stage is about dialogical data generation where communicative interaction, such as interviews or observations of participants by the researcher, generates further data. The fourth stage involves discovering system relations by grounding the participants' claims in the wider contexts of *social locales* and *social systems*. Finally, the fifth stage entails using system relations (derived from stages one through four) to explain the findings. This allows the relationships between systems to be reinterpreted according to cultural, economic and political power relations.

Carspecken's (1996) emphasis on a *hermeneutic recursive strategy* served as a central role in the data generation and analysis used in this study. Although the five

[12] No dialogue with participants.

stages for critical qualitative research could be viewed as five separate steps, Carspecken says that rather than being hierarchical, these five stages take place more as a circular or hermeneutic form of analysis. For example, while the first and third stages (collection of monological and dialogical data) are an ongoing process, the second stage (reconstructive analysis) informs the further gathering of data. With this recursive process in mind, I made series of "visits", one per week per teacher for a period of eight weeks, to each of the study sites.

I applied Carspecken's stages as follows. First, I conducted initial informal interviews with all three teachers at the beginning of the fieldwork. The interview with Rosa was conducted in a coffee shop. I met with Jim and Mariama in their offices. The purpose of this initial interview was to acquaint myself with the participants and gather any relevant artifacts and general information I might be able to study prior to my classroom visits. Each interview session lasted for about one hour. I made field notes and began to ground the participants' claims in the wider context of "social locales" and "educational systems". I attempted to generate "monological data" to in advance a little more about what each teacher does in practice. Each of the teachers said[13] they were involved in multicultural arts education.

Second, I observed the teachers' classroom actions for eight weeks during the spring of 2009. During these visits I sat in their classes, took extensive field notes, and began to articulate themes that may not have been easily observable to the teachers because they may have been tacit. I recorded as accurately as possible what was going

[13] All three teachers said they try to teach the arts in ways that affirm cultural diversity.

on. Often, I briefly asked the teachers clarifying questions at the end of the class meetings and gathered relevant artifacts to see if the teachers' perspectives from the interviews matched what I was observing.

These clarifying questions related to Carspecken's third stage for critical qualitative research, which involves dialogical data generation based on communicative interaction between the researcher and participants. My role as a researcher was both that of an outsider (an uninvolved bystander) and an insider (a fully engaged participant). My aim was to identify with the participants and to try to get close to them while still maintaining a professional distance. This dual role permitted adequate opportunity for participant observation and data generation.

Third, after the eight weeks of participant observation, I conducted follow up interviews with each of the participants. At this point I used a semi-structured interview format in hopes of further uncovering system relations.

What was I looking for during participant observation? I started with any relevant thing that first attracted my attention. This is what Glaser & Strauss (1967) called a slice of data. As one observation led to another one, I eventually began looking for patterns, such as any relations I could see between the actions and perspectives of the teachers related to what they did to promote cross-cultural understanding through use of the arts. As I recorded my field notes and coded the data, I kept comparing new data with earlier data (using the constant comparative approach, Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to look at what made one datum different or similar to subsequent pieces of data.

In some instances, I requested additional teaching observations, artifacts, and interviews until the data were saturated and no new meaning fields or themes emerged[14]. Again, I used critical qualitative research methods[15] consistent with Carspecken (1996) and others (Anderson, 1989; Quantz & O'Connor, 1988) to collect and interpret the data to gain insight into how the three United States educators taught the arts in multicultural contexts.

Subsequent to taping and transcribing teacher the interviews, a reconstructive analysis was made of the dialogical data. I again asked myself: What is going on here? What are the data on the teacher's efforts telling me? Following Carspecken, I first identified frequently occurring key phrases. Then I grouped the raw codes. Finally, meaning fields were assigned to the grouped codes. These meaning fields representing my interpretation of the participants' efforts and perspectives were then grounded in a hierarchy of importance as an attempt to answer the research question: What can be learned from three college teachers about how to teach the arts to promote cross-cultural understanding?

Yet, one fundamental issue lingers: how was the issue of trustworthiness handled in view of the fact that what I observed and interpreted may not a complete or accurate picture? To address this matter of credibility, I used triangulation to try to ensure greater trustworthiness of the study. Creswell (2007) discusses triangulation as an alternative to "traditional criteria like reliability and validity" (p. 208). Triangulation implies looking at the focus of study from three or more sources and methodological positions to ensure a

[14] Theoretical sampling, see Glaser & Strauss, 1967.
[15] See Carspecken, 1996, p.3.

greater chance of obtaining accurate findings and conclusions. Metaphorically, triangulation is like taking photographs of the same subject from different angles to reveal a more valid picture of what the object actually looks like. Creswell posits that by combining multiple observations, theories, methods and empirical materials, as I did, researchers can hope to overcome weaknesses or intrinsic biases and other problems that come from single method, single-observer, or single-theory studies. The idea is for the weaknesses in any one method to be compensated for by the strengths of another.

There is no such thing as an objective and distanced observer. As researchers, we are an integral part of what we observe and what we seek to more fully comprehend. In other words, what we look at and how we look impacts what we see. On the issue of trustworthiness, in chapter one I discussed two cross-cultural suppositions that help locate me (the researcher) within the context of this study. Some scholars refer to the researcher's perspectives or predispositions as "bias", but this presumes the existence of an ultimate and objective truth that is somehow separate from the knower. Therefore, it may be more accurate to describe the researcher's orientation as a default position, philosophical perspective, philosophical assumption, subtext, embedded mode, point of view, or motivation in place of calling it researcher "bias". But whatever it is called, it is necessary to uncover the ongoing inner monologue or influence of the beliefs and values of the researcher on the research conclusions. It is necessary because the researcher's presence, for better or worse, can contribute to the construction of selves and adds layers of meaning to already existing contexts.

Hence, I used triangulation strategies throughout the study in order to ensure

greater trustworthiness and to acknowledge the influence of the researcher's perspectives. Examples of triangulation included the use of multiple sites, multiple data sources, a theoretical lens, a pilot study, immersion in the field, peer debriefing, and teacher-participant checks. Teacher-participant checks involved the provision of chapter four to each of the participants to look over for reason of reliability. I thought it was necessary for the participants to confirm or disconfirm the accuracy of my observations and interpretations to avoid misunderstandings of the ideas the study purported to present.

In summary, I strived for immersion in order to try to experience the full context of the teachers' efforts[16]. In order to collect trustworthy data on the three United States college teachers, I engaged in participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and the collection and analysis of various artifacts. My aim was to try to understand the participants' natural or *emic* point of view on using the arts to promote multicultural understanding within a Western setting. According to Stake (1995), the "native" or insider point of view is also called an *emic* perspective (as opposed to an *etic* perspective or outsider's point of view). My task in chapter four was to try to gather the *emic* perspective by acquiring data that were as free as possible of my own concepts and assumptions. Finally, the generated data were thematically coded and interpreted through the critical lenses of Maxine Greene's "The Dialectic of Freedom".

[16] That is, the teachers' perspectives and efforts.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

An important problem in North America, as in most parts of the world, is a continued lack of understanding between cultures. Unequal power relationships contribute to these misunderstandings. The literature suggests that the arts may be one way to build bridges of understanding across cultures. With this in mind, I examined three United States college teachers' efforts to use the arts to promote cross-cultural understanding in their classrooms. I wanted to learn how these teachers promoted cross-cultural understanding and how the arts might be used in education to achieve this aim.

The study found that there were three basic ways in which these teachers sought to promote cross-cultural understanding. It also found that although each of the teachers experienced challenges, each of them also believed that they were at least somewhat successful in promoting cross-cultural understanding. The factors that contributed to the challenges and possibilities in teaching for cross-cultural understanding included the students' predispositions as well as the teachers' positionality. This chapter will first provide brief demographic information about each teacher participant. It will next describe the three basic ways they sought to promote cultural understanding as well as their views on the challenges and possibilities of their classroom efforts.

The Teacher Participants

The three participants were Rosa, Jim and Mariama. Each participant was between the age of 35 and 50, and each had at least five years of college teaching experience. The following summaries of their backgrounds are important because they

inform their perspectives and classroom actions.

Rosa is a naturalized American female, born in Europe. She trained as an artist with an emphasis in drawing and painting. She holds a BFA in Studio Art, an MS in Industrial Arts Education, and an Ed. D. in education in the discipline of Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis on Art Education. Rosa also holds a teaching certificate from the State of Oklahoma to teach K-12 Art and Spanish and has taught K-12 art in the state. Although Rosa is European American, she was not born in the United States. She was born in Portugal, grew up in South America, and did her graduate studies in education in the United States. She has experienced life in three continents and three countries, and has lived in three different states in the United States during the last thirty years.

At the time of the fieldwork, Rosa was teaching and coordinating the Art Education program at a public university in Oklahoma. The university offered baccalaureate and master's degrees with an average enrollment of 16,000 students. About 90% of the student population consisted mainly of peoples of European descent. Rosa wrote[17]: “I teach art to elementary education methods students and we do discuss art work from various cultures. I also teach art methods to prospective art teachers and right now my students are developing units addressing African art”. Based on my observations, I would describe Rosa as a standards teacher. Her teaching orients towards “best practices”. She uses established educational modules that align with national art education trends and state education requirements.

Jim is a Native American male. During the study, he taught in the Native

[17] E-mail conversation, October 08, 2008.

American Studies Department in a large research university in Oklahoma. The university offered degrees at the baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral level. The average enrollment was 26,000 students. 75% of students were of European descent.

Jim holds an M.F.A in studio art. His work is describable as art-based social practice, or as he puts it “multi-disciplinary forms of public art messages”, that bear witness to the invisible histories concerning the indigenous peoples of North America. Jim was teaching a course called “Contemporary Native American Artist Seminar: North America, Canada and Latin America”. The class was an upper division undergraduate discussion course. Usually, class participants viewed video-taped interviews of professional contemporary “native artists” that portrayed the artists discussing the conceptual basis of their work. Also included were lectures and writings focusing on the personal accounts, or autohistoria, of native artists. These appeared to replace traditional accounts by art historians. Jim noted that in today’s art world it is clear that the impetus to create important native work is often found in the artist’s own personal, cultural and political references. The seminar course, therefore, presented many artworks that dealt with issues of race, class, gender, and tribal sovereignty. Occasionally some artworks also dealt with conventional issues of form as well.

In the course description provided on his website, Jim writes: “I try to enable the students to understand as much as possible about Native Americans’ perspectives, life styles, and priorities in relation to art”. The course involved a five-part process including: (1) reading critical essays or writings by the artists; (2) viewing video-taped interviews with artists discussing their work; (3) group discussions of the videos and readings (often

reinforced with slide talks); (4) writing short papers on the students' opinions regarding artworks and ideas presented in class; and (5) writing a term paper on an individual living artist. Based on my observations, I would say Jim's instructional focus on Native American practices oriented toward advocacy for Native Sovereignty.

Mariama is an African American female. During the semester of observation, she was teaching in the same university as Jim. However, while Jim taught in the Native American Studies Department, Mariama taught in the African and African American Studies program. She taught African Aesthetics and African Dance mainly to first year undergraduates. Mariama is a native of Oklahoma. Her parents worked as sharecroppers, and she was the first in her family to graduate from college. Mariama is a singer and a dancer. She received her doctorate from a major university in the United States under a prominent Afrocentric scholar in African American Studies. She has published a book on the African American women's dance-art-music experience which is aligned with the concordant procedures and principles of Afrocentricity.

Based on my observations, I would say Mariama focused on Afrocentric teaching. Her instructional practices orient toward empowerment and advocacy for racial equality in North America. The process and structure of her class suggest that the arts are indeed integrated. She incorporates African and African-derived visual arts, poetry, drumming, and song performance to "promote knowledge for cultural transformation and continuity". Mariama referred to her pedagogical approach, which she called a "whole African artistic and cultural value system," as a "Pan African aesthetic".

Efforts to Promote Cross-cultural Understanding

Although each of the teachers taught college art and related courses, they had different curriculum and instructional approaches. There were similarities but differences in the ways these teachers tried to promote understanding across cultures. However, during the course of the fieldwork, three general findings were discernible. Collectively, the three participants appeared to promote cross-cultural understanding mainly by: (1) creating pedagogical spaces; (2) supporting dialogue; and (3) focusing on experience. I also found that the teachers perceived both challenges and possibilities regarding their efforts to promote cross-cultural understanding. Two factors influencing the effectiveness of their efforts were the students' predispositions and the teachers' positionality. Each of these findings will be discussed in turn.

Creating Pedagogical Spaces

One way the participants in this study used the arts to promote cross-cultural understanding was by creating what could be called "pedagogical spaces" in their classrooms. They used their college classrooms as pedagogical spaces, filled with challenges and possibilities, to achieve their learning objectives. These spaces were more that just a physical space for talking and listening. The physical space of the classroom refers to how students are seated, where the students and teacher are in relation to one another, and how classroom members move around the room. It tells about the overall atmosphere or order organized to accommodate the variety of activities that meet the instructional goals. This was part of what each teacher did, but they did more than this with their classrooms. In addition to physical factors, they also used the temporal, social,

and psychological aspects of the environment to achieve their goals. In these spaces the students had opportunities to come together for meaning-making by connecting with one another and the educational context. In other words, inter (between) and intra (within) spaces were involved wherein the participants attached personal meanings to different ideas and situations, interpreted what others were meaning, and responded accordingly.

One example of using the college arts classroom as a pedagogical space to promote cross-cultural understanding involved Rosa, who taught art education and elementary education in central Oklahoma. The customary physical arrangement of her classroom was the Roundtable. This was a format that consisted of arranging chairs and tables to create a block shaped Roundtable. The block-shaped configuration was the primary physical space in which the learners and teacher came together to represent, produce, and prompt participation during shared activities. The classroom furniture was arranged as a square or a rectangle to help create a sense of a learning community.

With the roundtable concept, all interacting partners in the classroom sat in chairs around a table to carry out the activities during the meetings. This arrangement provided opportunities for side-by-side and face-to-face interactions. Rosa maintained a regular position at the left-hand corner of the Roundtable during her lectures and demonstrations and while facilitating discussions. Behind the teacher was a screen for displaying data from a projector mounted on the ceiling. On the wall, at the center right of the room, was the chalkboard.

The Roundtable format, in this specific setting, seemed to proffer a relaxed atmosphere and opportunities for a flow and interconnectedness along the physical,

social, affective and cognitive dimensions. For example, it was common during a color mixing activity and other practice experiences for informal collaboration and conversational learning to occur among those sitting next to each other. Even during teacher presentations the students freely asked Rosa clarifying questions. Rosa was able to manage relationships between student interaction with each other and the subject.

I started observing Rosa's classroom actions on the first day of the semester. Rosa not only introduced herself and the course, she also made efforts to understand and address the demographics of the new students. On the first day, I observed two of Rosa's classes. One was for art education majors, and the other was for elementary education majors.

The art education classroom was the first one I observed. In terms of demography, this course had a more racially mixed student body than the elementary education class. The elementary education course was called Visual Arts for Elementary Teachers. This course focused on creating and writing lesson plans with implications for the integration of the visual arts into the larger elementary curriculum. The class consisted mainly of students of European descent, although a few of the students had Hispanic, Native American, and African American backgrounds. They appeared to be the traditional ages of college sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Subsequent observations focused on the class for elementary education majors. However, both courses used the same physical classroom space.

In the class for elementary education majors, there were eleven students on the first day of class. All were female, and most of them said they were married. The oldest

student appeared to be in her early fifties, and the youngest looked as if she was about twenty years of age. There was only one Native American and one African American student in this group. It was the first day of the semester, so the class meeting was basically a course introduction. The teacher took roll and the students took turns introducing themselves. The teacher allowed the students to talk at length about themselves in the contexts of family, schooling, and the course at hand, perhaps as a way of helping the students settle in.

The teacher then introduced the course process and structure and capped it with her expectations during the semester. In subsequent observations, she played music from diverse cultures while the students worked on assigned projects. These ethnographic nuances contributed to the pedagogical space constructed by the teacher and students.

Another pedagogical space involved a field trip to the university gallery. The teacher led the students to the gallery to view the famous family collection, an important collection of sixty-two paintings by famous artists from Europe and America. This gift was bestowed to the university by a famous family. The teacher gave an introductory lecture with references to some of the works on exhibit. Then the students walked around the gallery viewing and interacting further with the works in the collection. The intent was for the student to select one of the paintings, analyze it, and complete a written critique using Feldman's four steps for objectively analyzing works of art. These include: (1) describing the visual facts seen in the artwork; (2) analyzing the relationships in what is seen; (3) interpreting meaning based on the evidence in steps 1 and 2; and (4) evaluating the work based on steps 1 through 3.

During the period of observation, Rosa's own seating position was significant. She occupied either the center-front or the left corner of the block near the chalkboard and projector screen in order to facilitate the instructional process. With the block classroom design, Rosa was able to move freely from one student to the other when she needed. She was also able to gain access to the chalkboard and screen during the lectures, discussions and demonstrations as well as the hands-on indoor and outdoor activities that were her primary strategies.

At times, the students worked out course tasks independently. With her hands crossed at her back, Rosa would lean over a student to observe his/her progress and use conversation to provide direction. Occasionally Rosa sat afar outside the block. This occurred when she was finished with her lectures and demonstrations. When this occurred, the students consulted her when they needed to. These were temporary shifts from the role of whole group facilitator to that of a consultant expert.

Another example of creating a pedagogical space for cross-cultural understanding involved Jim. Jim taught a Contemporary Native American Artists Seminar, an upper division undergraduate course. In each class meeting, Jim arranged the in a circular configuration describable as communal spaces that were open-ended, interactive, and resistant to closure. Jim said the purpose of opening up communal spaces was so that "everyone has an equal voice" in the course activities. Actually, following the lead of their teacher, the students were the ones who arranged the seats for each meeting and at the end put them back in rows as they were. This circular seating arrangement, coupled with Jim's emphasis on process, seemed to foster democratic engagements.

Once they settled in, the class typically began with Jim commenting on current news about Native artists and sharing notes related to course events. Next came a video tape on a Native artist, followed by a break. Finally there was a critique of the issues presented in the tape. During his introductory comments, Jim occupied his regular desk in front of the class. Then he would shift to a corner seating position as the video tape was played. During the discussion, however, he moved to the left-hand corner of the classroom. I asked about the idea of sitting in a circle and why he shifted seating positions. Jim said those nuances of his methodology came from Native American ways.

When asked what he was trying to achieve through use of his circular arrangement, Jim said:

> That comes from the Native American traditions ...that we all sit in a circle in a Teepee. The Cheyenne do—the Cheyenne tribe. When we have a council, they start speech at the doorway. The first person on the doorway at the teepee starts talking and then everyone listens, and it goes all the way around the teepee until the end. And everyone has an equal voice no matter if you are young or old, if you are qualified as a leader or "not qualified"—everyone can speak. And so I weave this into my classes too. In the class discussion, people take turns. I (as the teacher) guide the discussion and let everyone have the chance to say their opinion. I don't really speak…I add some comments, but I don't lecture. I let the artist (on whom the discussion is the focus) speak, and then I guide the discussion. I think it is very important to note that, in an interpretative work, sometimes the

professor can make it seem like they have the best idea. They talk and the students repeat what the professor said. So I don't really say what I think. At the end I do. That way everyone has the chance to give their own definition first.

During the period of observation, the arrangement of the classroom space into a circle was the only observable configuration. Similar to Rosa's Roundtable arrangement, Jim's circle configuration made face-to-face encounters possible. To Jim, the circular arrangement of classroom seating was a primary way of engendering moments of sociability, cross-cultural communication, and inter-subjective encounters in which meaning was elaborated collectively in line with Native American ways of knowing.

Yet another example of using the classroom as a space of pedagogical possibility involved Mariama. Mariama taught African Aesthetics, a general education course for freshmen undergraduates. Her pedagogy appeared to be an overall endeavor to create a democratic stage for transformative education. While pushing student to think deeply and critically, she refrained from using potentially controversial terms such as "ethnic" and "tribal" and references to Native African practices such as voodoo that could be misinterpreted as religious and/or devilish themes.

The physical arrangement of Mariama's classroom was ever-changing. The students' seating arrangements varied according to the unit of study and the specific instructional objectives. There were instances when the physical arrangement changed as many as three different times in one course meeting. The arrangements were seemingly designed to take students through instructional approaches Mariama described as "Play Acts". Mariama's usual seating position was at the right center of the classroom. Here a

pre-existing teacher station was located that had modern instructional technologies. From this station, she interacted with the students who sat in rows, circles, or other arrangements that could change at any moment depending on her instructional needs.

The goal of transformative education appears to run through Mariama's pedagogical space. Her pedagogy can be described as "critical pedagogy" because it focuses on theories of critical transformative education. She regularly drew on Afrocentric ideas of emancipatory action designed to increase racial integration and promote changes in the students' perspectives. Mariama did this in different ways, each intended to challenge the cultural and historical stereotypes her first year students brought to the course.

Mariama regularly assigned small, mixed groups of students to work together on in-class tasks. This arrangement promoted a variety of cross-racial encounters. Through these encounters, her classroom space was activated in a way that can be conceived of as an interracial space of possibilities and challenges. Mariama mentioned that she had integrated voodoo chants into her curriculum during a previous semester. She said many parents were quite upset, and some called to ask: "What are you teaching my daughter (or son)? We hear you practice voodoo in class". So she chose to make those parts of the course more fun and light hearted.

Thus, in a variety of ways, these participants created pedagogical spaces in their college classrooms. Within these spaces the teachers and their students engaged in interactive exchanges designed to promote a sense of relatedness among the racially mixed class populations. These social and psychological pedagogical spaces were

designed to contribute to the development of cross-cultural understanding.

Focusing On Experience

In addition to creating pedagogical spaces, each participant also appeared to promote cross-cultural understanding through a focus on experiences. In life, people are active creators of experiences. These experiences can reflect personal or collective physical conditions as well as personal or collective states of mind, and each of these can be regarded as personally or socially beneficial. By experience I am referring to a general concept that entails direct participation or exposure to events or activities. The boundaries of an experience can be expanded to include sensory, symbolic, and temporal phenomena. Individuals can also create personal experiences through reflection.

With this broad idea of experience in mind, each of the teachers in this study drew on a variety of experiences in their efforts to use the arts to promote cross-cultural understanding. They drew on the students' collective experiences as well as their personal experiences. Although the collective experiences were often ethnocentric, at times they bordered on broader human experiences. The teachers also drew on their own experiences, including their personal cultural memories. The spaces created in their classrooms not only provided opportunities for the students to share their experiences, but also for the teachers to tell their own stories and raise questions about art education and our collective consciousness. For Jim and Mariama in particular, the classrooms became cultural spaces where personal and cultural realities could finally be shared and affirmed.

One example of the way these teachers focused on experiences involved Rosa. During the introductory part of her course, she narrated her experiences of childhood in

Portugal, growing up in South America, coming to America with her husband for schooling, raising her children, and finally becoming a United States citizen. Rosa's linguistic and cultural immersions in Portugal, Latin American, and North America undoubtedly bear on her perspectives as an educator and a person. Yet, during my observations Rosa drew mainly on her professional experiences and talked predominantly about the professional development of prospective teachers. When asked about her teaching goals, Rosa responded: "…every student is in a different world, and the need is to get them to recognize they have to adapt their teaching to specific children in order to reach them". Thus, as her teaching was concerned, Rosa appeared to be interested in helping her students develop the skills to reach a variety of children.

The participants in Rosa's Visual Arts for Elementary Education course were the traditional age of students ranging from sophomores to seniors. Some of the students said they had international experience, such as vacations and mission trips, which may be useful for understanding others from different cultural backgrounds. It also seemed that the diversity of the larger student body brought in perspectives from Native Americans, African Americans and Latinos as well as students of European descent.

Another form of collective experience observed in Rosa's classroom involved multicultural music. The roundtable educational process and demographic mix of the population seemed heightened by the occasional playing of multicultural music. When asked why she played this music, Rosa noted:

> They like to listen to music while they are working on projects, so it won't be silent. I play music from Brazil and South Africa because they are working on a

"Family Roots Project". It is to expose them to other kinds of music, other cultures they are not familiar with. Sometimes, I allow them to bring in and play their own music.

Another example of focusing on experience involved Jim. His course syllabus suggests advocacy for increased access to the experiences of Native American artists in the United States, Canada, and Latin America. In fact, recounting these artists' direct experiences was a central component of his instructional process. Jim's video-taped interviews relayed individual and collective Native experiences, and the term paper he assigned required the students to present in writing the experiences of a living Native American artist. The need to consider Native voices was an unmistakable component of Jim's focus on the narrative accounts of contemporary Native American artists. He insisted on having the students hear their voices instead of relying on secondary accounts by art historians.

Jim's empathy for these artists' personal experiences may be due in part because he is also an accomplished contemporary Native American artist. On different occasions he mentioned that he had met most of the artists presented in the video-taped interviews. Thus, Jim had first-hand experience of his colleagues' works which enabled class discussions at levels not feasible if they had only read about them.

At the onset of the semester Jim introduced his own work within the context of the course. From time to time, he alluded to the content or supplemented his original comments with updates on his involvement within the art world. Regarding his class, Jim

believes:

> Examination of the artists' notions are best done through video-taped artist interviews. These videos profile the artist's ideas and work in their own words. I have collected a library of contemporary artist video interviews and exhibition catalogues, each including over seventy artists. Using this video resource I can introduce new artistic concerns and follow up the video program with an in-depth, thoughtful class discussion… In an effort to excite the students and familiarize them with the art field, I also plan to hold informal seminars dealing with very current art world activities in which I happen to be participating. These efforts can serve to de-mystify the professional art practice and encourage the students to engage in similar creative venues whether local, regional or national.

Yet another example of focusing on experience involved Mariama's teaching of African Aesthetics. Like Jim, Mariama integrated personal experiences and collective experiences. Her approach was clearly Afrocentric. She explained that she had trained extensively in that domain of intellectual experience. In fact, a major focus of her graduate work was on the aesthetic expressions of African American women. Her own heritage as an African American woman of Caribbean parentage may have contributed to her interest in African centered philosophy.

Mariama's approach to teaching was quite theatric. She explained that she wanted to inspire her students to also be theatrical in their general approaches to things in life. In Mariama's words, "…the larger experience is to figure out who you are and to be that."

In our interview she explained that her integration of theatrical pedagogy came out of her training in African American Studies and her background in performance. Specifically, Mariama has a background in Black Theatre where she has engaged in singing, acting, and drumming with an African American Dance Troupe.

Thus, participatory performance was also part of Mariama's pedagogical repertoire. She used performance to engage her predominantly first year students and to help them connection with the course content. Among other things, Mariama would give an enthusiastic "high five" to students for exceptional performance.

One example of participatory performance involved the use of kinetic routines. When the class seemed a bit disorderly or experienced a temporary lapse of attention, Mariama might ask her students to stand up for a minute and participate in a footwork routine combined with a verbal exercise. One such exercise seemed a meditation chant reminiscent of voodoo practice. Another was an adaptation from a Negro spiritual. On several occasions Mariama engaged her students in a call and response exercise based on African linguistics and singing expressions. Here she would call out "Ago o o", and the students would respond "Amee e e". The purpose of these exercises was to keep her students motivated and on task.

Mariama also continually encouraged her students to move from logic to intuition—from the cognitive domain to the affective domain. She seemed well aware of the fact that the intuitive domain, entailing feeling, experience, emotion and performance, is an essential ingredient in African aesthetics. Thus, when a student had trouble reading a text fluidly, she mediated with a rhetorical question: "How do I read the text? You

dramatize it! Read it slowly so that the nuances will come alive."

Mariama's view of the African Aesthetics classroom can be conceived as a stage for undergraduate student immersion in the Black experience prevalent among the African American populace in North America. For example, on the first day of class, Mariama played two video tapes, "Four Women" and "Mississippi Godda". The clips were of African American performing artists. "Mississippi Godda", by Nina Simone, embodies African American political struggles through the 20th century as seen from the female artist's perspective. The artist's words in the song convey a burden of heaviness about Black hatred in the South. The musical narrative conveys a sense of heavy heartedness: "They thought I am not political anymore…my skin is brown. My manner is rough…because my parents were slaves…What do they call me? They call me peaches."

In another segment, Simone laments issues of equality: "All I want is equality for my sisters and brothers. They keep saying: 'Go slow…Give me equality'". The students were asked to write notes of what came to their minds while the videos played. The notes were discussed in light of the question: "What has Black art wadged war against?"

Mariama also addressed the dialectics between personal and collective experience in the aesthetic expressions of Black authors. She noted that Black narrative "context is about before and after". One literary problem, in some respects, has been that "The Negro cannot make us aware that he is a Negro. If he did, the writing is not important". Also problematic is the assumption that "Africa and the African cannot deal exclusively with African problems. They must have universal appeal...two less reconcilable strivings in

one body. You have to insert yourself in the context, the specific becomes the universal".

One of Mariama's primary goals was to introduce American students to the major themes of the Black experience in the United States, as a sum of the African essence and of the African Diaspora in North America. Understanding African American experience as a product of African and American experience enables the development of bridges between Africa and the African Diaspora. Specifically, Mariama's course syllabus says:

> The purpose of this course is to explore the philosophy, culture, and aesthetic expressions of African Americans before, during and after enslavement through a comparison of African and African American culture...it will provide the students with a body of knowledge and analytical skills that will enable them to deepen their understanding of traditional and contemporary culture practiced by the African American community. This course has three major objectives. First, to provide an introduction to African American culture and social values. Second, to explore the African origins of African American culture and its influence on American popular culture. Finally, to establish connection and continuity between African and African American aesthetic expressions of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Collectively, Mariama's efforts in the African Aesthetics classroom may be viewed as an attempt to expand the "circle of We" in line with Afrocentrism. Thus, enabling social transformation can be done in diverse ways.

Supporting Dialogue

A third way in which these college teachers used art to promote cross-cultural understanding involved the use of dialogue, including critical conversations, in their

classrooms. Dialogue implies a complex exchange of verbal responses between two or more persons. The focus may be an experience, object, issue, or idea. Dialogue is conducted for purposes of entertainment, instruction, or both. It has been said that good teaching is dialogue. In other word, good teaching is discursive, an open back-and-forth verbal exchange among the participants. Rosa mainly employed whole class, or "community level", dialogue. Jim employed one-on-one as well as community level dialogue. Mariama relied mainly on small mixed groups and community level discursive processes.

One instance of the use of dialogue to promote cross-cultural understanding involved Rosa's art education course. Rosa employed mainly whole class dialogue, supported by dialogical interaction between people seated side-by-side. Dialogue in her teaching was focused not only on teacher education but also on art as a cognitive process. Rosa appeared to believe dialogue provided social and psychological mediation that enabled students to think more effectively as teachers. With her block classroom design, she was able to move freely from one student to the other for one-on-one teacher-student dialogue. She would stand beside or lean over to answer her students' questions and monitor their progress. Even in community level dialogues, one-on-one engagement was also discernible.

On the first day of class, as the students introduced themselves, Rosa made supportive comments such as, "It was very interesting. Don't you think so?" This prompted continued dialogue. Rosa also made discursive efforts to understand and address the demographics of her class. She continually made efforts to invite more

questions and elicit perspectives on ongoing discussions from the students who were racially in the minority. In such instances, group discussion seemed to merge with one-on-one levels of dialogue for inclusion of their voices. When asked why she used these strategies, Rosa responded: “If you do anything not to address their culture, they feel left out. They also need to reach out to other students”.

One example of community level dialogue involved student presentations of their “Family Roots Projects” to the whole class. The Family Roots Project required students to research their own family histories and use the findings as a contextual basis for art making. The work was done on paper and spanned two weeks. The students were required to use watercolor and oil pastel to create a crayon resist representing their findings. On one hand, the projects helped Rosa assess what had been learned related to the materials, elements and principles of art making. On the other hand, it helped raise consciousness on the sometimes hidden diversity the students brought to the classroom. Again, Rosa’s students were predominantly female and of European descent. On the fourth week of the semester, Rosa’s students displayed their projects for whole class discussion. Eight works were on view, one per student. The students took turns in the critique, each leading in the discussion of her or his work.

The discussions began with the first work on the left side of the display. Jordan went first (Figure 1). Her piece included an American flag which was located at the upper left hand-side of her crayon resist. Jordan’s own portrait dominates the far left side of the composition. She depicts herself in front of a teacher’s desk since she was preparing to become a teacher. On the desk are a book and a calculator. Next to the portrait is the

Bible, symbolic of her Christian family. On the upper right of the composition was an illustration of the German flag because her grandparents are from Germany. On the far left was a shamrock, emblematic of her Irish parental heritage. Yet, on the lower-right side of the composition was a tepee, representing Oklahoma, her state of birth, because the name Oklahoma is synonymous with the Native American people.

At the end of her presentation the teacher and students were free to ask Jordan questions or to comment on her work. Rosa began by asking the whole class: “Do you have questions for our artist?” The students seemed contemplative. Roas posed more specifically: “Which elements and principles did she use?” The responses were varied: “squiggly line on the shamrock”, “parallel lines” (on the flags and Bible), “triangular shape on the tepee”, and so on. Next Rosa asked about the principles of art. Again the responses were varied, with students noting that balance, proportion, and asymmetry were all used in the composition to communicate meaning. Rosa raised further questions about emphasis, movement, and other formal qualities in the work. Finally she asked Jordan, “If you were to do this again, what would you do differently?”



Figure 1. Family Roots Project by Jordan.

The second presenter, Claudia, also used the American flag as well as a ring to say she was engaged to be married (Figure 2). Similar to Jordan, Claudia's composition included imagery from her German heritage, the cross to represent her Christian faith, and a flora metaphor to indicate her Irish descent. Also included were an oil well (indicating a prominent aspect of the Oklahoma economy), an Indian feathered headdress (which may indicate an aspect of her identity), and several other images as well.



Figure 2. Family Roots Project by Claudia.

The third presentation was by Duboise, an African American female student. Dominating the left side of the composition was her self-portrait. Around the portrait were displayed a peace symbol, numbers representing her three children and their birthdays, her Native heritage ("Africa"), a dollar sign, and so on.



Figure 3. Family Roots Project by DuBoise.

By the time all the students had finished presenting, it was clear that the national flag was a dominant metaphor within their projects. However, Native American imageries were also prevalent in The Family Tree project, and there were some important personal variations as well.

Another instance of the use of dialogue to promote cross-cultural understanding involved Jim. Recursive conversational processes were very much a part of his teaching process in the senior seminar course. Jim employed a combination of one-on-one and community level dialogue in the flow of his classroom activities. Concerning one-on-one dialogue, Jim explained:

> Each day that the class is scheduled to meet I plan to speak individually with each student. These one-on-one consultations will serve to update their progress and explore any questions. This method of teaching will also offer me a clearer vision of the students' needs.

Concerning community level dialogue, Jim sought to accomplish a view of the art class as a community of learning wherein students can profit by openly exchanging their

viewpoints and critical suggestions. As previously noted, the physical environment was invariably arranged in a semi-circular configuration in line with Native American forms of interaction. The majority of each class meeting was devoted to viewing and discussing video tapes on Native American artists. However, at the end of each video, Jim presented four questions for whole group discussion. The students took turns stating their opinions, and everyone was required to participate in the dialogue. Jim did not claim to have the best ideas, so he guided the discussions with minimal comments to ensure that "everyone has an equal voice". In fact, Jim rarely shared his standpoint until the end. The semi-circle arrangement and the discursive approach seemed to create a democratic space among the racially mixed participants which was meaningful to all both personally and collectively.

Discussion was imbedded in diverse aspects of the course. Dialogical relations between the students and the materials allowed for the possibility of nuanced learning. In his syllabus, Jim explains the basis of his thinking:

> In today's art world, it is clear that the impetus to create important native work is often found in the artist's own personal, cultural and political references. Therefore the seminar presents artwork that deals with issues of race, class, gender and tribal sovereignty as well as formalist modes…After the video presentation a discussion is shared within the class. This session often adds clarity to the video and also allows the class participants to take issue with the ideas and viewpoints expressed in the video. The seminar grade is based in part upon each participant taking part in discussions. Class participants must join in with each

> discussion…Overall, students and professors alike can excel by pursuing an intensive research methodology that seeks to express a commentary from a personal yet societal vantage point. The research paths can be parallel and intersecting…an atmosphere where we can together strive to learn, share and enrich one another....To allow the class to further resolve their opinions on the artwork and ideas presented, a 500-word typed paper is written each week. In this paper the student offers his or her reactions to the video program and or the class discussion.

Dialogical interaction between humans is a route to sociability. Jim's classroom can be seen as a dialogical space within which: "everyone has an equal voice" and not even the professor claims to "have the best idea". According to Jim, there is no "right or wrong answer". Rather, meaning was seen as a product of the transaction between the teacher, the students, and the course environment.

Mariama provides yet another example of the way in which dialogue was used in conjunction with the arts to support cross-cultural understanding. Mariama relied on small mixed groups and community level processes. During my observations, Mariama used mainly community level dialogue as an attempt to promote cross-cultural understanding, specifically through emancipatory curricular and instructional activities designed to promote racial integration and transformative education.

Mariama tried to create better race relations through transformative actions in diverse ways. For example, in a discussion of a class text early in the semester, Mariama

divided the whole class into four racially mixed groups. She had each group sit in a circle of six students (two African Americans and four others) to discuss the racially-charged text.

Another instance involved a movie called *Sankofa.* After the movie, Maraima had all students who were not African American (mainly students of European American descent) sit in the center of the class with the African American students sitting in a semi-circle around them. Mariama described this seating composition as a necessary ingredient in stimulating contemplative viewing and emotive responses in the critical discussion following the film. During the discussion, several of the European American students reported a degree of anxiety. Some said it felt unsafe sitting in the center surrounded by the African American students because *Sankofa* was about the ordeal of the African American during the era of slavery. Mariama said she wanted to immerse the students in a context in which they would be viewed as objects instead of subjects. She called this "Act II: the Controversy Stage". She uses the controversy strategy because some of her students of European descent do not believe racism still exists in our society. This strategy was reinforced by subsequent ones.

Mariama's class also challenged the stereotype that African aesthetic expressions are less sophisticated than Western aesthetics. This stereotype was challenged not only through dialogue but also in the course readings. At one point, Mariama presented several African symbols and asked the students to look for perspectives on collective human ways of thinking and doing. Mariama observed that "the only thing that moves clockwise is the clock". She suggested that this is contradictory to popular consciousness which

tends to follow a clockwise movement. She illustrated her point with the helix. The helix, or spiral, was a vegetal metaphor for the "twilight down" and is a common symbol in many African cultures. It is observable in nature as tendrils of plants, and it is always oriented in a counter-clockwise configuration. She added that water drainage, the rotation of the planets, the circulation of blood, and many other phenomena are similarly oriented in a counter-clockwise direction. Regrettably, she notes, in Western culture we are taught to think in a clockwise direction—objectively.

The reading that day told about the invisible censorship of the arts, a censor of what the author wanted to say and of what society wanted him to say. The article went on to say that in the 1930s, however, several African American artists successfully used the arts to voice their issues without White censorship. While discussing the article, Mariama commented on the issues of objectivity versus subjectivity. She cautioned: "Some of you will be in that debate…, but do the research…(be conscious of the) things that make you go 'hmm"…Remember, aesthetics is a branch of philosophy".

Challenges and Possibilities

According to the participants, they encountered both challenges and possibilities in their use of the arts to promote cross-cultural understanding. A variety of factors appeared to contribute to these challenges and possibilities. However, two factors in particular seemed to have a significant influence. These factors included the students' predispositions (toward the courses), on the one hand, and the teachers' positionality on the other hand.

The students had various predispositions that seemed to contribute to the

pedagogical challenges and possibilities intrinsic in the courses. For instance, in elective courses like Jim's and Mariama's, most of the students appeared to want to be there. In contrast, a number of the students who took Rosa's required course were heard complaining about the class. This undoubtedly contributed to their attitudes towards the experience. Rosa was asked to describe her experiences, including her successes and challenges, when teaching about non-Western cultures in Western settings. She reported challenges as well as successes. With regard to the challenges, Rosa stated: "Some (students) are more open to ideas than others". Indeed, in past semesters her students had expressed strong resistance to the idea of multicultural art education. According to Rosa, some of her students stated that multicultural art "will not be needed in the places they would teach".

Nonetheless, Rosa's position was that it was important for teachers to understand various cultural views. Thus, she found the means to introduce the arts from diverse cultural perspectives. The Family Tree Project was one example of her indirect way of drawing student attention to cultural diversity. In this situation, attention was focused on the students' own ethnic histories. They were asked to research their own ancestral histories and, through critique, share their experiences with the rest of the class. In Rosa's words "they had to research their backgrounds and the diversity of cultures that compose who they are. With the assignment, they would talk to their parents and grand-parents… Some came back and actually cried" because of their findings. For instance, one student was distressed to find out that his grandparent was a major slave trader. Rosa also

provided units on Africa, Native America, and arts from other non-Western traditions. Rosa's position was that she needed to promote cross-cultural understanding in a course in teacher education.

Jim believed he was successful in promoting cross-cultural understanding in his classes. There were many reasons to suggest this might be so. Jim designed his own course and is able to teach it from an insider's perspective. As a contemporary Native American artist and a chief in his tribe, Jim brings a lot of credibility to his course on Contemporary Native American Art. With the course, Jim's pedagogical constructs are influenced not only by established practices in contemporary art history but also from the entire lived context of Native American art and culture. Jim's course focuses on video tapes and readings based on highly successful Native artists, including himself. Drawing on primary sources involving the experiences of Native artists, Jim has an insider, or *emic*, positionality that may be ideal for what he is teaching.

When asked to describe his experiences teaching non-Western cultures in Western settings, Jim observed:

> Well, you have to challenge the stereotypes that the students have of Native American art. They have a set of ideas of what they think it is. And you have to be prepared to challenge their ideas about what you provide them or what kind of thing (examples) you give them. Indeed, they have expectations/conceptions of what art is in a kind of conservative manner, so I have to also give them a chance to learn about contemporary art.

Therefore, like Rosa, Jim experienced both challenges and possibilities when trying to promote cross-cultural understanding. And like Rosa, a lot depended on his students' dispositions as well as his own positionality as an artist and teacher.

Finally, when asked about the successes and challenges of her experiences, Mariama stated that she believed she was highly successful in teaching for multicultural understanding. However, she added that this was not true in the beginning. When Mariama began teaching African Aesthetics at the university, many of her students' parents were apprehensive about her positionality as an Afrocentric teacher. Many of their concerns involved questions of religion. With regard to her pedagogical challenges, Mariama said: "The biggest (challenge) is to get them to see how the course relates to their major course of study and to themselves… (With) this generation of students, (it is difficult) getting them to read, go to the library. They do not want to spend time to think and articulate…(Rather, they prefer) to memorize".

When asked how she dealt with student predispositions towards the course, Mariama said: "If you call (my teaching) a 'Play', consider my approach a four-act play that includes: Act I—Shock Value; Act II—The Controversy Stage; Act III—The Artist Propaganda; and Act IV—The Mirror." When asked to clarify, Mariama recounted: "The initial part of the course was the African Personality…(My pedagogy) came out of the context of Black Theatre to enable them to realize the dramatization of the Black experience. The larger experience (is to) figure out who you are and be that."

Regarding the possibilities of promoting cross-cultural understanding, Mariama

stated: “I attempt to measure success from students’ statements typically from final papers and (their) research where they acknowledge how privileged there are. The larger success is when they come to grips with philosophical/religious commonality”.

In response to her students’ predispositions toward her Afrocentric construct, Mariama’s role shifted from teacher to scholar to entertainer, from mother to caregiver, and from lecturer to motivational speaker. According to Mariama, the larger picture was to create in the student an expanded understanding of the African experience and to learn who they are in spite of race. In her words: “The ultimate is universal but you cannot get there unless you get to the unique.” Overall, Mariama’s positionality as an Afrocentric arts educator was an activist perspective aimed at confronting stereotypes and raising critical consciousness while negotiating empowering positions with the students in her class.

Thus, the three participants experienced a variety of challenges and possibilities in using the arts to stimulate understanding across diverse cultures. These challenges and possibilities were mediated by the students’ predispositions (e.g., towards the courses) as well as the personal and pedagogical positionalities the teachers’ brought to their classrooms. The teachers created pedagogical spaces involving one-on-one, small group, and community level dialogue focusing on various issues, approaches, and experiences. I believe this dialogical focus on personal, social, and aesthetic experiences contributed to the students’ development of cross-cultural understanding.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to learn about three college teachers' efforts to use the arts as a way of promoting cross-cultural understanding. Although there were many varieties in their approaches and outcomes, three basic themes emerged. Each of these teachers: (1) created pedagogical spaces; (2) supported dialogue; and (3) focused on experience. In this chapter, I examined these findings through the lens of Maxine Greene's "The Dialectic of Freedom". I then discuss their implications for using the arts in education as a means of promoting cross-cultural understanding.

Analysis of Efforts to Utilize Pedagogical Spaces, Experience, and Dialogue

There were similarities yet differences in the ways the three arts teachers tried to promote understanding across cultures in Western settings. Essentially, this study found that the three teachers sought to promote this understanding by creating pedagogical spaces, focusing on experience, and encouraging dialogue. It further found that they perceived both challenges and possibilities regarding their efforts. Two factors influencing the effectiveness of their efforts were the students' predispositions and the teachers' positionality.

How can the findings be explained, theoretically? What was going on when the teachers in this study created pedagogical spaces? How can Jim's circular seating arrangement, Rosa's roundtable arrangement, and Mariama's ever-changing seating positions be explained? It can be argued that the three teachers presented their college classrooms as pedagogical spaces of challenges and possibilities. This is very similar to

what Greene (1988) described as a *dialectical space*. Maxine Greene might say what was happening was that these teachers were creating communal or dialogical spaces of freedom in which diverse members of society were able to come together to know one another as well as the content of instruction.

When Jim had his class sit in a circle, this was a physical arrangement that enabled the students to see each other, dialogically. He also provided opportunities for every student to speak if they chose to. This created a physical and temporal equality within which all participants could participate with equal voices rather than submit to a conventional hierarchal order. In Maxine Greene's terms, Jim was educating for freedom of thought, feeling and action. For Jim, this was a way of modeling and practicing a traditional way of communicating among Native Americans.

Greene (1988) says there is a dialectical relationship between the role of education and the social responsibility of educators. The educators share societal responsibility for helping the students to question what is going on around them in order to start on their own journeys toward interpersonal freedom in an open world. Greene sums it up by saying: "It is through and by means of education, many of us believe, that individuals can be provoked to reach beyond themselves in their intersubjective space" (p.12).

How might Greene (1988) interpret Jim's circular arrangement of the physical space during his seminar? Greene might explain Jim's circular configuration of chairs as a means of arranging the physical and social space to enable interacting participants to move between personal reflection and public discourse to create dialectical exploration of

the works of contemporary Native artists. Jim's seminar focused on art works of contemporary Native American artists presented from the insider-perspectives of the artists themselves. This could be a contentious subject within modern Western settings, especially when combined with artworks that focus on issues of race, class, gender, and tribal sovereignty.

Greene might say that it is through the praxis—the ongoing process of action and reflection in such dialogical spaces—that students are able to move between their roles of student-as-student and student-as-teacher, and to move from positions of dependence or independence to a position of *inter*dependence as members of a larger society and culture.

The ulterior purpose of the circular seating arrangement, as Jim put it, was so that everyone had "an equal voice" in the course activities. At its base, Jim's dialogical space was in line with Greene's notion of experiential education as a social constructivist process that takes place from the outside in inside out and the inside out, enabling shared development of complex relationships in communion with others.

Greene would probably say that Jim created spaces of dialogue in his classroom. These were spaces where his students could "take initiatives and uncover humanizing possibilities" (p.13). For Greene, attempting to "uncover humanizing possibilities" is a primary project in education. Jim's seminar focused on artworks that dealt with issues of race, class, gender, and tribal sovereignty with the intent of creating open-ended communal spaces that are interactive and resistant to closure, concomitant with Native American ways.

Maxine Greene (1988) might also value Rosa's teaching, which included a block-shaped roundtable arrangement in her classes in elementary teacher education. This arrangement provided for side-by-side and face-to-face interactions, and it seemed to proffer a more relaxed atmosphere which assisted the learning flow along physical, social, affective and cognitive dimensions. Greene might also consider this a dialogical space wherein the college teacher and the pre-service students came into a complex dialogue with one another and art education. Greene would probably describe Rosa's class as much more than just a physical space; she would also view it as a cognitive and relational space in which learners and teachers came together to produce the shared activity of teacher education.

What about Mariama's creation and use of pedagogical spaces? Mariama's teaching seemed congruent with Greene's views on the dialectical struggles that are needed for personal and collective completion. Mariama's pedagogical spaces involved, as did Jim's, the opening of diverse spaces where students would be challenged and supported and where they could begin to grow (Greene, 1988).

It is also instructive to analyze these college teachers' use of dialogues in their teaching. For example, Jim resisted assuming an all-knowing stance in his classroom even though he was an expert contemporary Native American artist. This stance seemed to create spaces for the students to speak with greater confidence. It engendered sustained community level dialogue in the classroom. Jim did not claim to have the best ideas all the time. Instead, he guided the discussions with minimal comments to ensure that everyone had "an equal voice". Jim believed "there is no say that is (conclusively) the

right or wrong answer". Rather, meaning is a product that comes from transactions between the teachers, the students, and the course environments. As Greene says, education is a dialectical process.

According to Greene, it is through promoting dialogues that "preferences may be released, languages learned, intelligences developed, perspectives opened, possibilities disclosed" (p. 12). Greene advocates that the whole field of education be an "authentic public space of dialogues and possibility", one in which multiple voices (or, in Jim's words, "equal voices") can come before one another.

Mariama also used dialogue and experience in conjunction with arts to promote cross-cultural understanding. Mariama's course on African Aesthetics dealt with the experiences and consciousness of Black peoples of Africa and the African diaspora. Her pedagogy advocated emancipatory education with the hope of increasing racial integration. The participants in her class were a mixture of races, and this influenced her grouping of students during her course activities. In her efforts to promote dialogues across race, Mariama endeavored to create a democratic stage for social transformation.

Greene would say Mariama was educating for freedom not only for the Black people in America but also for the others who were represented in her course. The idea of simultaneously educating for personal freedom as well as collective freedom brings to mind the famous saying of Martin Luther King, Jr.: "No one is free until all are free". This idea is equally in concert with an African Igbo proverb: "A person holding another on the ground is not free either". Neither the enslaved nor the enslaver is truly free.

Greene's (1988) views about education and freedom are not just materialistic but

also social and psychological ideals involving quests for liberation from systemic oppressions of all kinds, whether imposed by others or imposed by oneself. Greene says we must learn to compose our own scripts of meaning and make public our own meanings because learning and learning how to learn are means of freedom from oppression and bondage.

I believe Greene would say all three of these college arts educators intuitively responded to an understanding of education as a dialectical process. Greene views education as a dialectical relationship entailing the "struggle for 'the overcoming of alienation' and the affirmation of men and women as persons" (p. 8). According to Greene, teachers can have a profound influence on students, and this influence can be either empowering or disempowering. To Greene, learning has to be in some way emancipatory.

This is certainly what Mariama did. Her pedagogy focused on transformative actions consistent with Afrocentric philosophy. It aimed at empowerment for racial equality, including empowerment of the disfranchised cultural self. In terms of the disfranchised cultural self, Mariama talked about the dialectic between personal and collective experience in aesthetic expressions by Black authors of our times. She noted that Black narrative "context is about before and after" and that a common literary problem is that "the Negro cannot make us aware that he is a Negro. If he did, the writing is not important". She also said a common misconception is that "Africa and the African cannot deal exclusively with African problems. They must have universal appeal ...two less reconcilable strivings in one body". This insertion of the disfranchised cultural

self within the context of North America is major subtext in “The Dialectic of Freedom”.

Altogether, the efforts of Rosa, Mariama, and Jim can be conceived as an attempt to expand “the circle of we” (see Houser, 2009, p. 207, for a detailed discussion of this concept related to a multicultural/ecological approach to civic education). Expanding or widening “the circle of we” implies the inclusion of ethnic minorities in the larger cultural context. While Mariama’s and Jim’s attempts were clearly in line with this aim, what is less obvious is that Rosa’s efforts were also about expanding “the circle of we.”

Rosa’s explanation of her efforts suggested a need to assimilate into the dominant culture of which she was supposedly a part. As previously noted, Rosa was born in Portugal. Her family immigrated to South America during her teenage years. Growing up and being educated in Latin American lent her a particular linguistic frame. Rosa taught in a medium-sized state teaching university. The student population was comprised predominantly of people of European American descent. Rosa experienced considerable challenges teaching for cross-cultural understanding in this setting. Some of her students believed multicultural art would “not be needed in the places they would teach”. Also, Rosa’s program requirements expected her to focus on art education rather than diversity issues. Rosa may have deemphasized diversity due to the predispositions of the students, and she might also have had a longing to be accepted by the dominant culture. Yet, Rosa still found ways to teach her students about cultural diversity.

I think Greene would value these educators’ efforts to help their students move from private to public spaces in pursuit of their life goals and projects. Greene

understands that achieving freedom in a shared world is a dialectical process. It is dialectical because it involves engaging in naming and overcoming obstacles in order to imagine what might be possible to achieve. Often the process can neither be resolved nor abandoned. Sometimes it must simply continue. Greene is saying there is a dialectical relation between the teacher's efforts and the students' predispositions. There may also be a dialectical relation between the arts and pedagogy.

What made the three teachers' efforts in promoting cross-cultural understanding possible? Was it the arts or teachers' pedagogies? Substantial data to answer the question may require involving participants' students and other sources of information outside the frame of this study. While some colleagues argue that it was the three arts teachers' pedagogies that made the difference, I proffer that it was both the arts and pedagogy for the reason that the artistic and the pedagogical are inextricable.

Was it the arts or teachers' pedagogies? Rosa's efforts were subject-centered. Less debatably, pedagogy made Rosa's classroom efforts in promoting cross-cultural understanding possible. Jim's and Mariama's approaches orient more of arts-based methodology, in line with non-Western ways of knowing in the arts, than pedagogy as known in the field of education. Jim borrowed the idea of setting the classroom relational space as a circle from a practice describable as participatory performance, which is synonymous with his Native American tradition. Mariama's instructional approach in the African Aesthetics course also orients participatory performance. Her attention seemed focused on social transformation for racial equity in line with Afrocentrism. Hence, her classroom actions were of the theatric art of teaching. As Mariama would say" "You

dramatize it! …so that the nuances will come alive."

From the Indigenous perspective, the artistic and the pedagogical are inextricable. For the reason that the arts involve creative expression and pedagogy is the *art of teaching*, the two are describable as forms of artistry. Anzaldua (2007) would say that what Jim and Mariam were doing was "invoking art" for experiential reasons; and Dewey (1934) would describe the engagement with the students as an aesthetic experience. According to Anzaldua: "In the ethno-poetics and performances of the shaman, my people, the Indians did not split the artistic from the functional, the sacred from the secular, art from everyday life" (p. 88). Dewey adds to Anzaldua's remarks on Indigenous aesthetics by presenting Western *Art as Experience*. It is therefore understandable that the teachers perceived both challenges and possibilities regarding their efforts to use the arts to promote cross-cultural understanding in their Western settings.

Analysis of Challenges and Possibilities

According to the participants, there were both challenges and possibilities regarding their efforts to promote cross-cultural understanding within their classrooms. Sitting in their classes, observing and taking notes, and interviewing the teachers, I observed a variety of situations that exemplified the challenges and possibilities that arose from the processes and structures of their teaching. These challenges and possibilities can be attributed to an array of factors, including the students' predispositions and the teachers' positionality.

Some challenges involved the students' predispositions towards the courses. Rosa's courses were required for K-12 pre-service teachers. This might have been partly why they resisted it. Greene might call Rosa's students' preconceptions a "private knowing" that would need to be brought to public discourse in order to engage with other points of view. Somehow Rosa found the means to introduce arts from diverse cultures to her art education and elementary education majors. This may be why Greene (1988) says the role of education and the responsibility of the teacher are a dialectical relationship. The teacher enables students to move between private knowing and public discourse.

In some situations the teachers themselves were a source of challenges in the effectiveness of the course. One example was Mariama's positionality. By integrating voodoo references in her course activities, some of her students' parents opposed her curriculum. They confronted her because they thought this was a religious path. Afterwards Mariama continued to discuss the same issues as before, but she decided to do it in lighter and more entertaining ways. (It is important to note that Mariama did not have to admit she had these troubles early in her teaching. This was an act of courage and honesty and might be why she is so successful.)

Another example of problematic teacher positionality might have been Rosa's emphasis on official art standards and accountability. Rosa tried hard to meet national art education trends and to fulfill Oklahoma State requirements. The problem with focusing too much on standards, to quote Freire, is that banking education can end up "domesticating" rather than "liberating" students' (and teacher's) minds, thoughts and actions.

Although there were challenges, there were also quite a few possibilities. All three teachers believed they were successful in their efforts to teach diversity through use of the arts. Here again the possibilities were affected by a lot of factors, including the students' predispositions and the teachers' positionality. As cultural insiders among many of their students, Jim and Mariama were able to focus directly on the effects of multiple cultures interacting within our national context, critically examine sociopolitical issues of power and oppression, and take an activist perspective aimed at supporting cross-cultural understanding. However, even Rosa, as a cultural outsider among most of her students, continued to find creative ways to expose them to cultural diversity.

How would Greene view these teachers' actions? I think she would see the activist positionalities of Jim and Mariama as part of their existential projects of confronting the ideal and material walls that prevent people from imaging possibilities of freedom. Greene would also admire Rosa's efforts not to give up and to find creative solutions under difficult conditions. Maxine Greene says freedom is not a given. Paulo Freire adds that we must develop critical awareness of the structures of oppression in order to resist them. They would probably both say it is the responsibility of cultural minorities as well as majorities to learn and teach about these obstacles and possibilities.

Regarding the idea of expanding "the circle of we", the United States Constitution begins with the phrase "We, the people". Words like freedom, justice, and equality are commonly used in our society. But these are not just words. These are the key ideas and ideals that have continued to steer the course of American history. These ideas and ideals were put into practice by each of the teachers in this study as they sought to use the arts

to build cultural bridges in their classrooms.

The ideals presented in the documents generated by the founding fathers might have been very virtuous, but they were incomplete. These ideals did not apply equally to women, children, Native Americans, African Americans, or even poor people of European American descent (Zinn, 1995). There is still a need today to exert continuous and sincere efforts to build bridges across the diverse cultures that constitute North America (as well as the rest of the world). Teachers like Rosa, Jim, and Mariama show that one way to do this is by constructing dialogical spaces for critical awareness and cultural understanding through creative uses of the arts in education.

Implications for Using the Arts to Promote Cross-cultural Understanding

Returning to the original focus of the study, there were three basic ways in which these teachers used the arts to promote cross-cultural understanding: they created pedagogical spaces, they supported dialogue, and they focused on experience. They experienced quite a few challenges, but they also experienced successes as well. Although these teachers did not speak about their work in this way, Maxine Greene would probably say they were educating for freedom in an interconnected world. Greene emphasized that freedom comes from imagination and action to change the circumstances that prevent people from achieving their completion. Ironically, it is only in collaboration with others that we can become ourselves and thus become free.

But what are the implications of these findings for others? What do they mean for educators, particularly arts educators, who wish to promote cross-cultural understanding through their teaching? What do they mean for teachers like myself, from a non-Western

culture, who want to address issues of inequality regarding race, ethnicity, and culture? These findings bear at least three implications for teaching.

First, teachers who want to use the arts to promote cross-cultural understanding should consider making their classrooms pedagogical spaces for personal and social thought, feeling and action. The literature suggests that educators should create dialectical spaces for the collaborative development of freedom in thought, feeling and action (Greene, 1988). Consistent with these ideas, the three participants in this study used their classrooms as spaces of pedagogical possibilities. All three teachers believed they were successful in their efforts to use the arts to teach for diversity.

The implication for art education and education in general is that those who wish to build bridges of understanding should view their classrooms as more than simply a physical space for talking and listening. They should consider not only the physical factors but also the temporal, psychological, social and cultural aspects of their environments in which they teach in order to meet their most important instructional goals.

Second, teachers who want to use the arts to promote cross-cultural understanding should support meaningful dialogue within their classes. The literature suggests that meaningful learning must be dialogical (Greene, 1988; Freire, 2006), and all three teachers encouraged dialogue (in one-on-one, small group, and community level processes) within their classrooms. To build bridges of understanding across diverse cultures, teachers must avoid what Freire calls “anti-dialogical” education wherein students feel intimidated, afraid to ask questions, and intellectually inadequate. Instead,

they should conceive of their classrooms as pedagogical spaces wherein true dialogue can occur.

Third, teachers who might want to use the arts to promote cultural understanding must realize the value of experience. Dewey (1934) emphasizes the importance of focusing on everyday aesthetic experience. Greene (1988) says that focusing on experience requires making connections and collaborating with others, enabling us to see the world from multiple perspectives. Freire (2006) might add sharing the experiences of others creates opportunity for overcoming alienation and affirming men and women as persons rather continuing to view them as objects of the world. Consistent with these views, the teachers in this study focused on the experiences not only of artists but also of the classroom participants. Focusing on experience allowed these teachers to tell their own stories and to encourage their students do the same thing. Others who wish to promote cross-cultural understanding should also strongly consider the value of experience.

Finally, what do I, as an in-service teacher, take from the study? What did I actually see as a person of African Descent? What are the implications of the study for my own thoughts and practices as an art educator? Thus far, I am mindful that when different cultures interact in unequal power relations, misunderstandings due to cultural dominance can often get in the way. Resolution may take many generations. I believe this is true of North America.

I concur with the literature that there are many prominent bases of racial domination in contemporary society (Anzaldua, 2007; Banks & Banks, 2005; Flecha,

1999; Gullestrup, 2007; Koppelman & Goodhart, 2005; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Morain, 1971; Quinn, 1997; Zinn, 1995). Though presented as a fiction, Daniel Quinn's account of the history of social domination is worthy of note. He presents a credible argument about the historical evolution of marginalized cultures and the dialectical tensions that continue to exist between indigenous (Leaver) and industrial/postindustrial (Taker) cultures today **(**Quinn, 1997).

Reconciling these polarities, rather than simply engaging in cultural wars, has been a major challenge in education in US society. Freire (2006) propounds a repositioning of both the oppressor and the oppressed via social reconstruction, and he believes the arts can play an important role. Greene (1988), too, believes engagement with the arts (including arts education) can lead to positive freedom in democratic North America. In light of these and other scholars, I have been thinking: How can I, as an art educator, help build bridges for cross-cultural understanding in the 21st century? There are many ways to answer this complex question.

From my study, I discern that Western domination continues to be a significant problem, and that it needs to be openly addressed in art education. Race issues in America are hardly a part of our general conversations. There were many underlying social issues that have important implications for arts education, including my own practice. Two of them keep coming back to me. One issue, derived from Jim's Contemporary Native American Artists Seminar class, was the issue was ownership, specifically of the land. Questions about land ownership are not only physical, but also involve psychological borderlands. I was unaware that many Native Americans view

Latin American people as ancestrally related to them. I was also unaware that it is historically inaccurate, and therefore ridiculous, to say to a Mexican living in the southern or central part of the United States that he or she is an "illegal alien".

The second issue was derived from Mariama's African Aesthetics class. In this class, tension existed regarding the benefits of citizenship in a nation "built upon their backs". For many African Americans, there is still a tremendous desire to negotiate a proper place in US society. Such negotiation may only be possible through social transformation based on continued pedagogical activism. Proverbially, "the story is always partial". Native American and African American perspectives may not be entirely complete when viewed from a European American perspective. Still, there is a need for me to keep these issues in mind as I seek to create dialogical spaces for the onward processes of life in an increasingly shrinking global village.

Indeed, there are many ways that I, as an art educator, can help promote cross-cultural understanding in the 21st century. Before enrolling in my doctoral program, a major aim stated was to return to art education with fresh vistas for theory and practice. I have begun to see that the emergent direction is arts-based social education. Instead of seeing myself as an artist, an art educator, or a social studies specialist, it is perhaps most practical to put all three orientations into a melting pot. As one with experience and education in the three areas, I intend to create a synergy from the best practices in each of these areas in line with my direction and personality. Specifically, my scholarly interest is in the practice of arts-based social education entailing social collaboration for the building of cultural bridges.

Although I have not yet fully explored this new direction, I have already begun. In 2008 I initiated and directed Project Earth to Art, a two-year international project centered in Ghana focused on "tapping local resources for sustainable education through art". The first year's session was held during the summer of 2008. Participants met at Aba House in Nungua, a suburb of Accra, which is the capital of Ghana. This session took the form of a professional development workshop for art teachers from diverse cultures and countries. The following year, during the summer of 2009, participants from at least nine countries and four continents reconvened at The Kumasi Symposium, held at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Kumasi, Ghana. Attendance during the second year more than tripled. Prior participants shared the results of their implementation of the Nungua experience, while new participants brought additional experience and expertise to the project. In 2010 there will be a third annual meeting, the 2010 Bamako Symposium on the Arts, which will encourage further interdisciplinary collaboration on the arts, the environment, and the global community.

Project Earth to Art has grown to be a registered Foundation in Ghana, and with the help of a dedicated group of colleagues, we are currently developing an Arts Village at Abetenim. This endeavor, an implementation of the proceedings from the 2009 Kumasi Symposium, will bring together a cohort of artists and architects from diverse lands to engage in creative research, an exchange of knowledge, and capacity building. The artists and architects will live and work together for a period of one year, designing and constructing artists' cottages from earth and other materials from the natural environment. European, American, and Australian artists will be assisted by indigenous

master builders from Africa. Other participants will include an earth building advocate, an international advisory committee, and a group of unemployed but creative rural youth who will join us as apprentices.

The Arts Village at Abetenim is an arts-based social collaboration designed to help us gain insight into how to develop additional villages in other Sub-Saharan countries. Our key objective is develop and demonstrate the use of the earth under our feet as a valid alternative to modern home building methods in Ghana and neighboring countries. Simply stated, the project's role is to "prime the pump" for the ongoing development of diverse, democratic, and ecologically sustainable residences in Sub-Saharan Africa.

How do these experiences relate to my classroom teaching? Upon returning to the art education faculty, I will draw on my coursework, the results of this study, and my ongoing work in Ghana to inform my theory and practice of teaching. I anticipate using the Arts Village in Ghana (and additional villages as they are developed) as empirical sites for international education. I envision utilizing Summer Study Abroad and other international programs to engage my students in West Africa travel with a continued orientation toward the development of a more complex sense of historical, social, cultural, political, economic, aesthetic place and space.

I plan to enable professional growth by challenging my students to tap into their natural strengths and abilities and frames of collaboration as resources for building cross-cultural bridges. This will not be just a benevolent threshold. As one who was born in a different culture, I understand that one way to mediate cultural misunderstandings and

unequal power is to truly learn about one another. And one place to do this is in the arts-based classroom.

By narrowing the chasm between educator and learner, we can open spaces for classroom relationships. People educate each other through their interactions with the world. By building upon who each student is, I hope to crack the mold of a one-size-fits-all approach to arts education. Maxine Greene calls it “education for freedom”. Freire calls it education for “humanization”. Whatever it is called, the bottom line for practice is that art educators need to help create relational spaces conducive to the affirmation of diversity in our shared world. If we do this, we will help build bridges across cultures.

APPENDIX

Interview Questions:

1. What goals are you trying to accomplish over all? What do you want your students to learn?

2. Could you describe your experience (both successes and challenges) of teaching non-Western cultures in Western settings?

3. Is there anything you would like to share concerning how to teach the arts to build bridges across cultures in North America?

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