

Arts-Based Research in Precarious Pedagogy-Making Experiences

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Abstract

Framing through the concept of precarity, we share our arts-based research on the experiences of creating a collaborative performance-making project focused on connecting students from different education levels, to create a film-dance integrated performance to advocate for social justice issues in education. We, as instructors and researchers, embarked on an arts-based research journey creating sketches, poems, videos, and a dance performance to analyze and represent our research findings. Our performance from the performative inquiry shows our understanding of the collaboration project through the same art form we required our students to utilize: film and dance-integrated arts performance.

Introduction

In 2016 we developed an arts-based applied learning experience where undergraduate students majoring in elementary education, enrolled in “Integrating the Arts in the Elementary Curriculum,” and graduate students majoring in higher education, enrolled in “Social Justice Topics in Education” courses, worked collaboratively to produce an integrated film and dance performance. The collaboration centered on themes developed during a graduate course about social justice topics in education, and performances were intended to reflect students’ engagement with social justice topics and challenge traditional notions of learning by using an arts-integrated approach to embody their learning. By the second year, the project evolved to include dance students from a local high school, which allowed us to ultimately “create an integrated applied learning experience that supports the goals of the high school dance program, pre-service teacher education course, and higher education graduate course, respectively” (Liao et al., 2018, p. 88). The experience engaged students in collaborative performance-making that was precarious for all stakeholders involved in the project because of the complexity and unfamiliarity of the collaborative teaching and learning experience.

We frame the process of this pedagogy and the project as precarious, revealing the vulnerability of the pedagogy and project (Tsing, 2015). Tsing explained that “precarity is a state of acknowledgment of our vulnerability to others. In order to survive, we need help, and help is always the service of another, with or without intent” (p. 29). We intentionally developed this project to require interdependency among all students and instructors engaged in the experience. As instructors, we needed each other to not only support the production of the final performance, but also to support our respective course activities and accomplish learning outcomes. While our interdependence made us vulnerable, it also helped us to succeed in a world that was structured to challenge us.

In this article, we share our arts-based research on the experience of creating this collaborative performance-making project. We will first share an overview of the project. Then, we will discuss the scholarship we explored to understand the project through the lens of precarity and performance-making pedagogy. We will then discuss our performative inquiry into understanding the experience of collaborative teaching of this performance-making project. Our research findings are represented through an interactive film and dance performance shared via a recorded video link embedded in this article. We argue that both our project and arts-based research are performative and precarious.

Saying our pedagogy in the making is precarious acknowledges not only the risk of the pedagogy-making process, but also emphasizes the political challenge and precarious support for conducting such a large-scale project. Indeed, time and schedule restrictions, communication conflicts, restrictive school policies, access to funding, and the overall complexity of the project were challenges we encountered during each iteration of the experience (Liao et al., 2018). Our decision to engage in the project as pre-tenured faculty members alludes to the political challenges we also faced. There was a real risk that our work would not be valued in the tenure review process, which created a precarious condition for our own economic stability and security (Manning, 2016; Tsing, 2015). Saying our project is precarious also acknowledges the difficulty of making this project a stable part of the curriculum. The hiring of new faculty and staff members, lack of institutional support, and loss of school partners, in fact, contributed to a pause on this project after the 2018 iteration. Nevertheless, we believe the value and experience from this project can advance arts-based teaching, learning, and research as demonstrated through our research findings.

Overview of the Project

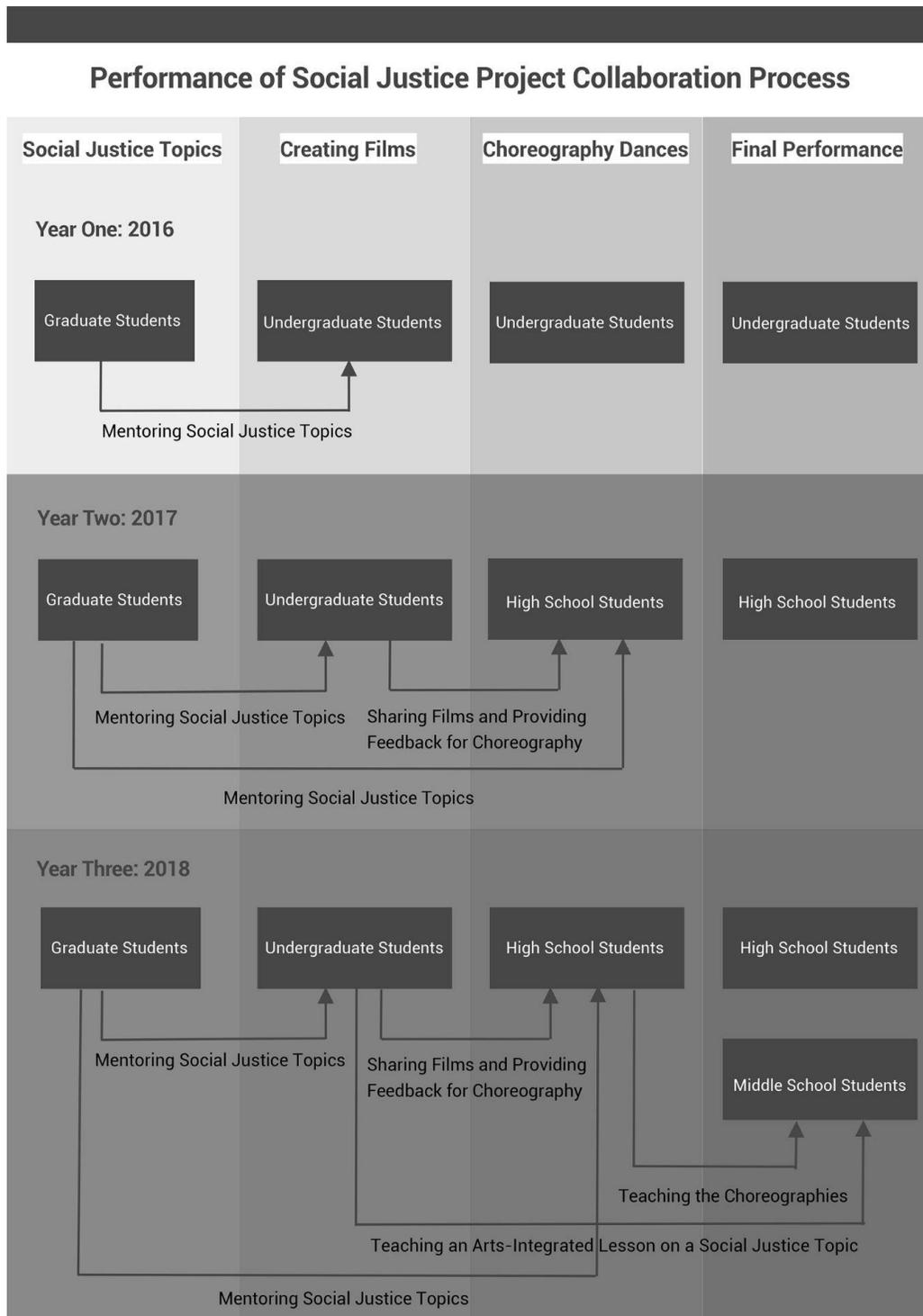
Collaborative performance-making is the pedagogy, project, and event we created over a span of three years (2016-2018). Initially, as a final class project for both the undergraduate and graduate students in their respective courses, the project was expanded after the first year to become a community outreach event in addition to a course project. During each year of the collaboration, we held a performance as a culminating event for advocating social justice issues in education, showcasing students' learning, and bridging the community. The performance required students to combine dance and film as a layered performance (see Figure 1) in order to convey meaning, as well as to transform the dance into a digital performance and the film into a live interaction.

We created this project and pedagogy as a way to engage graduate and undergraduate students with social justice issues through arts; as the project evolved, the teaching also reached high school students (who performed as dancers in 2017 and 2018) and middle school students (who performed as dancers and attended as audience members in 2018). Students from different levels, including graduate, undergraduate, high school, and middle school, participated in different stages and created different parts of the performance (see Figure 2). In the process, the graduate students applied their learning, acted as mentors for the undergraduate and high school students, and also learned to embody social justice action, rather than to statically identify as social justice allies (DeVita & Anders, 2018). The undergraduate students created films to present their learning and research of social justice topics in education

(e.g., racism, sexism, classism). In the first year, they also choreographed the dances and acted as dancers on stage. In the second and third years, the undergraduate students' roles shifted (each year's students are different), and instead of creating dances, they worked with high school dance students to share their films and provide feedback for high school students' choreographies. In addition, they went to the local middle school to teach an arts-integrated lesson on the selected social justice topics to sixth-graders. The undergraduate students engaged in the performance were challenged to learn about social justice topics relevant to their work in elementary education, as well as to express ideas through the arts. The high school students learned about the social justice topics from both the graduate and undergraduate students, and choreographed dances to correspond with the films in the performance. They also acted as dancers in the second and third years. In addition, they taught their dances to the middle school's students in the third year. The dance students reflected on the ways they were pushed outside of their comfort zones to learn about dance as a form of communication that can convey serious issues in addition to aesthetic appeal. The middle school's sixth-graders were involved in the project by the third year. They learned about the social justice topics from the arts-integrated lesson taught by the undergraduate students, and volunteers were recruited to work with the high school dance students to perform the dances. As instructors, we engaged in creating the performance-making pedagogy and researching the experience of this unique collaboration.



Fig. 1: Scene of performance of social justice, 2016.



* The graduate students and undergraduate students are different students each year. There were 15-20 graduate students and 35-45 undergraduate students each semester. There were about 25 high school students and about 10 of the high school students participated in both the 2017 and 2018 iterations. There were 26 middle school students who participated as dancers.

Fig 2: Performance of social justice project collaboration process.

We sought to provide a collaborative space where all participants in the project felt connected and utilized a layered mentoring approach to do so. Shaw and Byler (2016) noted that, “[u]nderstanding life as precarious suggests that social existence itself depends on interdependency through the care of others” (para. 1). Our project modeled this interdependency by encouraging all stakeholders to play an integral role in the production of the culminating performance. In order to develop a complete and integrated performance, all students and instructors made meaningful contributions that blurred distinctions among roles.

During the performance, the dancers and films sometimes interact, even contradict each other, in conveying complicated representations of social justice topics. We changed the collaborating components, involved more students each year, and reached new audiences as we expanded the collaboration. For example, in our third year of the collaboration, an in-school performance was offered as an assembly to all middle school students, and a second performance was attended by community members and parents; this was a significant increase in our audience from the first year when the performance was limited to mostly classmates and a few friends and family members. In each performance, there are several short pieces that focus on different social justice topics in education (e.g., racism, sexism, classism). The various social justice topics aligned with graduate students’ engagement in applied learning activities with members of the respective community they were learning about.

Precarity and Performance-Making Pedagogy

Examples of performative art and performance-making pedagogy exist across multiple disciplines (e.g., Bird, 2020; Buono & Gonzalez, 2017; McManimon, 2020). A special issue of *LEARNIng Landscapes* in 2020 on “The Role of Performances in Educational Practices” included examples of arts-integrated projects from across the educational spectrum. One article, written by Boydell (2020), shared research on a project that used dance to represent psychosis among young people, which described the project as an “academic-artistic partnership [that] was characterized by managing reservations and taking risks” (p. 80). Boydell discussed challenges encountered throughout the performance arts-based research project she facilitated, including the need to balance the aesthetic aspects of the performance for audience appeal with both research findings and educational benefits of the work. Boydell also noted the stress associated with negotiating different viewpoints among collaborators, including researcher, choreographer, and performer, and the challenges of translating and representing findings through movement appropriately and effectively. The challenges encountered demonstrate the precariousness of performance-making pedagogy, which we discuss in greater detail below.

Precarity

A concept originally from sociological discourse about the uncertainty and insecurity of one’s livelihood, precarity has been applied to other fields, and the discourses around the concept have expanded in recent years (Choonara, 2020). We frame our work around this concept, acknowledging the risk of taking it out of the original context. However, as the core of our work is to advocate and spread awareness of social justice for the minority groups of people the performance project touched upon (e.g., Black male,

Native American, LGBTQ+), and the precarious conditions these people are living in, we build on and amplify connection and the need for the theorization of this kind of work.

Additionally, in the introduction to an edited volume focused on precarity and performance, Ridout and Schneider (2012) pointed out the discourses around “good precarity” and “bad precarity.” They stated that,

... precarity’s “positive qualities”—leaning away from habit, stepping outside of comfort zones, chancing the speculative and uncertain act of critical thinking—can be used to undermine or interrupt neoliberalism’s negative, fearmongering mode of precarity that imposes insecurity for the many in the interest of enormous wealth for the few. (p. 9)

While we see the precariousness in the process of our project, we also think that it is not all negative. Understanding our project through the perspective of “good precarity” connects our project back to performance art pedagogy’s critical stand and provides a way to see the possibility of making changes through collaborative performance-making. The positive outcomes experienced by students in all contexts point to the positive aspects of precarity. Moreover, the positive outcomes reflect the enacted social justice values learned through engagement in the project: community, inclusivity, and empowerment by giving voice.

Performance-Making Pedagogy

We call our collaborative teaching performance-making pedagogy. Similar to Charles Garoian’s (1999) performance art pedagogy, which includes three attributes: performance, performativity, and performance art, in using the term performance-making, we emphasize the performativity in the performance itself and the performative, precarious process of making the performance. Performance, as Garoian explained, includes making, doing and production in the arts and “the teacher’s pedagogy, the students’ interaction with that pedagogy, and their mutual involvement in school” (p. 8) in the education context. In other words, teaching and learning are performance. Performativity, according to Garoian (1999), “represents the performance of subjectivity, a means by which students can attain political agency” (p. 8). Performance art pedagogy emphasizes the political agency in which one’s subjectivity produces and the negotiation of “positionality within the culture” (p.8). Seeing performance art as a self-conscious and open form of art, Garoian argues that performance art pedagogy creates “a liminal space, an aesthetic dimension, wherein socially and historically constructed ideas, images, myths, and utopias can be contested and new ones constructed as they pertain to students’ experience of reality and their desires to transform that reality” (p. 10)

We consider the main difference between performance art pedagogy and our performance-making pedagogy is the emphasis on the collaborative process in the latter. The collaboration can be conceptualized through the lens of intra-action (Barad, 2007). Intra-action, according to Barad’s (2007) agential realism, is “the mutual constitution of entangled agencies” (p. 33). She explained, “in contrast to the usual ‘interaction,’ which assumes that there are separate individual agencies that precede their interaction, the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action” (p. 33). An example of an intra-action in our collaboration project can be

seen from the high school students' choreographies. The students' choreographies are not separated productions of the choreographers' exercise of their agency, but emerge through the intra-action with the graduate students' research, undergraduate students' films, the instructors, and other nonhuman agencies, such as space. The agencies, the students, teachers, and other nonhuman agencies, are entangled in the process and continually influencing each other through intra-actions. In other words, agencies are not fixed and stable, but precarious and uncertain. The continuing intra-actions in the collaborative performance-making, thus, render the pedagogy precarious.

Performative Research Into the Process of Performance-Making Pedagogy

To understand the precariousness in our journey of making the performance-making pedagogy and conducting such a risky project, we embarked on a layered arts-based research process (Buono & Gonzalez, 2017; Siegesmund & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008) through performative inquiry and arts-based methods. We ask: what constituted the experience of creating the collaborative performance-making project?

Performative inquiry is an approach that inheres in researching a topic through performance. It is often used in social science and educational fields to expose narratives of injustice, create meaning, and promote participation in focal issues (Butler-Kisber, 2010). Performance inquiry as a research methodology fits well with our project because not only is our project art form performance, but it also "opens spaces of intertextual play within which social responsibility and individual and communal response may be investigated" (Fels & McGivern, 2002, p. 30). Aimed to create the intertextual dialogue between our students' final performance and our experience in creating this project as pre-tenured faculty members, we decided to employ performance inquiry in our research to show our understanding of this collaboration project through the same art form. As Fels (2012) suggested, engaging in performative inquiry through artmaking is a way to generate embodied and reflective data. We, as researchers, engaged in an analytical process after the collaborative project. We deconstructed and analyzed the processes through which we created our collaborative project and constructed new understandings of the collaborative experience through movement, poetry, drawing, and video making.

We began this arts-based research journey by creating a blog to share our initial individual reflective analysis of the raw data with each other. The data collected from the process, including written reflections from students, notes during our collaboration process, videos from the practices, and the final performances, were analyzed for emerging themes. In addition, we generated reflections on this project through our exchange on the blog, and the reflections became our data too. Using this initial analysis, we undertook arts-based approaches to illustrate these emerging themes and apply our artful interpretations. These emerging themes were translated into drawings (See Figure 3) and reflective poems as ways to analyze and crystallize the raw data (Gerber & Myers-Coffman, 2018). A total of five drawings and five poems were created from our data analysis.

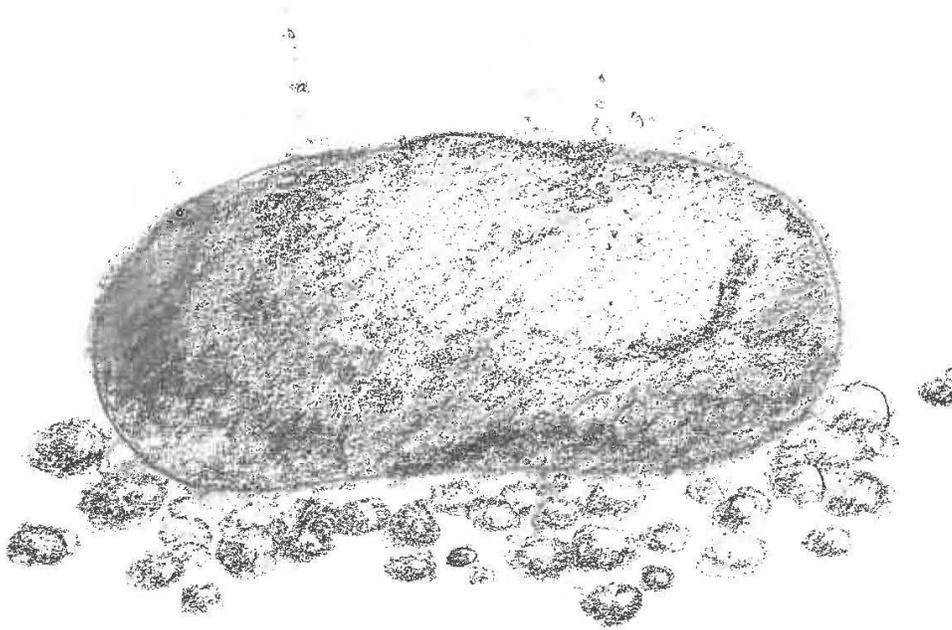


Fig. 3: A sketch drawing from the research process.

Using the drawings and poems as arts-based analysis, we implemented a performative method to further interpret the imagery from the drawings and poems and created dance movements to represent the findings (Bagley & Cancienne, 2001). Next, the art pieces (i.e., the poems and drawings) were organized based on the categories that emerged from our analysis to create a video artwork through which we presented a narrative of our findings. This mirrors the format of the dance and film integrated performance project we orchestrated. We also created embedded interactive movements as a way to open up our research and invite others to join the dialogue. The interactive movements are also a disruption of the power dynamics that are expected to be at play in a performance. We invite the audience to engage by dancing with us. We invite them to think of themselves as a part of the performance, not merely an observer of it. The research “findings” were then presented through an interactive dance-video performance at the InSEA World Congress in 2019, engaging audiences from different fields to ponder the challenges and benefits of collaborative work.

Precarious Performative Research Analysis and Results

The Performativity

Our arts-based research led us to the conclusion that the integrated film and dance performances that students develop and perform as their culminating experience on learning about social justice topics are performative acts. Austin (1962) argues that the term

performative utterances. . . is derived, of course, from ‘perform,’ the usual verb with the noun ‘action’: it indicates that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action—it is not normally thought of as just saying something. (pp. 6–7)

Performativity was described by Judith Butler (1993) as the “reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains” (p. xii). Lloyd (1999) noted that Butler’s concept of performativity means that we are always “doing” that identity rather than just being that identity. Additionally, Karen Barad (2003) stated that “[t]he move toward performative alternatives to representationalism shifts the focus from questions of correspondence between descriptions and reality (e.g., do they mirror nature or culture?) to matters of practices/doings/actions” (p. 802). Our film and dance performance asks students to not just reflect on what they have learned about social justice topics, but to embody and enact that learning with each other, with the audience, with the media they have produced. Because of these multiple interactions, the performances are opportunities for students to *act* out their learning and to *do* social justice work. The students do not simply tell us what they learned in their performances; rather, the performances enact concepts of social justice about which they learned and performed.

Barad (2003) noted that, “‘We’ are not outside observers of the world. Nor are we simply located at particular places in the world; rather, we are part of the world in its ongoing intra-activity” (p. 828). Her statement aligns with how we positioned students (and ourselves) throughout the development and performance of their social justice projects. We (as instructors) facilitated communication among all groups and provided workshops where students engaged in movement exercises and in-depth discussions about their experiences and ideas. We worked with the students to provide guidance on how to address the different elements of the performance, which align with the aspects of explicit performatives (e.g., mood, tone of voice, cadence, emphasis) identified by Austin (1962) (pp. 73–74). Each aspect of the collaboration was woven into elements of the others in order to achieve the complete performance. The inter- and intra-actions that were essential to the project demonstrate its performative nature as well as the complex ways in which learning occurred.

The Fear and Precarity

An initial theme that emerged in our research findings is fear. The project was precarious to us from different perspectives. As we discussed at the beginning of this article, we engaged in this project not knowing if it would be successful, and as pre-tenured faculty, there were risks of spending much time and energy on a project that might not be recognized. In a reflection from our arts-based research process, one of us wrote:

The fear feeling for me is like a stone sinking into the water. You never know how deep the water is. It keeps sinking. It is also like holding a stone in the hand and trying to squeeze it. No matter how hard you try, it is impossible. (C. Liao, personal communication, January 29, 2019)

The sketch in Figure 3 is the visual representation of this fear. The fear came from the precarity of the project.

However, we do not see fear as negative in this process. The performativity of our project transformed it into positive. Butler (2009) linked the concepts of performativity and precarity by stating that it recognizes,

[. . .] who counts as a subject and who does not, that performativity becomes linked with precarity. The performativity of gender has everything to do with who counts as a life, who can be read or understood as a living being, and who lives, or tries to live, on the far side of established modes of intelligibility. (p. iv)

Butler illustrates the connection by describing undocumented immigrants who gathered and sang in the streets of Los Angeles in 2006. She notes that “[f]or the most part, illegal immigrants stay away from any situation in which they might be caught, imprisoned, and deported. But in this instance, they made themselves very public, exercising a right that belongs to citizens precisely because they do not have that right” (pp. iv–v). She concluded by stating that,

In the end, the question of how performativity links with precarity might be summed up in these more important questions: How does the unspeakable population speak and makes its claims? What kind of disruption is this within the field of power? And how can such populations lay claim to what they require? (p. xiii)

We found Butler’s description of the linkage between performativity and precarity aligned with our work in multiple ways, and particularly through the three questions posed above. There are two ways in which we relate to the first question: “How does the unspeakable population speak and makes its claims?” depending upon which position we take as the “unspeakable population.” In one sense, the performance gives voice to the arts, which are often “unspeakable” in terms of demonstrating student learning outside of specific arts-related disciplines. In another sense, the performance gives voice to the social justice topics and communities with whom students have worked to develop their performances—another population typically silenced within higher education. The performances were intended to be disruptions “within the field of power” (question 2) by utilizing an arts-integrated approach that directly challenges traditional ways of representing learning. We wanted to disrupt traditional standards for demonstrating learning to our students, who will become future educators and may be empowered to do the same. Indeed, through the act of the performance, students challenge the social and cultural norms they have learned about through their social justice projects. Students are also challenged to think critically about the representations they portray in their performances to avoid reifying stereotypes they are attempting to challenge. Their performances are discourses on their learning and reflections on the social justice topics they have explored through applied learning projects.

In relation to “how can such populations lay claim to what they require?” we argue that our efforts to sustain and scale this work over three years helped to address this question. Our efforts created space for others to challenge the “modes of exclusion” (Butler, 2009, p. vi) used by higher education that value specific ways of demonstrating learning and scholarship. The arts are excluded by traditional norms that privilege PowerPoint presentations and papers over film, performance, or visual arts, among other alternative forms of expression. Positive feedback from students, school, and community members about our project helped us to challenge structures that restrict creative and imaginative approaches, such as ours, which also engaged in interdisciplinary and interinstitutional collaborations. In the end, although we started this project with fear, the performativity of the work guided us out of fear.

The Challenges

Participants, including the students and instructors, overcame internalized feelings of fear and challenges that were tied to both the performance and its outcomes. The uncertainty associated with how the live performance would proceed and be received by the audience contributed to the vulnerability and precarity of the performance. There was a clear sense by all participants that we were doing something unique and sending a message that challenged expected behaviors. Indeed, our performance-making pedagogy made students, administrators, and colleagues uncomfortable at times. In the end, the performance provided students with an opportunity to voice their engagement with social justice topics.

The challenges encountered on our project are directly connected to the precarity of the project's design and implementation. The project relies upon coordination across multiple courses at various levels and across multiple institutions. As the project evolved with each iteration from 2016 to 2017 to 2018, we introduced additional layers of complexity, which contributed to the precariousness of the project and added new challenges to overcome. Seemingly basic, but critical, challenges occurred in everyday tasks like scheduling for collaborations between student groups and maintaining effective communication. Boydell (2020) noted similar issues in her performance arts-based research project.

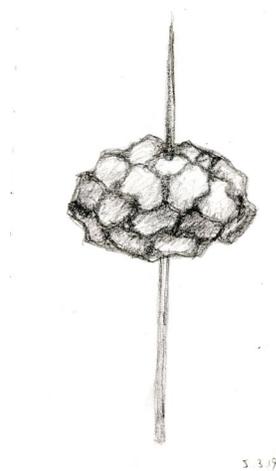


Fig. 4: The sketch representing challenges.

Figure 4 represents the theme of challenges, which is a negative aspect of precarity. We had to overcome multiple challenges that affected the progress of engaging in the project. Each decision we made had an impact on the other aspects of individuals engaged in the collaboration. This sketch represents the delicateness and fragility of the collaborative process because of the challenges we faced throughout the project. Each individual component of the project was reliant upon the other in order to achieve the final outcome: a film and dance integrated performance. The sketch depicts the ways in which the individual pieces are held together around a central axis of support. External and internal forces are constantly pulling, pushing, and threatening the stability of the network—yet it holds together despite those challenges in a beautiful mosaic. The interdependency of each piece is both a strength of the design and the basis for the challenges encountered.

Different levels of experience contributed to diverse points of view that needed to be negotiated. The respective areas of expertise for student groups (graduate students: social justice content; undergraduate students: film; high school students: choreography and dance) contributed to the interdependency among groups and established a need to work collaboratively.

Support and Collaboration

Over time we learned to anticipate challenges and identified creative ways to overcome them:

When I reflect on the project, I'm amazed at how many little pieces had to fall into place for it all to be successful; how many resources we had to cull together to make things happen: equipment from Watson, sound support from Roland Grise staff, costumes from mini-grants, brochure assistance from GAs, etc. The many tiny bubbles supported this huge rock because they all worked together. (J. DeVita, personal communication, February 10, 2019)

We found inspiration from our students' learning that helped us to support each other and sustain the collaboration for multiple years. Support and collaboration were necessary on our project in order to overcome the challenges we encountered, and they represent other themes from our research findings. The poems below represent our findings related to support and collaboration. Support relates both to what students identified as motivation to be active supporters for marginalized populations and their commitment to engage in advocacy work.

Support

At times disappointed in myself and my attempts at practicing inclusion
At times enlightened and empowered
The lights turned on
Marginalization is so intertwined across identities
Social justice is both a process and a goal
I can advocate for my students
Because I need to stand up for groups which I may not represent

Collaboration

It is hard to accomplish a common goal
Because of schedules
Because of different knowledge and experiences
Working with others opened my eyes
Gave me a chance to change my preconceived notions
Allowed me to connect on a different and personal level
To reflect on my own practices
Collaboration gave me strength to take a stand

Growth

While our challenges are linked to the negative aspects of the precarity of our work, the theme of growth is associated with the positive aspects of precarity. We found that growth could also be framed as the interaction between challenges, support, and collaboration. Students' learning and development (i.e., growth) was enhanced by their engagement in navigating challenges associated with the project. In fact, understanding the process and value of working through differences to overcome challenges was an outcome of the project for students. One graduate student reflected that:

A main challenge I faced was discussing my social justice group with undergraduates. Being a leader in such a sensitive project made it difficult for me to breach the subject, especially if the understanding may include negative/mainstream viewpoints of a group. Breaching this subject was tough for me because I needed to stand up for a group which I may not represent as an individual. (Student A, personal communication, 2017)

For this student, negotiating their engagement with the undergraduate students they were working with was a challenge they had to negotiate to effectively advocate for their respective marginalized group.

As Butler (2009) discussed, there is power in performativity; in our project, students used the final performance as a space to give voice to both the marginalized perspectives that were the focus of the project and the students' own voices and bodies. Similar to Boydell (2020), who concluded that "[e]mbodied inquiry focuses on the relationship between language and the experiencing body, and has the capability of highlighting the lived experience of individuals" (p. 79), we found that the final performances not only embodied lived experiences, but they also helped to reshape the lived experiences of the students who participated. One of the middle school dancers reflected at the end of the performance in 2018, that following her performance was the first time she felt like others in the school knew who she was; that it was the first time her peers recognized and complimented her.

Performance of Performance-Making Pedagogy

Our performative inquiry is not a fixed thing like those published texts. The interactivity of our performance is the variable in the performance. We would argue that each performance is different; it is impossible to produce the same performance twice. One representation of our work is a video recording of an integrated film and dance performance developed and performed by us. We aligned the final performance with the same product required of our students to reflect the blended process of research and teaching of the project. Although the video captures the performance at one time and lacks the opportunity for audience engagement, we invite the audience to interact with the movement while watching the video. As we (authors and dancers) transition between themes, we invite audience members to engage in upper-body movement that connects physically with the piece.

Link to the recorded performance:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kek72G3OY3zjPWPCqZJfg_WHv44ceSfq/view?usp=sharing

Conclusion

Although this performance was shared at a conference (Liao & DeVita, 2019) and recorded in the video shared above, we do not consider it to be the end of our research journey. In fact, we consider our arts-based research journey as precarious too, subject to reinterpretation. Our performance is a re-embodiment of the experiences of making this collaborative performance-making project. The five experiences identified in this research—fear, challenge, support, collaboration, and growth—are connected together, and one led to another. The fear is connected to challenges; with challenges, we seek support; with support, we collaborate; with collaboration, we grow from this project.

The project outcomes revealed several benefits among stakeholders that align with our implications for practice. The students engaged in the project benefitted from participating in a multi-layered learning experience that enhanced their growth and development. Students had to engage across peer groups and levels, think critically about adapting social justice concepts to media and movement, and communicate their messages effectively using film and dance. The project required a higher level of risk that helped to deepen learning across all groups. While students were typically uneasy about the uncertainty and risk associated with the project at the beginning of the semester, most found it both stimulating and rewarding by the end.

The higher education faculty and the high school instructor who worked collaboratively on the project benefitted from the partnership. Our respective positions at our institutions, as well as our respective skills in various art forms, were utilized throughout the project's planning and implementation process to support the overall project and helped to make it successful. The pause of the project due to the change of partnership further implies the essential role of partnership in this kind of collaborative project.

Considered a precarious project, the performativity of the project gives a positive impact to everyone involved, including the community members who participated in the performance events. We believe our performance-making pedagogy is an example of arts-based social justice education that has the potential to be expanded and reenacted in the future.

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