

# Propositions for Sustainable Relationalities

Sustainable Relationality Study Group

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## Abstract

From November 2023 to June 2024, an a/r/tographic study group gathered to engage with the concept of sustainable relationality. With the methodology of a/r/tography and propositional thinking, the relational gathering became an experimental curricular *uncommonplace*, a messy yet nourishing place from which to envision different ways of working and being. After introducing the intentions and theoretical background of the study, two art-based engagements that emerged for two groups of master's students are offered. Reflecting on the transitions undergone by these groups, we speculate on the conditions that might enable similar educational opportunities for human flourishing sustained by deep relational encounters.

## Introduction

Ken and Nicole have participated in study groups together for about six years now. Both a/r/tographers first gathered around the Canadian federally funded *Mapping A/r/tography: Transnational Storytelling Across Historical and Cultural Routes of Significance* project as doctoral students, which was led by their mentor Rita Irwin, based at the University of British Columbia. Inspired by the a/r/tographic emphasis of research that unfolds from critical, contemplative, and creative engagement with the interplay of theory and practice in community (LeBlanc & Irwin, 2019; Lee et al., 2019), Nicole and Ken formed their own study group to work with the Master of Arts in Art Education (MAAE) students at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) University in 2023–2024. Both scholars, situated in a state of transition with Ken recently finishing his doctoral studies and Nicole still adjusting to the demands of a tenure-track position, wanted to continue sustaining permissive and generative spaces for thinking, philosophizing, writing, and making. The Mapping A/r/tography study group met monthly for multiple years, first in person and then pivoted online because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Sustainable Relationality study group also gathered monthly, but only for eight months, and entirely online—it was not until June 2024 that this group met in person for the 2024 Canadian Society for Education Through Art (CSEA/SCÉA) National Conference.

The Sustainable Relationality Study Group's conference participation was made possible by a Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science grant, titled *Social Implementation of Arts-Based Pedagogy in Teacher Training by Program Development and Research Hub Construction* (PI: Koichi Kasahara, based at Tokyo Gakugei University), which in some ways extended work from Mapping A/r/tography's

transnational partnerships. This current study summoned researchers from Japan, Australia, Canada, and China to consider the concept of sustainable relationality: What does developing sustainable relationships with land, culture, society, and education in each of our local contexts mean? In this article, authors share the messy process of imagining, mobilizing, and becoming in an a/r/tographic study group centered on the concept of sustainable relationality in the situated milieu of K'jipuktuk (a Mi'kmaq word for "Great Harbor"), or Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. The piece begins with a sketch of the facilitators/educators/mentors' intentions for the study group, the propositional thinking that propelled the unfoldings, and the a/r/tographic theoretical foundations that supported this work. It features two art-based relationship and community-building engagements that emerged for two groups of master's students: (1) Fayrouz and Meghan, and (2) Melissa, Rebecca, and Robin. The first developed intercultural learning through creating and playing a memory card game. The second shifted their instrumentalized understanding of art education research to one based on care and reciprocity through socially engaged practice. The reflections at the end speak to the transitions this group went through and speculate on the conditions that might enable similar communities of practice to develop and flourish.

### **Study Group Notes from Ken and Nicole, the Facilitators/Educators/Mentors**

We (Nicole and Ken) came to this work sharing a commitment "to living in rich and creative ways" (Cohen, 2014, p. xv) because we experienced its potential for cultivating abundance in a/r/tographic communities of practice. Inviting students to join a study group was our way of inspiring others to consider the possibilities this commitment could enable, especially in a space marked by scarcity (United Way Halifax, 2024). Entering this engagement, we knew that these beginning scholars hoped to learn more about a/r/tography and how to participate in academic conferences. While the group was attuned to the potentiality of presenting together at the 2024 CSEA/SCÉA National Conference which was coming to Halifax, it was at first unclear what we collectively aspired to achieve and what form this a/r/tographic work would take. It took time to figure this out together, and this was a process of navigating transitions organically. Largely, each person entered these spaces with a commitment to being together. In the initial sessions, an agreed-upon structure—a proposition—enabled each study group member to share a part of themselves. Elsewhere, Ken has observed that "propositions, when taken up, in putting forth, set us forth, directing our being to motion ... unground[ing] being from the assumed fixity of hereness into the unfixed domain of the not yet known" (Morimoto, 2024, p. 491). By responding to these propositions, ideas, quotes, data, and visual artifacts accumulated, we began working with this accumulation to story what had happened.

As facilitators, we (Ken and Nicole) mainly held a space of pedagogical abeyance for the students and their ideas to ripen. Price (2012) traces multiple interpretations of abeyance, including "transitory times," "flux," "suspension," "waiting," "aspiration, (and) desire," "look," "gape," "open wide in remembrance, expectation, and contemplation" (p. 66). We provided an environment for the students to unlearn their traditionally oriented beliefs of what is expected in social sciences and humanities research and

scholarship. This was a space of generosity that allowed students to uncover their curiosities, let themselves be moved by their concerns, and make sense of these impressions. In the endeavor to walk alongside the students, we as educators tried to bring “a sense of spaciousness to experiences ... and gesture toward less fear and more space for suspension in learning” (Price, 2012, p. 67). Indeed, echoing Price’s (2012) interpretations of *abeyance* (italicized here), we witnessed how this experience was a *transitory time* for the students that was full of *flux*. We *suspended expectations*, while we *waited* and *looked* with inquisitive anticipation for the something that was sure to emerge. In *remembering* what it was like for our own mentors to offer a similar space for us, we *contemplated* on our mentors’ *aspirations* and *desires* for us, as well as our own for the students we now serve.

Lucero (2018), who thinks of his pedagogical practice as conceptual art and believes how “the everyday—attended to—becomes art” (p. 51), has inspired us to consider our teaching in the study group in similar ways. Lucero explains in an interview that this reframing of curriculum and pedagogy as artistic practice involves “work[ing] within limits—mostly conceptual, but sometimes material—to try to find the pliability of things that might appear to be concretized and immobile at first glance” (Kersten, 2021, p. 35). This focus on possibilities in the face of limitations formed the central ethos of the study group, and it carried our work forward. Like Lucero (2018), we embraced an emergent, lived curriculum, by having “conversations with [our] students about their goals, their intentions, their accomplishments, and about [our] role in helping them achieve those things” (p. 53). Characteristic of a/r/tographic inquiry, instead of asking students to start with a research question, we shifted to posing questions like “What practices move you into feeling?” and “Considering where you would like to put your energy, how might it reconceptualize the idea of work?” to get them started. This formed a permissive beginning to allow the messiness of the process to direct the course of our research.

### **A/r/tographic Relationality**

Our propositional engagement with sustainable relationality is informed by a/r/tography (Irwin et al., 2024b; Springgay et al., 2008). In *A/r/tography: Essential Readings and Conversations*, Irwin et al. (2024a) discuss how a/r/tography engages “both artistic and educational practices as a basis for inquiry” (p. 4). The methodology has “resisted stabilization over time” (p. 5) since it activates “an artistic approach to understanding concepts as method” (p. 7). Each time someone takes up a/r/tographic work, it is never about simply following a set of protocols or parameters. The work always becomes something different, because “embracing concepts as method for engaging with artistic and educational ideas immediately opens up possibilities for thinking differently, encouraging a vibrant engagement with materials, and exploring interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary intersections of ideas” (p. 7). This is why our study group was structured not only to investigate the idea of sustainable relationality, but also to play with and in the concept as a lived phenomenon. This living inquiry “encourage[s] and enable[s] students to do their own ‘experiment’ in the laboratory of their psyche” (Bai, 2006, p. 14) so that ideas can be digested to strengthen one’s “agentic vitality” (p. 14), which contributes to self-authority—a kind of knowing that emanates from the inside out.

A/r/tography has been described as a “methodology of situations” (Irwin et al., 2006) because of the rhizomatic nature of how inquiry is constantly being (re)directed depending on the situation (p. 75). Staying with a sense of not knowing involved some risk on everyone’s part: the project could flop, there could be interpersonal conflicts, and we could have all done something else with our already overextended capacities. Yet, these conditions also held abundant potential for trust to flourish—a trust in the community to hold space for individuals to grow, and a trust in the self to find one’s way. Mosavarzadeh (2024) refers to a/r/tography as a “methodology of trust,” which:

comes through the willingness and openness to engage with the process of living (with/through) the questions, keeping the questions alive throughout one’s inquiry authentically and intentionally, and willing to re/conceptualize and re/contextualize the questions as one gains new understandings throughout the process. (p. 482)

Our work together centered on an “equity of relations, respecting those with whom we work as partners in the process, co-laboring, co-learning, and co-researching, in setting the direction for our work together” (Irwin et al., 2024a, p. 6). With time, we eased into a process of becoming that was shaped by each other as “artists, materials, and concepts, and what emerges from these relationships” (Irwin et al., 2024a, p. 7). We came to understand who we were in relation, holding with gratitude what each was able to contribute and never asking more than what each was willing to give. As such, relationship and community building became vital components in our understanding of sustainable relationality.

Our ideas on sustainable relationality draw from previous a/r/tographic research on environmental sustainability (Chung, 2024; Triggs & Sorensen, 2024; Rousell et al., 2020) as well as cultural sustainability (Burke et al., 2021; Coleman, 2023). These studies challenge our material and environmental encounters to dwell with “a pedagogy that attends to the ripples of life’s moments, one that intentionally designs for accessing the realm of the aesthetic in the making of art and self” (Triggs & Sorensen, 2024, p. 115). These studies frame sustainability for art education not as an external objective to be analyzed and achieved but as a relational and ethical encounter. In this context, our theorization of sustainable relationality centers relationality as the ground from which to engage with others and build a holistic understanding of sustainability. In so doing, we can nourish and foster responsibility and commitment in a community of practice. Instead of beginning with an abstract goal of sustainability, we start by asking what it is that we desire to sustain and what might nourish us. Sustainable relationality is also informed by Donald’s (2012) concept of ethical relationality: “Ethical relationality is an ecological understanding of human relationality that does not deny difference, but rather seeks to understand more deeply how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other” (p. 535). Sustainable relationality not only asks what is needed to sustain our world but also what we ourselves need to enact such engagements and what we are able to give to each other. Sustainable relationality is a relational framework to create messy spaces of abeyance where we can grow and nurture each other amidst ambiguity and uncertainty. In theorizing what sustainable relationality is, we embrace “a paradigm that sees humans moving along the continuum of possibility, forever in a state of realizing, realized, and not yet realized” (Cohen, 2014, p. 5). In doing so, we reinvestigate assumptions about the conceptualization of sustainability and give ourselves the artistic permission (Lucero, 2018) to transform our understandings and practices of sustainability based on our lived experience of relationality.

## The Sustainable Part of the Conversation

Many of the study group members had multiple existing commitments that kept them busy. In time, it became evident that what brought individuals together was a search for nourishment, connectedness, well-being, (re)generation, and growth—a more sustainable alternative to the late capitalist society in which all of us work. Such a society values technicization, instrumentalism, individualism, utilitarianism, and impersonality, and what counts in this climate is the ceaseless production of measurable progress. Work must enliven and lift for it not to enact a cycle of harm that consumes human vitality and spits people out when production is finished. Our relational gatherings served as an experimental curricular *uncommonplace* to envision a different way of working and being/becoming together—a delightful resistance of sorts. This experimental living inquiry offered what Quinn (2023) calls an invisible education, which is:

not about situations where learning is a goal or a pathway, but rather emerges indirectly from other activities and simply in daily living. As such it is oppositional to the “learning outcomes” that have come to dominate formal education. Uncertainty and liminality replace preordained results, suggesting what I would call an epistemology of the ineffable. (p. 4)

The tangible approaches to craft this curricular *uncommonplace* may have been mundane, but they created a space for us to witness, as much as possible, each other’s fullness.

Citing Fenstermacher (1992), Clarke (2014) talks about the potentiality of responding to an educative agenda, which “focuses on providing support and success, in the fullest sense possible (not just academic), in the ways that students come to know and interact with the world” (p. 106). His support of Lara, a student who rallied an entire school to collect milk cartons for a rock radio station competition to have Australia’s most popular rock band perform at the school (they won), was situated outside of the system of schooling, which is about “timetabling, scheduling, assessing, recording, and reporting” (p. 106). Curiously, our study group’s learnings, too, seemed to be possible only because the experience sat outside of the formal curriculum of the university. There was no syllabus to follow, no predetermined content to cover, and no designated learning objectives to design for. We (Nicole and Ken) continue to wonder how the educative agenda could be protected within systems of schooling.

Given time, support, and encouragement, the students found their paths to a project that gripped their interests. They also found language to articulate their own approaches and processes to meaning making. The following two sections of this article illuminate two projects, one material and one conceptual. The first group, Fayrouz Ibrahim and Meghan Macdonald, created a card game based on a shared set of words. They each illustrated these words from their perspective and played the matching game to enable cross-cultural understanding between them. The second group, Melissa Boucher-Guilbert, Robin Jensen, and Rebecca Zynomirski, came to a fuller understanding of the pervasiveness of instrumentalization through dialogic aesthetic experiences. In resisting the creation of a product, they embodied an epistemology of the ineffable (Quinn, 2023) and provoked philosophical considerations of use (Ahmed, 2019). Some of this work was exhibited in *Artful Engagement: 2nd Annual MAAE Group Show* in the Anna Leonowens Gallery in Halifax, Nova Scotia, from June 25 to July 6, 2024. This show included many interactive components because the emphasis was not on the product but on the engagement with materials, ideas, and each other.

## Memory and Materiality: An Exploration of Sustainable Relationality Through Art-Based Research

Fayrouz Ibrahim and Meghan Macdonald



Fig. 1: Memory card game stack. Image: Fayrouz Ibrahim and Meghan Macdonald.

We, Fayrouz and Meghan, met as students in the Master of Arts in Art Education program at NSCAD University. Fayrouz grew up in Sohag in Upper Egypt and Meghan grew up in Parry Sound, Ontario, Canada. Separated in age by a decade and by life experiences on different continents, we began our work together with explorations to get to know one another. We visited each other's homes, shared snacks, and walked along the shore of the Atlantic Ocean. We talked about our families, stressors, sadnesses, joys, and hopes. Fayrouz comes to this work as an Islamic art historian and Meghan as a postsecondary support staff member.



Some of the connections made through these conversations were facilitated by sharing tangible objects, places, times, and feelings that we both related to. We began exploring our developing relationship through the lens of material culture, which Blandy and Bolin (2018) describe as “human-formed objects, spaces, and expressions that make up our world, and frequently includes the articles we construct and/or possess for the purpose of personal memory making and the sharing of individual or group identity” (p. 7). The objects that we each chose to bring when we moved to Nova Scotia and what we have acquired since highlighted to us the pivotal role that material objects and artifacts play in shaping identities and experiences, especially within the context of diverse cultural backgrounds. These materials serve as tangible links to the past, facilitating a deeper understanding of personal and collective identities.

When Meghan visited Fayrouz’s home, we had several chats about different aspects of materiality in our lives from the past and how they still influence our present. As we enjoyed Turkish coffee, Fayrouz shared that she was drinking from her favorite coffee cup, a lovely gift from a friend in Egypt, which features Islamic designs. Later, Meghan wrote a letter to Fayrouz about a basket that her grandmother had brought back to Canada from a trip to Egypt. Without knowing at the time, by “working with objects that might ‘elicit’ a response ... in the form of memories, emotions, and sensorial knowledges” (Harrison et al., 2024, p. 2), we were engaging in a kind of object elicitation that has a long history in visual studies and ethnographic research. The artful turn arrived when these tangible objects became touchstones for deeper connections in our collaborative a/r/tographic project: Memory Card Game. The project highlights the connections between people and their objects and the potential for these objects to be a conduit for shared understanding and relationality.



Fig. 2: Memory card game in the Anna Leonowens Gallery. Image: Ginger Yu.

By sharing personal narratives and reflections on material artifacts, we felt how these tangible items served as anchors for memory and identity. Storying these special objects strengthened our connection with each other, and we decided to make a card game that would reflect the playful ease of our gatherings and inspire more intercultural exchange. Using the game Memory as our model, we formulated a list of 36 prompts from which we could choose an object, place, or feeling of personal significance to illustrate. These prompts included: *absent, accomplishment, adorned, age, betrayal, closeness, consumed, enveloped, forget, forgiveness, found, friendship, from great distance, from within a pocket, growth, held, hidden, hurt, isolation, label, lost, mirror, mother, nourish, reflection, responsibility, saved, secure, self (Fayrouz/Meghan), soul, stitched together, summertime, transparent, travel, wrapped up, and youth.* Beginning with a deck of 72 cards, we wrote each prompt on two cards in both Arabic and English, so each card would have a matching pair. Then we each took 36 cards to begin making drawings that would correspond with each of those 36 prompts. Though we were working with the same prompts, the images we drew were different, as the subjects we chose had a personal significance. We kept our cards a secret until we met again to play Memory.

The next time we gathered at Meghan's dining room table, the 72 cards were shuffled and laid image-side down. We took turns turning over two cards at a time, with the goal of collecting a pair. Through this flipping action, the illustrations on the cards were slowly revealed and we explained the significance of our drawings. If one of us did not reveal a pair on their turn, the cards were flipped back over and then the next person would take their turn. When someone did find a pair, they would collect those cards, and the game continued. The illustrations on our cards created a "language of artifacts and objects" (Svabo, 2007, p. 1). They were points on the maps of our individual lived experiences by which we could navigate our growing relationship. Making this collaborative art-based project and working with the cards enabled the co-creation of what it means to dwell together in the place we live.



Fig. 3: Memory card game close-up. Image: Fayrouz Ibrahim and Meghan Macdonald.

The metaphorical aspect of our Memory game, where turning over cards represented the gradual revelation of personal stories, provides insights into how relationships develop over time. In the Memory game, this process is accelerated, while retaining the dynamics of building trust and intimacy through shared experiences and conversations. During the Memory game, we would catch glimpses of something



within the other that was previously unknown as we read the prompts and explained the story of our drawings as a reciprocal exchange of offerings. We completed the game knowing a little more about one another, having shared and listened to the thoughts, memories, and experiences that were housed within the other.

Our collaboration helped facilitate in us a stronger intercultural understanding and connection. We found that engaging in art-based practices not only enriched our individual creativity but also promoted sustainable relationality. By creating and sharing artwork that reflected personal and cultural narratives, we developed an appreciation for each other's backgrounds and fostered a bond. Coleman (2023) suggests that like "holding up a mirror to the past, present and future all at once. . . . In the mirror, you find an embodied knowing through artful inquiry, your becoming, reflecting back at you" (p. 139). As we created and played the game together, we came to a deeper understanding of ourselves as artists, researchers, and teachers. This project has practical implications for art education, suggesting new ways to incorporate material culture into curricula and to develop methodologies. By encouraging students to explore their identities and cultural heritage through artwork and significant objects, this approach promotes empathy and cross-cultural understanding. We have enjoyed this collaborative process and look forward to expanding the research further by bringing this activity into classroom settings. There, learners can create their own Memory cards and share personal stories, fostering meaningful connections through play and art.

## Dialogic Aesthetic Engagements for Connectiveness

Melissa Boucher-Guilbert, Robin Jensen, and Rebecca Zynomirski

We, Melissa, Robin, and Rebecca, come to this a/r/tographic inquiry on the concept of sustainable relationality as art educators with experience in K–12 schools and community art education. As a part of the study group, we created in-person and digital messaging spaces of communal engagement as socially engaged art, which Helgura (2011) writes, "functions by attaching itself to subjects and problems that normally belong to other disciplines, moving them temporarily into a space of ambiguity" (p. 5). While we initially set out to create a project, the open-ended conditions of the study group enabled us to join an emergent and relational practice, guided by our shared interest in connection and resistance against outcomes-oriented approaches to learning that saturated our experiences of education. The resulting process was a profound entwinement with one another while not imposing rigid scrutiny or expectations on each other. We texted each other prompts, readings, quotes, and pictures and spent time in each other's homes alongside food, children, and pets. While resisting the goal-oriented structures of academia, we found ways of connection and relation that offered authentic nourishment and healing.



Fig. 4: Dialogic text exchange 1. Image: Melissa Boucher-Guilbert, Robin Jensen, and Rebecca Zynomirski.

When we embarked on this study group journey, we did not really know what we had agreed to do. We signed up because we were deeply interested in spending more time together and were curious about the concept of sustainable relationality. For the first time in our learning journeys, we were attached to neither academic evaluations nor pre-built syllabi. This freed us to ask questions about what we truly needed and wanted and, more importantly, prompted us to begin listing what we did not want, such as making a final product. Echoing Helguera (2011), our socially engaged art challenges the traditional focus of art, which centers around object-making and authorship. It is “specifically at odds with the capitalist market infrastructure of the art world: it does not sit well in the traditional collecting practices of contemporary art” (p. 4). Deliberately naming what we did not want to engage in demonstrated the importance of dialogue and reflection that allowed for creative and relational resistance against the dehumanizing expectations of instrumentalization.

The invitation to think about sustainable relationality was open-ended. We found ourselves making choices that nourished our different needs. In our journey together we have felt, at times, tensions between our own needs and the pressure to perform. We discussed the preconceived expectations we believe academia imposes on us, the capitalist definition of productivity, and what play might look like for us. As students and teachers, we discovered a shared interest in unlearning our understanding of “productivity” and “accomplishment” embedded in our educational systems. Our inquiry about sustainable relationality elicited a desire to holistically incorporate the academic concepts we encountered, merging them more intimately with our personal and multifaceted lives. The support of our families and the members of the art education community helped us move forward in a direction that felt

rich and right for us. In doing so, our individual ideas, questions, feelings, and experiences held us together in connectiveness (Marshall et al., 2010)—a kind of sustainable relationality.

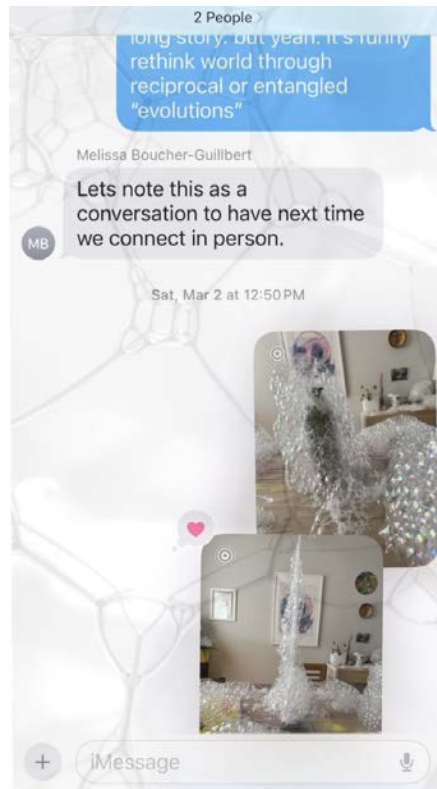


Fig. 5: Dialogic text exchange 2 featuring Robin Jensen's studio exploration of strong bubbles.

Image: Melissa Boucher-Guilbert, Robin Jensen, and Rebecca Zynomirski.

## Finding Nourishment and Returning to Sustainability

While seeking an understanding of productivity that nourished us, we chose digital messaging as an accessible process that could enable interactions with each other at intervals that felt sustainable. Digital communication allowed us to nurture relationships through real-time response and correspondence along with our lives and each other, allowing knowledge to grow from within us. For over six months, we brought our research and educational interests into the group and shared them through text messages. Through the process, we realized that the accumulation in our digital messaging space formed a method of meaningful production that did not trigger the mental burden and barriers that came with the desire to perform.

Rather than setting objectives, we created a loose set of propositions to remain connected across our individual lives via the thread of our texting correspondence. Our discussion included education, play, self-care, community care, artmaking, feminine health, family, pets, and time. These texts became regular points of connection that stimulated our thinking and creativity, nourishing and energizing us. Occurring within our busy schedules that constrained and limited our physical and mental resources, the digital messaging format allowed for meaningful and sustainable connection. Giving ourselves a

permissive framework without defined expectations allowed us to create alternative spaces for self-exploration, relationality, and emergence. Eventually, the desire to meet in person brought us to spend time with one another.



Fig. 6: Dialogic text exchange 3. Image: Melissa Boucher-Guilbert, Robin Jensen, and Rebecca Zynomirski.

In our process of inquiry, we created an a/r/tographic community of practice that valued a sense of “critical softness” (Lee, 2024, p. 129). Lee (2024) suggests that critical softness entails a process of “respecting the boundaries of others as well as one’s own as they are being discovered” (p. 129). Through an un-making of familiar institutional structures, we co-created a transformative community that emphasizes relationship, joy, agency, and sustainability. Such a community encourages us to think critically, work creatively, and appreciate the influence that each has on the other through active engagement across our similarities and differences. As Triggs and Sorensen (2024) suggest, “curriculum is also an act of creation, one that involves assembling contradictions and transforming these, in aesthetic relationships” (p. 116). For us, what emerged was a co-created curriculum for maintaining an ecosystem of complex connections. Becoming attuned to the “connectiveness” in this way through our creation of a community of practice with each other has required time to feel, care, think, speak, and act. This sense of time created the conditions necessary for us to inquire through our relationality, raising questions about productivity and its place in educational spaces: What is work? What happens when the learning

evidence lacks a product, a final paper, a final art project, and the learning is conducive to the process? What are our new responsibilities in this place where individual agency is nourished as part of a whole?

## Conclusion: Transitions and Speculations

Wrapping up our presentation at the 2024 CSEA/SCÉA National Conference marked the end of our study group meetings. Afterward, we (Nicole and Ken) invited the group to consider contributing their works to a collaborative piece, which were shaped into this article. In reflecting on this experience, we contemplate with Bai (2014), who observes:

Many teachers like to think that their teaching is directly related to their students' learning. I don't need to deny that sometimes, or perhaps often, this happens. That's a good thing. However, there are many things in life that are not learned by such linear causality. In fact, there is a sense that profound things in life are not learned that way at all. (p. 34)

In hearing the entangled yet beautiful transitions that the students went through, we have come to believe that an invisible education that is offered by walking alongside them holds tremendous possibility.

The strength of this a/r/tographic project remains in the community of practice that was fostered in and through art. The study group provided opportunities for the students to become acquainted with the art educational research communities and practices in which we are rooted. The permissive environment allowed the research process to get messy, and this offered breathing room for transitions to happen organically for the two groups. As for us, our positions shifted—from being held by our mentors in the past, to now holding students in anticipation of an unfolding educational journey. We witnessed how a commitment to cultivating an a/r/tographic community of practice can become sustaining and nourishing; we are proud of the students' work and the knowing that unfolded through this messy yet emergent process.

In our debriefs, we wondered how we can offer more permissive opportunities for students to come to embrace “an epistemology of the ineffable [that] explores knowledge and ways of knowing that escape and evade measurement, whilst still being formative and significant” (Quinn, 2023, p. 4). Such a worldview “attends to the values of moments: these moments of learning time spin and vibrate in ways that are difficult to name but easy to feel” (Quinn, 2023, p. 4). Ultimately, sustainable relationality poses questions about how we might linger in the joy of making and writing, research, as well as teaching and learning, and what connectedness, friendship, and entwinement have the potential to do. The deeply relational transitions undergone by our study group energized our commitments to lifting each other up and building each other's capacities so that we can continue to care for the ecosystems in which we are individually embedded to sustain larger webs of human flourishing.



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