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Teaching is always performance. There are actors who are present, an audience—usually, but not always students—and most importantly a dynamic that exists between them; this relationship being key to successful pedagogy. In short, teaching is relational work. In the best of all possible worlds, this dynamic is a relationship that is forward looking, has dignity, and characterised by hope. Zournazi (2002 p. 9) describes hope as “a space for dialogue... exchange...[for] voices to be heard”, and risks for encounters with others “that create possibilities for change”. It is this possibility that is important for education in the way that inducts young people into a world that is not yet known or fully formed.

This chapter describes a project conducted with pre-service teachers where a hope-full project was conducted through a one-semester unit— Learning Through the Arts—delivered in an intensive summer mode each day over two weeks. Hope as a concept was inquired into, imagined, embodied, and through arts practices, insights into hope were gained; this project thereby becoming an example of arts-relationality (Keifer-Boyd, 2011) and arts-based research (Barone & Eisner, 2011; Knowles & Cole, 2008).

Key to these processes were the notions of voice and agency foregrounding engagement, action and performativity (P R Wright, 2011), where the personal, social and cultural were inextricably linked thereby reflecting the world in which we live and “the sensuous acts of meaning making” (Willis & Trondman, 2000 p. 9) that flow from it. Denzin (2001), for example, draws attention to the way that as we live in a “performance-based, dramaturgical culture” (p. 26) and that as “we know the world only through

our representations of it” (p. 23), projects such as this can exist as a “form of radical democratic process” (p. 23) uncovering both power dynamics and socially constructed lived experience.

In this project pre-service teachers with little or no prior experience of the arts were inducted into a performance troupe, or ensemble, and participated in a process of deep listening to each other’s stories that were then embodied and expressed. Following the great theatre maker Augusto Boal (2006), this ensemble could be thought of as being both analogical and complementary— analogical in the way that students were similar, but not identical, and complementary in the way that their differences and individual elements were brought together for a common purpose. This work that this ensemble engaged in then was to both shape and then *express* communication beyond the rational and precise into the sensual and aesthetic reflecting the dynamic embodied way we live in the world.

Engagement through, and the development of arts skills and processes led to the development of a tangible product—*Performing Hope*, the final performance. These skills and processes reflected a focus on emotion, a tolerance for ambiguity or not knowing, a cycle of inquiry and reflection, and connection with others. It is these distinct characteristics that provide a powerful model for an education that is authentic and responsive, and where we prepare young people “to see things as if they could be otherwise” (Greene, 1995 p. 15).

Key to these processes are the ability to imagine, see alternatives, represent and interpret our world, and integrate personal and shared

understanding (Davis, 2008). In a context of neo-liberal and neo-conservative education where experience is homogenised, reductive, and human, social and cultural capital is reduced to the goal of keeping the economy competitive, these processes are key if a critical and democratic education is to succeed (Apple, 2011).

This project culminated in a public performance where ‘hope’ as an organising construct was inquired into, engaged with through arts practices, the results of these processes performed for the benefit of others there present thereby enhancing understanding; the notion of hope being one key principle that imbued the project with particular qualities and being essential for education. The public performance then became in and of itself a manifestation of hope highlighting the way that communication even the production of language—usually thought of as a purely cognitive act—is an embodied experience, Merleau-Ponty (1962) highlighting the way that all lived experience is grounded in the body and its relation to situated contexts. Consequently, Hope was *performed*, constituted through the enactment both showing and doing; this enactment existing in contrast to more formal forms of education that rely merely on telling (Kincheloe, 1999). In this way hope became more than an intellectual idea, it was illuminated from multi-perspectives and was *sense-making* rather than knowledge-giving through performance with its amplifying and social power.

The second key principle was the importance of the Arts in human’s lives. This principle reflects the ways that the Arts are natural, normal and necessary for humans to flourish (Dissanayake, 2007). Consequently, to deny

young people an education that is through the arts, with the arts, in the arts, and for the arts, is to deny them some of the most fundamental ways of knowing, doing, and becoming, thereby diminishing their capacity to be full functioning citizens.

Performing Hope was a group-devised performance that grew out of student's authentic stories, 'hope' being the theme that united them in times of increasing global inequality. Key to this performance was the student's lived experiences themselves, and the relationships developed them. As in any group, there are resources present within members—both individually and collectively—that help shape who they are, and in part, determine who they will be. It is also the group notion that is important where the rampant individuation of a market-driven consumerist economy leads to feelings of isolation and loneliness (Zournazi, 2002).

The social pedagogic art-ful processes through which performance was devised were important at a number of levels. First, through a process of building community, or in performance terms an ensemble where the goal was to create a performance piece *between* us. In this process there was recognition of both difference and what unites us. For example, this particular group of students was made up of a soldier recently retired from active military duty and seeking to retrain as an educator, a young woman from the West Bank in Palestine who 'escaped' the trauma of conflict with her family hoping for a more peaceful life, a young Muslim woman from Somalia who hoped for better things for her family, other mature age first generation higher education students, and some students straight from

school. What united each of this disparate group was a commitment to education, including for example, enrolling at University to further their own learning journeys in formal ways, and those seeking to train as educators with a commitment to others through teaching as a profession.

Specific drama practices facilitated this process, for example, getting-to-know-you exercises teach everything from turn taking to providing each person with an opportunity to be playful with ideas or simply to move or speak thereby developing their communication abilities. These processes are important in the way that they model democracy and active citizenship, and move participants into multi-modal ways of knowing and doing. This means that as a group students intentionally move away from the purely cognitive or the cerebral, recognising that whatever sources of information we use and draw on, are also mediated through our bodies. This significantly helps participants to not only **do** and **be** in different ways, but also break down the Cartesian dualism that permeates so much of education. Consequently, *Performing Hope* was also identity work.

The processes of building trust and a group dynamic were also critical to this work. Each of these processes are contingent on the skill of the 'teacher', part of which is to create safe boundaries around the work, to metaphorically 'hold' the group as it develops thereby facilitating risk taking, and by modelling dialogic processes, mutual respect, and understanding. As Ayers (2002 p. 40) highlights: "teaching can be, must be if it is to maintain its moral balance, a gesture toward justice". The adjunct to this process is the teacher removing him or herself as the 'font' of all knowledge within the

group; the group itself having expertise and latent abilities within it. Paulo Friere (1972 p. 67) describes this beautifully:

Through dialogue the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student and students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely “the one-who-teaches,” but one himself taught in dialogue with then students, who, in turn, while being taught, also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow.

What this means is that a space is created for knowledge exchange, rather than knowledge transfer in the way one may ‘pour’ knowledge from a full vessel into an empty one. This ‘third space’ (Bhabha, 1994), as a place of transition ‘betwixt and between’ (Turner, 1967), is one rich with potential for learning (Cook-Sather, 2006; P.R Wright, 2002). When one works more as artist or maker of theatre giving shape and form to ideas, this process is clear. In short, the key to these successful practices lies in foregrounding dignity in the relationship building both responsibility to others and oneself.

The second key practice lies in recognising, enlisting and strengthening each individual’s—and the groups—creative dispositions. For example, participants are taught how to improvise and freed to be playful in ways that are informal, fun, and consensual.

Play has been described as an attitude of “throwing off constraint...” (Millar, 1968 p. 21) which might be physical, social, emotional, or intellectual. It is through play for example, and its practices in drama as improvisation that possibilities for greater freedom, interactivity, and creative possibilities are developed. These dispositions are in stark contrast to outcomes based education driven by systemic standardised testing.

The influential improvisation teacher Viola Spolin (1999 p. 11) reveals the potential power of this work:

In spontaneity, personal freedom is released, and the total person, physically, intellectually, and intuitively, is awakened. This causes enough excitation for the student to transcend himself or herself—he or she is freed to go out into the environment, to explore, adventure, and face all dangers unafraid... Every part of the person functions together as a working unit, one small organic whole within the larger organic whole of the agreed environment.

Greene (2001, p. 142) also describes how teaching is comprised of “moments of improvisation”. It is in these moments that freedom, responsiveness, relationality, creative possibilities, and ‘freeing [of] the imagination’ become hope-ful, and indeed critical, projects. For example, through these processes students break free of their own socially determined location, boundaries that constrain them, and open up a space for imaginary play, that is, for learning, improved communication, and to be ‘actors’ or have agency in their own lives (P R Wright, 2011). Following Boal (2006), creativity demands the invention of alternatives.

Notions of play in all of its meanings are synonymous with performance, most importantly in a space apart from Western everyday life and a mechanistic rational worldview. Play theorist Sutton-Smith (1997 p. 221) describes some important characteristics of play as being “adaptive variability... [and] flexibility, not admirable precision”. In addition, Goffman (1971) also highlights the different roles we play in everyday life. What *Performing Hope* did then was to potentially expand participant’s role repertoires and potential freedom to ‘play’ them thereby providing greater choices and flexibility in facing unknown futures. As Greene (2001 p. 29) highlights: “the more we know the more we are likely to see and hear”; the

corollary being, the more we see and hear from ‘other’ perspectives, the more we are likely to know. Consequently, in developing each student’s personal, social and cultural agency (P.R Wright, 2009; P R Wright, 2011), we are more likely to move beyond ‘instructional instrumentalism’ and towards “subjective and social reconstruction” (Pinar, 2006, pp. 109-120; Pinar, 2004, p. 24).

It is playfulness that makes this shift in attitude possible where participants can step outside of, and then manipulate systemic frames of reference through an impulse towards freedom and connection. This lies in contrast to a focus on immediate instrumental objectives so prevalent in contemporary education driven by goals, a culture of accountability, and inhibited by fear. In short, it is imaginative play that produces possibilities—both deconstruction and reconstruction—and the potential for transformation.

It is from these possibilities and through these arts practices where consensual participation was key, that artefacts were developed, in the case of this project, *Performing Hope*. What this means, then, is that in a project such as this, it is not enough to simply teach ‘skills’ in an individualistic and instrumental way—following government rhetoric ‘to get a job’, for example—there must be the freedom for these to be used in generative, as opposed to reductive, ways. It is the somatic engagement of participant’s authentic stories, and the enactment of these through arts skills and processes, that gives such projects a particular saliency revealing the way we are interrelated, interconnected and continually called on to be different.

In a processual and performative way, stories were elicited from the group which then became the 'texts' used both to inquire into an individual's experience and perform for the benefits of others. For example, the young Palestinian woman recounted the fear she felt huddled together with her family in a bomb shelter during an air strike, then the mixed feelings experienced as she left extended family to seek a more peaceful life in an unknown place; hope being juxtaposed against anxiety. Each of these 'moments' was represented by students in an embodied way through frozen moments (still image) or tableau (Neelands, 1990).

What this process does is to 'crystallize' and then represent the key feeling at that moment so that ideas can be visualized and themes and patterns revealed. This both amplifies the 'felt' or sensate dimension of participant's experience and moves them away from cognitions or intellectual ideas to the kinaesthetic engaging multi-modal ways of knowing and validating experience.

This process further recognises that we do not live in the world in a purely rational way, we respond to, and are influenced by our feelings. Consequently, an education that is content driven and primarily concerned with the transmission of facts, is impoverished (Freire, 1972). Megan Boler in a play on words, calls this "feeling power" (1999). Hence, by way of contrast with this 'transmission' model, *Performing Hope* resonated with both participants and their audience because it was **of** their experience with credibility and authenticity being markers of quality and utility value.

Identifying what was ‘key’ for participants provided a strong focus for this arts-based inquiry so that it could become generative in nature. For example, students were challenged to move from an embodiment of a single moment to add a sound that evoked or gave voice to what this moment might be. For example, beginning from a frozen image expressing a student’s fear, a second was asked to find a way to join in, both looking at what was ‘offered’, then responding to it in gesture then a sound that gave ‘voice’ to what she saw; this process both witnessing and validating this ‘lived experience’ and adding to it. The composite of this was a tableau that was both representative and expressive of this group’s experiences individually and collaboratively, and a performance of it; in short, documenting and bearing testament to other ways of living and hoping.

The results of this ‘embodied inquiry’ (Todres, 2007) then became a sound-scape that could be shaped, framed and edited, engaging different sensory modalities—each ‘language’, movement and stillness, sound and silence—providing tools for expression that were not English language, or even word, dependent. In Sontag’s words: “text is one stopping point along a continuum that can also include visual communication, music, dance, theatre, even silence” (1967). This meant that anyone in this group, no matter what his or her ability, could contribute.

Next, a movement was added to the growing performance. This process, warmed up to through image and sound, added greater depth through an ‘offer’ made to others. For example, seeing one person’s movement both showed one persons’ interpretation of a ‘moment’, but also provided an

invitation to join in, elaborate or critique, and contribute. Consequently, this form of embodied learning acts as critical pedagogy, for a knowing from the senses—visceral knowing—as critical in the “Freirean” sense, moving from an often one dimensional image of knowledge into the transactional.

Each level of this task also implies a larger ‘risk’ for many participants where there is a greater degree of ‘visibility’ and potential for self-disclosure. For many, this presence represents challenge. Consequently, these processes were modelled, scaffolded, step-wise, shared, and supported, and subsequently became more effortless as the group developed it’s own identity and confidence grew.

Importantly, each of these processes are generative, social, and aesthetic with each leading on to the next and in turn generating other responses. What this reveals is how questions have more than one answer (Eisner, 1997), and how there many ways of knowing; one important pedagogical principle being the way each offer made or idea embodied was accepted and considered as something to be further extended or elaborated. In this way, *performing hope* as an aesthetic event both draws participants into the world with its varied view points, whilst also refracting it through one’s own subjectivity—here being art’s educative potential through an awareness of difference. For example, Gordon highlights the way play can be both a reflective and reflexive process through neither losing one’s self in the world, nor completing retreating from it into one’s own subjectivity (2007). When play and art are linked, the educative significance of these often parallel

processes are revealed. For example, in Greene's words: "The world perceived from one place is not the world" (1995 p. 20).

Each moment that was offered and story as it was shared became a 'pre-text' (Haseman, 1991) to be shaped and framed towards performance, thereby building confidence and group identity through shared tasks and processes. In addition, each performance provided opportunities for reflection and critique thereby building up a sense of 'connoisseurship' (Eisner, 1977) amongst participants offering teaching moments that were present for all to see.

For the ex-soldier, this meant relating a story told to him by his grandfather who had been an ANZAC at Gallipoli during the First World War. This story was told as a monologue, the young man becoming his grandfather for this performance. The story, told with a mixture of terror, pathos, and humour enabled others to both be witness to his familial experience—one that was part of Australia's heritage and indeed shaped his own life journey—and his own courage performing for the first time in a theatrical way. One student, for example, made the observation that a digger's hat¹ would both communicate to an audience who he is, and add to the context helping them locate 'where' he was as he recounted this tale. What this process also revealed was the further pedagogical principle of 'working for someone else's success' foregrounding the way that education, at its best, is an act of service.

¹ A digger's hat, made from rabbit's fur with its fold up sides and ceremonial ostrich feather plume, is the essence of an Australian soldier's uniform and distinctive identity.

The third poignant story was that of the Somalian women arriving in Australia having survived both trauma in her homeland and Australia's border protection policies. As this story was performed through image, sound and movement in non-discursive ways, we as an audience to these authentic stories, were able to see a series of leavings and arrivals, each driven by hope and the fears and aspirations that were attributes and dimensions of it. This notion also resonated more broadly with the student group as for many the broad motivation present within them for engagement with education was consistent with the idea of leaving a life, or chapter of one's life behind, in order to bring realise hope.

A unifying thread that ran through the performance was the Greek myth of Prometheus. In this story Prometheus, against the wishes of Zeus, brought fire from the sun to wo/man kind so that s/he may no longer live in darkness. The Prometheus story then became key and was used as a theatrical device to link individual's stories and provide a dynamic and emotional thread to the performance as a whole. Also in the way that story begets story, fire and light became generative key metaphors to this project and for education encapsulated through W. B. Yeats often quoted phrase "Education is not filling a bucket, but lighting a fire." For example, Leonard Cohen's 2001 song "By the Rivers Dark" became the opening prelude to the performance.

Growing from this metaphor and located within contemporary culture was the story of Rosa Parkes, the African American woman whose act of protest in 1955 involved claiming her right to a seat on a bus in Alabama in preference to a white woman. This act of protest became a key moment in

the American civil rights movement as others looked to her act of courage for inspiration, the US Congress referring to her as "the first lady of civil rights", and "the mother of the freedom movement"². This notion of standing up for what you believe in, and not be relegated to a position constrained by established societal position resonated with many project participants, many of whom came from homes as the first in their family to undertake higher education. Hence, social justice became a powerful theme explored through our performative-inquiry and performance-making processes.

It is the aesthetic ways in which these stories were performed—making learning visible—that gave form to feeling and (re)presented in aesthetic ways that what might not easily be 'said' in others. For example, different forms of representation are both enabling and constraining thereby broadening the sense-making processes and the meanings we attribute to them; using a different array of referents, enlarging rather than narrowing our understandings. *Performing Hope* gave form to feeling of person, place, and situation; it was an expressive form in the service of understanding. In short, *Performing Hope* makes available through performative means—communicative arts practices—what cannot be known through other discursive forms thereby enlarging our understanding (Eisner, 2003).

In addition, knowing how someone feels provides connection and builds relationship, and developing the skills and knowledge required to express it honours experience. What is true in education is true in life, "it is harder to hurt someone when you know their story" (P.R Wright & Palmer, 2009) and

² <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-106publ26/content-detail.html>

when the arts are employed in this way they become relational dialogic work—competencies critical for an education that is **artful** in being with others.

It is in these ways, where the arts are used both as a means for inquiry and a way to represent the results of that inquiry that the arts become a heuristic making visible the complex ways that we interact with the world and what ‘hope’ might mean. Through these practices we move beyond propositional forms of knowledge—the precise, quantifiable, prescriptive and formulaic—and towards evocative and empathic participation with some deep meanings in human life. Consequently, *Performing Hope* becomes a celebration of what makes us human through enacting qualities of experience; using aesthetic means to make visible what is not yet noticeable or fully formed—to see, to feel, and to know—thereby bringing hope into being and moving beyond “reproductionist thinking” (Flecha, 2011).

Performing Hope was also a political process. First, through the way that it provided a public space where people could speak and be heard, second, in its processes. For example, public intellectual Susan Sontag (1987) underscores that contestation, candour and pluralism—fundamental democratic virtues—are essential elements in any artistic endeavour. Third, the project highlighted the way that arts processes revealed that what happens in schools impacts on the social context in an iterative way. Fourth, many participants reported that they were drawn to education in the hope of ‘making a difference’ both individually and collectively. A common word for this politicized educational process being ‘consciousness-raising’, and

consciousness as Greene (1995) reminds us, always includes creativity and the imagination.

Consequently, cycles of inquiry, reflection, and action become both political acts and reflect good pedagogy and inquiry. In addition, these processes themselves, **inquiry, engagement, and reflection** on an issue that validates the lived experience of participants are consistent with the tradition of critical participatory action research in the way that Finley notes grows out of an ethics of human relationship (2003). It is these concerns and processes that make education 'more than measuring' through including *presence, openness, and flexibility*. In addition, they help us better understand the 'artful-ness' of good teaching where the qualities of being a good teacher and good at teaching are understood to be in relationship with each other requiring constant awareness, responsiveness, and adjustment (Flecha, 2011).

Finally, R.S. Peters, an English philosopher, described education as an attitude to be carried with you rather than a score to be achieved. In his words: "to be educated is not to have arrived at a destination; it is to travel with a different view" (1967 p. 8). Consequently, encapsulated within a final multi-media montage of images and sound were the project participant's thoughts, wishes and aspirations for the future including: 'there is always hope', that "with hope anything is possible", and that "hope is the dream of a soul awake". It is this final sentiment that powerfully links the role of the arts with education and is captured in the description by Maxine Greene as a "wide-awakeness" or enlivening the senses in the service of learning

(Greene, 2001). This enlivening, in contrast to anaesthetising or dulling the senses, is a hope-ful project with rich metaphors and symbolic languages providing new ways of wondering about ourselves and our world.

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