Arts4SocialJustice

Madison Byblow

Portfolio in Partial Fulfillment of M.Ed. Degree

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Narrative Component

Madison Byblow

Lakehead University

Researcher Stance

In the following pages I will tell a story. This story is mine, but it is also others'. With this narrative I will recount the journey and people that took me to where I stand now. I will discuss how I found myself in the place to develop a portfolio, and focus some attention on the decisions that shaped each piece. I will discuss the reasons I came into the research and the steps I undertook to complete this project. While it will not always be chronological, this narrative will follow a logical string of events to demonstrate how the pieces of this project naturally came together. I invite you to join me on this journey as a researcher, educator, and life long learner.

This narrative must acknowledge the end, where I am now, to provide a road map that has allowed me to reach the finish line of this story. My portfolio project for my Masters degree, entitled Arts4SocialJustice, compiles three artifacts that I developed over the course of roughly two years. This happened while completing course work through Lakehead and working alongside talented scholars prominent in their field. The three artifacts I have developed over the last two years that make up this portfolio include a literature review, a conference presentation, and a Web 2.0 resource manual. Each of these pieces combine together to demonstrate how arts learning and social justice learning can coincide almost seamlessly, helping teachers better address the needs of diverse classrooms on a regular basis.

My portfolio project comes from a few different places, representing and should be considered a project where both my interests and identity have aligned. On the one hand, I have always been drawn to anything creative. Although I have little formal training in the arts, over the years I participated in school and community theatre, took vocal training and piano lessons, and always felt a strong connection to the arts. On the other hand, during my undergraduate degree at Nipissing University I undertook the position as Vice-President External of my student

union. Here I found myself heavily engaged in student politics, democracy, and social justice work as a young adult. On a campus that lacked a political landscape almost entirely, I took an interest in developing conversations, campaigns and events around topics of race, gender, class, socio-economic status, and more. I carried these experiences from the Nipissing campus along with me and they have paved the path to where I currently stand. Ultimately, of course, it is important to note that I am a passionate, White, novice elementary educator who identifies as female. As such, I own a lot of privilege in the classroom and recognize the role that I can and must play.

My positionality, identity, and interests weigh significantly on my decision to undertake this work. However, the spark that ignited my work with this project was born out of another. This journey began with YouthSites, a SSHRC funded project out of Simon Fraser University led by Dr. Stuart Poyntz. Roughly two and a half years ago, I was offered the opportunity to work with the YouthSites team to assist in mapping the youth community arts scene in the city of Toronto. The project itself is concerned with Toronto, London (UK), and Vancouver; however, I was directly involved in the Toronto chapter through my graduate supervisor, Michael Hoechsmann. I worked alongside other talented post-graduate students, prominent scholars, and community leaders to identify and examine community arts as they pertained to youth experience in Toronto. Little did I know, this new opportunity would open my eyes to my future portfolio project.

In this introductory essay I weave together the various threads of my portfolio and discuss how the component parts both represent and transcend that project. Now that you understand my positionality and some of the factors that influence my thinking, I will discuss a series of events that lead me to writing this piece. First, I will touch on my experience leading up

to my Masters degree with YouthSites. This experience not only birthed a component of my portfolio and introduced me to the world of research, but helped me transition from my Bachelor of Education to my Masters of Education, and gave me the opportunity to seek guidance and learn from a talented group of scholars. Next, I will discuss my Masters course work, which propelled my thinking in the area of arts learning specifically. This course work helped streamline my conceptual understanding as well as my ability to create and explore. Finally, I will describe my component pieces how they come together as one complete project.

Involvement with YouthSites

In the spring of 2018, before beginning my course work for my Masters degree, I undertook the position as a research assistant with YouthSites. An opportunity that began as a summer long term turned into almost a full year position as part of my graduate assistantship. Originally assigned to work under the supervision of Banting Post Doctoral fellow Heather Fitzsimmons Frey, I was part of the Toronto location research team. Heather, who specializes in girl and youth centered research in the dramatic arts, worked with myself and my colleague in the Masters program, Elesha, to observe, document, and anecdotally record research on Toronto community arts organizations. Heather gave Elesha and I an assignment that we completed over the summer months of 2018. This assignment involved multiple tasks, including meeting with organizations to conduct interviews, take field notes, and participate in programming as a researcher participant. Here, we would document experiences and observations on programming, access to programming, and individuals in the programs. Through the entirety of my involvement with YouthSites I worked alongside Julian Sefton-Green, Stuart Poyntz, Heather Fitzsimmons Frey, Alysha Bains, Elesha Daley, and my supervisor, Michael Hoechsmann, to

gain a deeper understanding of the community arts programs that supported the youth in a city that often found myself in – a city I might find myself teach in one day.

While I was conducting field research for YouthSites I saw inside community arts organizations such as the Oasis Skateboard Factory (OSF), UNITY Charity, CUE, SKETCH Working Arts, and more. I began to understand the larger social function of the arts community in the city of Toronto and it became more apparent how social justice and arts education collide so seamlessly. As one of my first solo assignments I conducted an round table focus group with UNITY Charity's program facilitators, where I inquired into their programming structure, how their identities collided with their work, any difficulties they faced as organizations, and much more. The facilitators spoke highly of their experiences working with arts and social justice, and we discussed deeply the void in public education that these programs fill for students. At this point, I began to wonder why it was that these organizations were able to address topics of social justice through arts education but teachers like myself in public schools found it much more difficult.

As I continued on with my YouthSites work I learned more and more about how and why community arts programs work and what they look like. Ultimately, the catalyst for this project was my introduction to the Oasis Skateboard Factory, a public school situated downtown Toronto as part of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). OSF, an alternative secondary school program through the TDSB, helps students acquire their secondary school diploma through the process of creating their own small business making skateboards and skate apparel. In the program, students are responsible for creating their own business plan and materials to sell, all while learning about and engaging in social justice issues locally in their community. Using this program structure as inspiration, I began to wonder what resources were available for

classroom teachers to bring this sort of pedagogy to students in traditional settings at an elementary level.

As a novice, White, political, female educator, I frequently search for resources that will aid in teaching a diverse and multicultural group of students. Conversely, I also find myself searching for resources that bring to life the arts I feel so passionate about. In some schools the arts are seen as a rotary subject – a less valuable second string to their counterpart, core subjects. However, teaching the arts has enormous benefit to students. Not only did I know this from my own experience as a learner, but also YouthSites revealed how powerful the arts could be on the ground level. Another added level, however, was the benefit of educational content that addresses issues of social justice. In the end, I was struggling to find all these resources in one place to support active and regular use of diverse social justice learning in the classroom. Since an important component of social justice education is that it is integrated regularly into pedagogy, rather than as an additive or a “spice” (Hess, 2018, p. 136; hooks, 1992, p. 21), I found myself on the brink of my portfolio.

In an attempt to make an already valuable discipline more relevant to both twenty-first century learners and teachers, my portfolio project begins to consider the arts from a social justice perspective. After seeing how much social justice work was happening in non-formal art programs near me, the lack of quality social justice arts education in public schools became more and more visible. As a teacher myself, I thought it important for others to have regular access to tools that would help them to teach social justice through the arts. If I were so eager to do this work, wouldn’t others be too?

Course Work

Before I begin discussing my component pieces and how they each directly came about, it is important to address how my course work propelled and influenced my thinking over the course of my Masters degree. I began my course work in the Thesis route with hopes to complete research in the non-formal arts sector in my region, comparing it to public education in order to find and hopefully fill available gaps. However, after taking a few courses that were arts focused and working with the YouthSites team, I felt a push to develop something that would be more practical for the development of my own craft. After all, I knew from my own experience that teachers were lacking quality social justice arts resources in elementary schools. While my portfolio project took its initial roots through my experience with YouthSites, it later developed as a result of new insights through coursework and my own teaching experiences.

When choosing my coursework with Lakehead, I focused on courses that were arts based or had a social justice undertone to them. I enrolled in Arts-Integrated Research, Holistic and Contemplative Education, Indigenous Research Approaches, Curriculum Studies in the Arts, and more. In these online spaces I was able to discuss and develop my own understanding of my soon to be portfolio. Most notably, I took two courses with Pauline Sameshima where I was introduced to the concept of *ma* and liminal studios. *Ma* is a generative concept that invites participants to develop meaning and understanding through creation. In the space between production and product that *ma* acknowledges, glimpses of *ma* help participants see the personal connections they make to arts-based experiences. In this liminal space of creation the artist or viewer engages in the world around them to develop contextual understanding (Reingold, 2018, p. 24).

The concept of *ma* and the opportunity to work within liminal spaces presents itself well within social justice arts education. Participants who engage in *ma* can take a deeper look into

their own identity and understand their own choices, motives, and changes as time goes on. This of course, happens in the process of creation. In the two courses I took with Pauline Sameshima, I developed my understanding of *ma* deeper to conclude that my portfolio could lead educators and students into a liminal space of *ma* for self-refection, illuminating their individual role within a greater social context. Producing my manual has afforded me the opportunity to work within the generative liminal space that *ma* acknowledges, developing meaning behind my own work and creation as a teacher and a learner. My portfolio permitted me to create and explore new ideas, entering my own liminal spaces between identity, purpose, and creation. I give credit to these courses, where my perspective on creating my portfolio, both conceptually and physically, vastly changed.

Component Pieces

Moving forward, it is time to discuss the pieces that come together to make my portfolio. Arts4SocialJustice is a practical project that intends to aid elementary teachers in applying social justice methodology through arts learning, more specifically the Ontario Arts curriculum. The first component of my portfolio is a literature review that addresses social justice education, arts education, and how the two can coincide in a public education setting. This review provides an academic argument and background for the final component, my manual. I began this work as a result of my graduate assistant position and my course work component, but finished it through conversations and ideas that sprouted from the program. After working for YouthSites, I had a better understanding of the literature I was searching for because I was privy to the dialogue that pertained to this field. I began by compiling a list of references, both books and articles, at the advisement of my supervisor. I read through the items on the initial list, keeping some and forgetting others, finding links to new ideas and supporting theories throughout. This process

continued on until I was finished my literature review, a piece of writing inspired by Russian Nesting Dolls. Like the dolls, my review points to how the discipline of social justice arts education finds multiple smaller disciplines within. In researching through prominent literature, I found new avenues, smaller dolls, all helping to make the largest Bubushka, the biggest Russian Doll, social justice arts pedagogy. This is a central piece of the project that helped to define and streamline my ideas, highlighting where and how social justice art education is taking place and defining the mediums through which it most frequently does. In my search I found that theatre and visual arts were the most dominant in literature, and so I began to also seek out ways in which social justice education was happening specifically through mediums of music and dance.

After completing this literature review I better understand how social justice education works through the arts. More specifically, I gained an understanding of what additive programming looks like and how to avoid it. Since my positionality affords me a sizeable amount of privilege as a teacher, I would consider this learning objective to be one of the most valuable from this process. Nevertheless, developing this literature review helped map the current dialogue surrounding social justice education and the arts.

This leads me to the next component of my portfolio, a conference presentation from the Arts for Education Conference at the University of Toronto. As previously discussed, I was first introduced to the social justice arts community when working with the YouthSites project in 2018. Through my involvement I got to know groups that used mediums of movement, textiles, theatre and sound to address social justice issues in the community. The groups I worked closely with specifically were the OSF, SKETCH Working Arts and UNITY Charity. Each of these organizations used a social justice framework to teach creative arts, sound and movement arts to youth in Toronto.

Toward the end of my involvement with YouthSites, my colleague, Elesha, and I were asked to participate in the Arts for Education Conference at the University of Toronto to bring light to the work YouthSites was doing within the city. Among other presentations, workshops, and panels, we were asked to address the YouthSites project and our involvement in such. Our presentation, *From the Outside Looking In: Putting Toronto Youth Arts Organizations in the Cypher*, used the concept of a cypher to analyze the non-formal arts community serving the youth of Toronto. The cypher, a concept I encountered during my work with YouthSites at a community arts festival, is a hip-hop space where a circle of supportive community onlookers and dancers are ready to enter in the middle and share their expertise. Our presentation viewed the non-formal youth arts learning sector as a cypher itself, with each organization making unique and powerful contributions with one another and with youth in Toronto. In our presentation, Elesha and I demonstrated how youth arts organizations develop essential streams of knowledge exchange and build cultural capital among youth in Toronto.

This conference presentation, as the second component of my portfolio, demonstrates another way that the arts can bring topics of social justice to life to aid teaching and learning. However, it also tells a unique story of the non-formal arts learning sector, which can then be compared to public social justice arts education. The structure of the cypher works to help conceptualize the fluid nature of this work, emphasizing the importance of social justice education as a regular practice as opposed to additive teaching. The final component I will discuss next aims to aid in this fluidity, making it more accessible for teachers to address topics of social justice within the elementary classroom in a way that children will relate to and benefit from.

The third and final component of my portfolio is a Web 2.0 manual for elementary educators that will aid them in teaching social justice pedagogy through the arts. As I've noted before, my manual came about from the lack of social justice learning I witnessed in schools, and subsequently the lack of resources I found available in one spot. Along the way, I decided that it was important my manual be easily accessible, connect clearly to the Ontario arts curriculum, and allow me to exist in the liminal creative space of *ma*. I landed on developing a Web 2.0 platform that would allow me to input content, images, and documents that help teachers understand and deliver social justice arts education.

When writing my literature review, I came across a number of articles that discussed interesting ideas for critical social justice pedagogy in the arts. As I was reading and writing, I began taking notes of key words, ideas, and phrases that would support my search for practical teaching resources. These keywords included politically motivated theater, critical pedagogy for music, critical postcolonial dance theory, and more. I took down these key words and phrases that I kept stumbling upon and used them as the basis in my search for resources. As I was collecting resources I felt as though my search would never end. As such, the list in my manual is not exhaustive; however, the Web 2.0 platform allows me to easily add resources as time goes on and others or I find new pieces to the puzzle.

As it came time to put together the manual, I wanted my project to embody creativity along with functionality. In the light of learning *ma*, thinking about the liminal space between two objects (or in this case, the liminal space between theory and practice), my hopes were to develop a website that acted, to some degree, as a piece of art in itself. While I was writing my literature review, I stumbled across Hess's (2015) article *Decolonizing Music Education: Moving Beyond Tokenism*. Here the author discusses the idea of rhizomatic music education,

where different culturally relevant music pedagogy is taught horizontally rather than vertically in hopes to remove the idea that Western knowledge is the summit of knowledge. This framework removes Western music education from the peak, placing different cultures and students' identities horizontal to one another (Hess, 2015, p. 342). A rhizome, of course, also has a botanic background, in its most basic definition meaning horizontal roots of a plant. This works conceptually for my project, and as such I created an image for my homepage that supported and furthered Hess's (2015) discussions. Subsequently, Hess's (2015) description of rhizomatic music education can be applied to all mediums of social justice arts education, where cultures, concepts, and experiences should be taught horizontally rather than hierarchically. As such, I decided to include this conceptual framework as part of my manual to aid in demonstrating the importance of moving social justice arts education away from tokenism and toward an integrated approach to learning.

My manual, which is available and readily accessible online, is interactive and easily navigated. It includes numerous resources linked to the Ontario arts curriculum that are centered on social justice pedagogy. It is my hope that these resources will benefit elementary teachers who aim to teach to the diverse bodies of knowledge students have access to in this world, all while engaging in the creative process. Bridging these two disciplines, art and social justice, allows teachers to consistently integrate social justice pedagogy in the classroom.

Conclusion

Together, the pieces of my portfolio work to tell a story of the anatomy of social justice arts education. Each piece plays an important role, drawing on conceptual frameworks to support ideas and practices. In my literature review, the Russian Nesting Doll concept helps to define how social justice arts pedagogy is multifaceted and contains much more than what appears on

the surface. In my presentation, *From the Outside Looking In: Putting Toronto Youth Arts Organizations in the Cypher,* the cypher helps define the fluid nature of social justice arts education in the non-formal sector, giving way to the idea that different organizations, cultures, and disciplines must work together for the system to thrive. And finally, my manual leans on the concept of rhizomatic curriculum to speak to the importance of an integrated approach to pedagogy, doing away with a hierarchical methodology. Each of these pieces address the interconnected nature of social justice arts education, building on one another to develop a clear picture of social justice pedagogy taught through the arts. This capstone is one that I am proud of, one developed with heart and passion over time, and one that leaves room for future discussions or ideas.

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Literature Review: Arts4SocialJustice

Madison Byblow

Lakehead University

Introduction

This review of literature is particularly interested in two areas of education, education for social justice and arts education. In conducting a review of some relevant literature, I began to explore social justice education and art education, considering how the two overlapped or interacted in both the formal education system and outside in non-formal settings. More specifically, I began looking at the area of social justice and art to examine some of the prominent texts that stood out. Since education in the arts is part of the formal curriculum, it becomes much easier to define, understand, and examine. Social justice education, on the other hand, while still a component, is less formal than the former. This hinders definition and explanation within the public education system, making it more difficult to understand such a complex and layered component of education. In this review, I seek to understand how social justice education is defined in literature and how it has interacted with arts education. Furthermore, I seek to examine some key points and takeaways from a research journey that considers both social justice and art education as it has occurred over the last 15 years globally. Finally, I seek to explore prominent points of praxis that have successfully woven social justice and arts education in relevant literature. This will help provide a frame for understanding what is happening now in the field of social justice arts education. This review will offer insight for those working in the field of social justice education, arts education, or both. While I am concerned primarily with social justice arts education at the elementary level in Canada, this review will address the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary systems worldwide as well as social justice arts education outside the public school system for a more holistic and practical understanding. However, the main concern is to provide a frame of reference of the current conversation to move forward in the field of social justice art education. This review contains

some of the contemporary literature on the topic, and reflects the research journey guiding towards the creation of a popular education manual for elementary educators, which will support social justice art education at an elementary level while connecting with the Ontario curriculum.

Literature Review

Defining Social Justice Education

There are a number of different facets to general, public education in Ontario. Overall, Ontario's education system attempts to provide equitable access to education for students across the board. This inclusive education strategy includes a specific plan for equity that has been developed and should be integrated across curricular areas in Ontario classrooms (Ontario, 2014). In some cases, equitable education can be seen and understood as multicultural education, Afrocentric education, or social justice education. Most prominently, this paper will discuss social justice education as it relates to receiving an equitable education across the board, as well as how equitable end inclusive education can develop critically conscious students in schools. This will be done in an attempt to understand how social justice education is discussed in relevant texts in conjunction with art education. First, it is relevant to consider how social justice education is determined across the board in education.

While it is easy to understand and define public school subjects such as math, science, language, and art, many scholars have discussed the difficulties in defining social justice education (Cammarota, 2011; Dewhurst, 2010; Dewhurst, 2011; Hytten & Bettez, 2011; North, 2008). In some ways, the term social justice education is difficult to understand because it is not clearly defined across the board through discourses, despite its wide use (Hytten & Bettez, 2011, p. 9). Often seen as a catchphrase used in education (North, 2008), social justice education could easily be added or removed without any significant conceptual understanding of how it can work within the system. In other ways, social justice education is difficult to understand because it is not a static concept in nature (North, 2008, p. 1183). In fact, social justice education must have a multiplicity of approaches in order for it to be fair, just, and equitable (North, 2008, p. 1183).

More so, social justice education requires a redistribution of power as this allows for a more equalized system (North, 2008). However, this could mean that the traditional teacher student dynamic is flipped upside down creating some unease with definition, since social justice education will never look identical in each classroom and can look quite different than mainstream, conventional classroom pedagogy. Despite a vast contribution of research in the area of social justice education, the definition remains muddy for some since it is ever changing and complex.

From a practical standpoint social justice education is often discussed in relation to models used by scholars and educators in practice. Some prominent texts have provided these models for use to help scholars and educators understand how social justice education works in action. Julio Cammarota (2011) outlines a social justice pedagogy that aims to increase the praxis of young people, addressing three different stages of awareness for young people to engage in (p. 833). In this model, Cammarota (2011) suggests that social justice education can occur through participatory action research, where participants have self-awareness, community awareness, and global awareness (p. 833-834). These three stages are helpful in understanding again how social justice education is not described as a static or linear process, but something that changes from group to group, classroom to classroom, and circumstance to circumstance.

Other authors have reviewed different approaches to social justice education to give an overview of conceptual frameworks that frame the approaches to social justice education in relevant literature. Connie North (2008) presents and evaluates approaches to social justice education through a framework that outlines three major concepts as markers for this kind of work (p. 1184). The three major concepts that North (2008) suggests must exist in social justice education are recognition and redistribution, micro and marco levels of power redistribution, and

a tension between knowledge and action. By providing this conceptual framework North (2008) helps determine and define how social justice education operates, allowing one to better understand the complex layers involved in social justice education pedagogies.

Because social justice education is so complex and multifaceted, it is often found within other discourses such as democratic education or citizenship education as well. In doing research, some articles supported the concepts of social justice education under a different umbrella such as democratic citizenship or education for democracy. Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne (2004) discuss that education for democratic citizenship is a spectrum in which the third step is the justice-oriented citizen (p. 239). Before this third step however, are the personally responsible citizen and the participatory citizen (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004, p. 239). These three levels of citizenship can be understood as levels of social justice education that aim to support an effective democratic society just as social justice education does (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004, p. 239). When education for democratic citizenship is examined, we can see that it aims to encourage critical thinking such as social justice education, and understanding it as another facet of social justice education can aid in understanding the discourse as a whole.

Apart from practice, social justice education can be difficult to define because it is discussed in literature in multiple different ways. Social justice education has been discussed in relation to conceptual understandings, where frameworks, defining features, or categories have been provided to help educators and researchers better understand the different approaches (North, 2008; Dewhurst, 2010; Hytten & Bettez, 2011). Kathy Hytten and Silvia Bettez (2011) examine the different ways that literature calls upon social justice education: philosophically or conceptually; practically; ethnographically or narratively; theoretically; or in a democratically grounded way. The authors describe these different descriptions as strands of social justice, each

with their own unique strengths and weaknesses (Hytten & Bettez, 2011). This helps describe the multiple orientations that social justice education can be described through literature, highlighting the fact that it is multifaceted and unique in each context. Hongyu Wang (2013) outlines two approaches to social justice education, critical theory and post-structural theory, calling on a nonviolent approach to these theoretical lenses with the use of wisdom traditions from Taoist and other spiritual traditions. This nuanced approach to social justice education acknowledges a need for a subtle shift in focus, where non-violent and relational dynamics, as opposed to binary and dualistic *othering,* build a community that is less self-defensive (Wang, 2013, p. 493). Wang (2013) describes this as "differing *for* one another rather than *from* one another" to build a strong community through social justice education (p. 499). This is opposed to calling out the evil and developing a binary between *us* and *them* that most often comes to the forefront with social justice topics (Wang, 2013, p. 499).

Aside from how social justice education is defined as an umbrella term, there are a number of different discourses that are geared toward social justice but can be seen as their own discourse all together. These include Black Feminism, Feminism, Queer Pedagogy, and more. While there are a wide range of texts on these topics, a few stood out in relation to specifically discussing influences on social justice education. Adrienne D. Dixson and Jamila D. Smith (2010) discuss how Black Feminist pedagogy has influenced social justice over time, considering how the pedagogies that support Black Feminism can support students of colour in social justice education. With this, Dixson and Smith (2010) argue that both teachers and students can be active participants who share their knowledge in social justice education, co-producing knowledge. Similarly, Lisa W. Loutzenheiser (2010) discusses the influences of Queer pedagogy on social justice education, relating to how students who are LGBTQ see

education from their vantage point. Loutzenheiser (2010) provides the argument that pedagogies must consider inclusion of LGBTQ students and must be altered with “critical analyses of the roles of gender, race, and/or sexuality” as opposed to just adding in lessons of queer pedagogy sporadically (p. 130).

Now that we have discussed the difficulty in defining social justice education, as well as influences on social justice pedagogies, it would be helpful to offer some kind of definition as it is seen in literature. In most cases, social justice pedagogy is closely linked with critical theory and Freire’s pedagogy. In Freire’s pedagogy there are specific qualities that support groups of people who are or have been oppressed (Gadotti, 2017). One specific component of his pedagogy that Moacir Gadotti (2017) discusses is the “construction of a democratic society with social justice” (p. 20). This construction requires a critical understanding and examination of the world around oneself, a lens that leans toward social justice. Social justice education can be understood as enabling

> people to develop the critical analytic tools necessary to understand oppression and their own socialization within oppressive systems, and to develop a sense of agency and capacity to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and in the institutions and communities of which they are a part (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007, p. 2, as cited in Dixson and Smith, 2010, p. 105)

Social justice education, then, is pedagogy that supports and provides students with critical analysis tools, allowing agency to develop and action to be taken to disrupt systems of oppression or injustice that occur in their daily lives.

Arts Education: A Way Forward

Ontario's art program is built on four strands; drama, dance, music, and visual arts. Arts education is an essential component of holistic education of students, providing "intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth and well-being" to students (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 3). In the Ontario arts curriculum, students engage in making art, analyzing and appreciating all forms of art, and integrating arts learning into other areas of study (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 5-6). Arts education has always been a critical part of society and to this day can been seen as an important component of such. Therese Quinn (2010) regards how art education has served a number of different purposes, whether it is public good, a form of cultural history, or a means of political action the author argues, "artistry is a human birthright" (p. 223-224). However, the arts in Ontario education are largely focused on discipline-based arts education, which concentrates on skills or aesthetics rather than critical thinking or reflection.

While discipline-based arts education offers students the opportunity to learn a specific set of skills that are required to create particular art forms, art education has more merit to it than simply teaching students aesthetic, discipline-based skills. Education in the arts allows students to become more imaginative, wide-awake, and aware, driving critical thought processes that foster social justice (Quinn, 2010, p. 226). The use of art pedagogy can inculcate a critical mind that considers social justice issues, simply through the medium of the arts. Considering the use of art education as more than just skill-based education allows for both aesthetic understanding of art while instilling a critical and reactive response to problems and issues. Moving forward, this review will consider literature than offers art as a catalyst for social justice education and critical thinking.

Merging Art Education and Social Justice Education

Not only is learning in the arts valuable, but also experiences in the arts can provide a conduit for learning in other areas, such as social justice learning (Glowacki-Dudka & Griswold, 2016, p. 111). The question then becomes how can you merge these two disciplines in a way that adheres to the principles of social justice education, while providing a valuable arts learning experience for participants. Part of this includes analyzing and understanding both the materials and process so that they align with both discourses appropriately. Social justice education and arts education can be merged into social justice art education, which is defined as work that "shares a commitment to create art that draws attention to, mobilizes action towards, or attempts to intervene in systems of inequality or injustice" (Dewhurst, 2010, p. 7). This specific way of engaging in social justice through art is valuable since it has the potential to align with learning expectations in the arts and expectations of equity in schools. The malleability of social justice education allows for more access to conversations and engagement; however, it is important to understand how this specific sub-discourse is described or understood as well.

Marit Dewhurst (2011) uses three lenses to identify and discuss what happens when social justice education and art education fuse. First, Dewhurst (2011) draws attention to the intentions of the art to understand how and where the work is located (p. 369). Second, the process of art making is considered to evaluate the critical nature of the work (Dewhurst, 2011, p. 370). This lens is particularly useful for the function of art education because it allows the individual assessing the work to understand the process in which the art is made (Dewhurst, 2011, p. 370). Dewhurst (2011) identifies the importance of this lens because it involves asking oneself critical questions, and through this process the artist will make intentional decisions for their art that support social justice goals (p. 371). Finally, the last lens that Dewhurst (2011) identifies for use in understanding social justice art education is context. With this lens, the

social location of the individual is considered to understand how their position influences the art that is created (Dewhurst, 2011, p. 373). These lenses described by Dewhusrst (2011) allow educators to understand and engage in social justice art that will both benefit students and have a robust impact on the world around them (p. 377).

In another article, Dewhurst (2010) discusses the defining features of social justice art education by illustrating three dimensions of social justice art education that contribute to pedagogy. The first dimension, connection, relates to how the artist connects their art with their own personal life (Dewhurst, 2010, p. 8). This relates directly to Dewhurst's (2011) discussion on the importance of location of artwork, proposing that the artist needs to create based on his or her own life experience in order for a social justice lens to be possible. The second dimension Dewhurst (2010) proposes entails questioning or critically examining the topic of the social justice art (p. 8-9). This defining feature is integral to social justice art education since critical examination is a significant component of any social justice work as seen in most literature explored on the topic (Dewhurst, 2010). The third and final dimension as discussed by Dewhurst (2010) is translating, where the artist considers what techniques and materials were used for the pursuance of their art goals (p. 9). This dimension is important because the choices artists make here can reflect their overall goal of social justice (Dewhurst, 2010). Dewhurst's (2010) contributions toward defining social justice art education aid in understanding the process of such, which can be extremely helpful for planning curricula or examining if specific pedagogy falls in line with the aims of social justice art education.

Aside from understanding how this kind of work is defined specifically as social justice art, it is also important to point out that social justice art education is described through other terms in relevant literature. Some literature points towards other supplementary pedagogies that

support social justice art education, such as Paul Duncum's (2011) position on engaging public space for social justice art. Duncum (2011) suggests that using public space is an effective way for art education pedagogies to be used since controversial pedagogies are more suited to public spaces as opposed to the cozy four walls of a classroom (p. 351). At an academic level, this is considered activist art, but at an elementary level these public spaces can be understood as community art or environmental art (Duncum, 2011). Art pedagogies best suited to engaging public spaces are visual arts; however, other forms of art, such as dramatic arts, could be explored to engage public space to the same degree (Duncum, 2011, p. 360). Like Duncum (2011), Lisa Hochtritt, Willa Ahlschwede, Bonnie Halsey-Dutton, Laura Mychal Fiesel, Liz Chevalier, Taylor Miller, and Chelsea Farrar (2018) consider how public pedagogy can be used in social justice arts education. Public pedagogy, as defined by Hochtritt et al. (2018) is defined as "forms, processes, and site[s] of education and learning occurring beyond or outside of formal schooling" (p. 288). Public pedagogy is described in literature as a way for students to think about and combat forms of oppression outside of the formal education system, making it more applicable to real life situations. The term public pedagogy is used to support social justice art education by increasing the spaces, and therefor the recognition, in which these pedagogies take place.

Another lens used to discuss social justice arts education is described as educating for cultural citizenship (Kuttner, 2015). Educating for cultural citizenship is a key phrase found in a significant amount of literature on social justice education; however, Paul Kuttner (2025) aligns this phrase with arts education, making it even more significant for the purposes of this review. Falling in line with Freire's contributions of social justice "for the construction of a democratic society" (Gadotti, 2017, p. 19), pedagogies that support cultural citizenship education through

arts education have a social justice frame that is important when reviewing relevant work in the field of social justice arts education. Kuttner (2015) suggests that arts education is about much more than just aesthetic and skill, but can be seen as a way of creating cultural citizens, therefore increasing the social justice component inherent to some arts education. This supports the idea that cultural citizenship education is a type of social justice education, and can be pursued in a natural way through arts curriculum.

Cultural and democratic citizenship go hand in hand, and are seen as links within literature surrounding arts education and social justice. Educating for democracy (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004), another term relevant to social justice arts education, involves pedagogy that supports social justice at numerous levels of education, ending with a justice oriented citizen who is able to think critically about the world they are engaging with (p. 239). Education for democratic citizenship, while very similar, makes concrete connections to art education in relevant literature. Richard Siegesmund (2013) reinforces the idea that art education should be a development of consciousness, a wide-awakeness of democracy (p. 307). Maxine Greene (2001) relates art education with play, where students can "spin visions of worlds as worlds otherwise might be" (Greene, 2001, as cited in Siegesmund, 2013, p. 303). Through the act of spinning worlds, students can use art education to imagine a more just society. If imagined, it can be acted upon or even built, which is key to social justice education.

In addition to cultural citizenship, other key phrases such as sociopolitical consciousness are found in literature that supports social justice arts education. Bic Ngo, Cynthia Lewis, and Betsy Maloney Leaf (2017) discuss community-based arts education that supports sociopolitical consciousness, which engages students in changing the current systems of oppression through art such as theatre, spoken word, and more (p. 365). Like education for social justice, education that

intends to increase sociopolitical consciousness has a direct link to transforming educational and social disparities through pedagogy that is liberating, transformative, and empowering.

Art education is the perfect conduit for social justice education because through art we can begin to see the impossible. One can transform new worlds and see new beginnings; one can "disrupt the walls that obscure…the spheres of freedom" (Greene, 1988, p. 133, as cited in Quinn, 2010, p. 223). Quinn (2010) emphasizes how art allows one to become imaginative, wide-awake, and aware, which is an essential component of critical thinking, a front seat driver to social justice (p. 226). Art not only acts as a conduit for social justice education, but art, in the act of viewing or creating, stimulates cognitive development and transformation (Quinn, 2010, p. 225).

Now that prominent texts have been discussed to help define and provide context for understanding both social justice education and social justice arts education, the rest of this review is concerned with literature that discusses current arts literature that support social justice. More directly, the rest of the review is concerned with contemporary social justice arts education pedagogies or praxis as they relate to the different strands of the Ontario curriculum.

Dramatic Arts and Social Justice

Theatre is necessarily political, as is social justice work (Boal, 1985, p. x). With the power to educate, inform, organize, and influence participants, theatre can be understood as serving the purpose of correcting the faults of nature around oneself (Boal, 1985, p. 9). As such, theatre provides a significant opportunity for participants to call to action or mobilize for change. In searching for literature in the area of dramatic arts and social justice, that which most prominently recurred was the work of Augusto Boal (1985). Boal (1985) illustrates how theatre has transformed through history, and has more recently been taken over by the oppressed (or the

masses) (p. 119). Now that the oppressed have a hand in theatre, it can be used as a tool to engage participants in critical thinking where a social justice frame can be used. Theatre of the Oppressed is a way for participants to consider the social context around them and explore possible changes. Through my search, I have found that Boal's (1985) Theatre of the Oppressed method (which relates to Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed) has been used in numerous different ways, ranging from elementary students to post-secondary aged students.

In an article that investigates the connection between citizenship, art, and education, Jose Eduardo Silva and Isabel Menezes (2016) discuss Theatre of the Oppressed as a way to build an understanding of the world around oneself through actions of their own body, increasing empowerment, autonomy, and active citizenship (p. 40). One of the main goals of Boal's method is for participants to engage in potential real life situations to explore concrete examples of outcomes, therefore increasing understanding and the ability to act on such situations should they encounter with them in day to day life. Silva and Menezes (2016) argue for the merging of social justice and arts education in non-formal settings through the practice of Theatre of the Oppressed and the methods derived by Boal (1985).

Similarly, Johnny Saldana (2010) illustrates the use of Theatre of The Oppressed as a method of exploring issues among children; however, Saldana (2010) suggests the use of these methods in elementary settings to allow for "seeds of social consciousness and strategies for dealing with oppression" to be planted in the classroom (p. 62). With the techniques of Boal's (1985) method, Saldana (2010) demonstrates how theatre can be used for social justice, in order to allow students to understand oppressions in their everyday life and develop as socially conscious and empathetic citizens.

With some similarities, Andrea Dishy and Karina Naumer (2010) illustrate how Theatre of the Oppressed can be used in conjunction with other dramatic methods, such as puppet theatre, to engage young students in social justice issues that yield appropriate for their age group. Dishy and Naumer (2010) position Theatre of the Oppressed in classrooms where children are aged three to seven, exploring how this method could be used to foster critical thinking at an elementary level. Dishy and Naumer (2010) emphasize some of the positive aspects of teaching social justice arts education at such a young age, including the fact that interactions with systems of oppression at a young age are a step towards being an assertive adult who is able to stand up to their own oppression in the future (p. 43).

Also within mainstream elementary education, Elinor Vettraino (2010) highlights the use of Theatre of the Oppressed as a way for the education system to create more responsive learners able to contribute to society, be responsible active citizens, and confident as individuals (p. 65). Vettraino (2010) hones in specifically on the Image Theatre method to provide students with the opportunity to discuss liberation and oppression in a concrete way within their classroom. As an exploratory method, Vettraino (2010) relies on Image Theatre to address complex concepts such as behavour intervention, systems of oppression, and liberation. By describing how non-traditional anti-oppressive methods such as Image Theatre can be used inside structures of education that are at times oppressive, Vettraino (2010) argues that Theatre of the Oppressed should be a part of elementary education (p. 77-78).

In comparison to others, Carol Rozansky and Caroline Santos (2009) explore using Boal’s (1985) Theatre of the Oppressed method to increase critical literacy in elementary students. Rozansky and Santos (2009) explore how image theatre is a way for young students to understand oppression and gain critical literacy skills, while critically responding to both texts

and scenarios where oppression is present. Through the use of image theatre, Rozansky and Santos (2009) illustrate the possibility for Theatre of the Oppressed methods to be used specifically for critical literacy, which directly supports aims of social justice education. Through image theatre, Rozansky and Santos (2009) suggest that students are given space to explore possible outcomes to real-life scenarios, giving them the tools to react to such scenarios in real life.

While increasing the age of students, Sooz Stahl (2018) addresses the use of Theatre of the Oppressed with high school students in order to confront social justice issues at school in a practical way. As a way for students to engage with social justice education while meeting standards of the arts curriculum, Stahl (2018) discusses that Theatre of the Oppressed allows students to "share...vulnerability, to empathize with others who are different, and to practice confronting oppression in our daily lives" (p. 372-373). Stahl (2018) demonstrates the flexibility that this method provides while still addressing systems of oppression and other social justice issues in a constructive and practical way.

Quite unlike the former texts, Hannah Fox and Abigial Leeder (2018) examine the use of Theatre of the Oppressed in post-secondary education, and in conjunction with other theatre methods. Fox and Leeder (2018) discuss Theatre of the Oppressed methods alongside autobiographical theatre and playback theatre, arguing that the combination allows for a liberated and inclusive environment which ultimately inspires allyship (p. 110). The authors demonstrate how the use of these methods allows for both the audience and actors to be part of the social justice movement, "creating a community of activists and allies utilizing theatre as a tool for liberation" (Fox and Leeder, 2018, p. 110). At an academic level, Fox and Leeder (2018)

demonstrate how the use of Theatre of the Oppressed and other methods can allow for the exploration of liberation, systems of oppression, and social justice issues overall.

Visual Arts and Social Justice

Although dramatic arts prove useful for developing conversations of social justice and critical thinking skills in our students, other mediums provide similar opportunities in the classroom. Not surprisingly, teachers are either strongly interested in the arts or veer away from them. Whatever the level interest of the teacher may be, visual arts are a powerful medium for students to explore concepts of social justice in relation to their own identity through a creative response to a social issue. Mark Graham (2009) proposes "The study and making of art can be a powerful way to engender empathy, compassion, and intercultural dialogue, and engage students and teachers in critical thinking about cultural assumptions and diversity" (p. 155). In my exploration, some texts examine specific social justice issues related to mediums of art, while others address a widespread array of social justice issues in relation to one or more medium for exploration.

When searching for literature that discussed the use of visual arts to explore concepts of social justice, mediums such as photography, print, murals, and graphic making are all discussed. Cass Fey, Ryan Shin, Shana Cinquemani, and Catherine Marino (2010) claim the use of photography as useful for addressing racism in their classrooms. In learning about social research photographers, Fey et al (2010) identify how photography is "a powerful medium with which to explore social issues and concerns through the intersection of artistic form and concept" (p. 51) The authors discuss three activities in which students can explore racism through photography, each allowing students to "develop abilities to carefully analyze and

interpret photographs, develop and improve their powers of observation, increase vocabulary needed to respond and sharpen their visual and critical thinking skills" (Fey et al., 2010, p. 51).

Other examples of exploring social justice through photography have been discussed in conjunction with other art forms. In a study with high school students, Graham (2009) acknowledges the use of photography to address issues of multiculturalism and storytelling. Graham (2009) posits that art, specifically photography and sketching in this case, "has tremendous potential to develop students' intercultural competence and experience, and artists can reveal the assumptions, values, and beliefs of a culture in a way that makes them poignant and comprehensible" (p. 155). In a project that used photography and painting to explore the relationships of immigration and diversity in the classroom, Graham (2009) notes the importance of understanding the skills of photography and painting technically before being able to critically think about social justice issues (p. 157). This project demonstrated how using art to explore social justice allows students to have a rich experience, cultivating a disposition, which permitted students to "examine topics of culture, diversity, and social justice in a traditional classroom" (Graham, 2009, p. 160).

Other examples of visual arts and social justice include painting and mural making. Katherine Fobear (2016) illustrates the use of community murals as a way for groups to come together, sharing about both themselves and their community (p. 52). In an article describing a project called Painted Stories, Fobear (2016) narrates how community murals created empathy and mobilization, addressing LGBTQ refugees in Vancouver (p. 54). Although this example takes place in a non-traditional learning space, the author argues how the use of mural painting was something that worked to draw attention, mobilize participants or marginalized people, and "intervene in systems of inequality by providing critical counter-narratives" (Fobear, 2016, p.

59). In discussing the value of the arts as a conduit for social justice learning, Fobear (2016) references bell hooks (2000) to say that art allows for a transgression across boundaries that are imposed "making people reflect and pushing our understandings of ourselves beyond racial, sexual, gender, and class norms and boundaries" (hooks, 2000, as cited in Fobear, 2016, p. 53). This example of social justice art demonstrates how art allows participants to "articulate the inarticulable" to develop empathy and understanding around social justice issues, especially within a community (Fobear, 2016, p. 52).

In another more recent example of social justice art that engage the community, Pamela Harris Lawton (2019) inquires into how art education and curriculum could be reimagined in response to community and social engagement, questioning the role of social practice art within art education programs (p. 204). In this article, the examples Lawton (2019) provides are geared toward social action "with art as the medium for learning" (p. 204). As previously noted, art has been seen as a considerably strong medium for social justice learning since it creates a space where participants can begin to interrogate the structures of power and oppression that surround them (Fobear, 2016, p. 53). In her project, Lawton (2016) describes both community participants and students who are engaging in art work as a collaborative effort, addressing lived experiences, social, moral, and cultural concerns as well as political ones (p. 210). This project not only addressed themes of social justice but also other democratic concepts such as civic responsibility, which we have seen as a tenant of social justice education (Lawton, 2016, p. 215). Lawton (2016) provides an example of reconsidering how curriculum can be used to address social justice issues ensuring that teachers are able to holistically integrate topics of art learning and social justice learning in order for students experiences to be transformative and engaging.

Lawton's (2016) intersectional ideology used mediums of printmaking, woodcutting, and painting to address issues of social justice.

Along with a variety of mediums used, some authors discuss social justice art with an ideological push that differentiates it from others. Kim Hyungsook (2014) highlights how socially engaged art can foster character education. Hyungsook (2014) gives an example of character education in Korea; however, this applies to many school boards in Ontario since character education is a staple for a number of boards. The author highlights how art practice can be used to discuss the topic of refugees in Korea, addressing how art can be used as a tool to promote social justice (Hyungsook, 2014, p. 57). The program of study included participatory activities where participants were encouraged to draw and create in order to enhance ones understanding of others around them, specifically in Korea (Hyungsook, 2014, p. 59). Hyungsook (2014) illustrates how art that promotes character education not only increases understanding of others, but also works to build a democratic and global citizen mindset (p. 58). The author establishes that art is a helpful vehicle to explore the world around oneself, and plays a "critical role in human culture in creating an understanding of these manifold conditions of existence" (Hyungsook, 2014, p. 64). This article suggests that multiple ideologies can be incorporated into social justice art to question the "social condition of inequality…[and act] as a powerful tool for creating material practices for other ways of being" (Hyungsook, 2014, p. 66). Hyungsook's (2014) example helps to explain how art can be used to promote social justice alongide other ideologies.

Not only do the arts increase social justice awareness from an introspective standpoint, engaging in the arts increases students' understanding of the world around them. In a study that addresses the use of arts with university students, Vedant Nanackchand and Kim Berman (2012)

address how visual graphics can have a positive impact on issues of human rights, social justice, democracy, and overall public good. The authors were trying to address social responsiveness through an action research study by increasing critical personal and civic awareness in students through art practice (Nanackchand and Berman, 2012, p. 468). In this article, Nanackchand and Berman (2012) combine aesthetic art education with critical thinking skills. In this study students address the South African Bill of Rights by responding to a human rights issue through visual graphics (Nanackchand and Berman, 2012, p. 471). Here, visual graphic creation is used as an educational intervention that allows students to have increased awareness for social justice issues such as human rights (Nanackchand and Berman, 2012, p. 476). Along with increased awareness among individual students, Nanackchand and Berman (2012) point out that using visual graphics allows for students to display their artwork, in turn allowing them the "potential to influence public opinion" (p. 473). Although Nanackchand and Berman (2012) give an example of using the arts to address issues of social justice at a university level, a similar reactive process can easily be mimicked at a younger grade level to achieve similar results.

Movement Arts and Social Justice

Another influential medium for social justice art education is movement arts. In the Ontario curriculum, this is found in the dance strand in grades 1-8. Social justice is linked to the Ontario curriculum through the overall expectations of Reflecting, Responding, and Analysing, and Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 66). However, dance in the curriculum, unlike the other strands, can often be mulled over or taught void of context. Despite the curriculum's focus on formal technique (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 14), dance is more than just a performing art and should be viewed as "a cultural text for understanding the social world" (Cruz Banks, 2010, p. 18).

In the search for literature on dance education and social justice resources were more limited than what was found in other mediums. Literature in this area involved discussions on how dance education can be used to teach critical thinking, democratic education, climate justice, and social justice (MacPherson, 2018; Ward, 2013; Catalano and Leonard, 2016; Cleland Donnelly and Millar, 2019; Cruz Banks, 2010). What these article have in common is a dialogue that centers cultural and historical context in the teaching of dance so that students can engage in social justice learning.

Sheila A. Ward (2013) begins our exploration of movement arts and social justice with her article discussing African dance in elementary settings. Ward (2013) discusses dance education as a way for students to broaden their worldview kinesthetically, “exploring the values system of diverse cultures, dispelling myths, circulating historical accuracies, and establishing traditional cultural connections” (p. 31). By this definition, it is clear that dance education opens the floor for students to engage in socially just topics. Ward (2013) notes both the challenges and benefits of teaching dance education in K-12 settings, specifically African dance. In terms of benefits, Ward (2013) highlights the fact that dance taught with adequate cultural context can provide the opportunity to discuss topics of race, beauty, racism, and power, in positive ways with young students (p. 31). However, Ward (2013) makes a clear distinction that social justice and social action come into play not when the teacher brings this kind of dance education into the classroom, but rather when the teacher asks students to question and reflect upon how “African-based dance is valued and recognized among other dance forms” (p. 32). Through teaching African dance, and perhaps we can assume other dance traditions, the teacher can help students view dance “in a manner that challenges social and racial inequalities by ‘questioning

the structural inequality, the racism, and the injustice that exist in society'" (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 128, as cited in Ward, 2013, p. 33).

In another article discussing African dance, Ojeya Cruz Banks (2010) considers how dance pedagogy supports critical postcolonial thought to support students in greater world perspectives (p. 18). Cruz Banks (2010) offers a unique contribution to the overall dialogue by discussing a project that attempts to move away from tokenistic multicultural education and toward critical pedagogy (p. 18). Cruz Banks (2010) argues that multicultural education is often presented in the classroom devoid of context, which means it can lend itself toward stereotypes "rather than…constructing meaningful connections to the world outside of the classroom" (Derman Sparks, 1993, as cited in Cruz Banks, 2010, p. 19). However, once a critical framework is applied, Cruz Banks (2010) argues that dance education can involve questioning school knowledge rather than romanticizing cultural practices through additive education (p. 19). Cruz Banks (2010) points out that since dance education often favours Western styles and training, critical pedagogy helps to move the emphasis away from technique and locate it in cultural and social contexts, such as the importance of dance for marking social occasions (p. 20). African dance specifically can apply critical pedagogy to represent struggles of race, gender, sex, and act as a way for students to critique society (Cruz Banks, 2010, p. 20). As a tool for social justice education, Cruz Banks (2010) identifies how dance can "mobilize social action by reclaiming youth education…supplementing it with alternative sources of cultural knowledge" than that of western dance education (p. 30).

In a discussion that addresses dance as a vehicle for democracy, Theresa Catalano and Alison E. Leonard (2016) explore how dance can be used in the curriculum as a tool for democratic deliberation (p. 63). Catalano and Leonard (2016) start by making the point that

relevant literature has explored visual art as a tool for democratic deliberation; however, despite their relevance, movement arts have been left out of the conversation (p. 63). The authors begin by evaluating the use of dance for teaching democratic education, explaining how dance serves as a form of both knowledge and inquiry for students (Catalano and Leonard, 2016, p. 64). Through this inquiry and knowledge based practice, dance embodies democratic ideals by offering a level playing field where “diverse groups of people can and do meet to share common experiences” (Daly, 2002, p. 9, as cited in Catalano and Leonard, 2016, p. 66). A shared common experience allows students to “foster interdependence through participation and a concern for the common good” (Daly, 2002, p. 9, as cited in Catalano and Leonard, 2016, p. 66). According to Catalano and Leonard (2016), dance can be seen as a tool for social justice since it addresses four key democratic concepts: participation and access for all students, allowing for human connection and interdependence, the chance for all voices to be heard, and helping students to develop empathy and value diversity (p. 68-71). The last key component that Catalano and Leonard (2016) explain is how dance can address injustices through the possibility for students to bring forward their own experiences or potential experiences to address these issues on their own terms through a dance relationship (p. 76).

Finally, in Tehmekah MacPherson’s article addressing the significance of Hip Hop dance, MacPherson (2018) discusses how Hip Hop education has transformed over the years for the worse, now seen for its wow factor rather than its origins in “cultural history and expressive energy containing helpful life lessons” (p. 136). MacPherson (2018) discusses her circle pedagogy for teaching Hip Hop classes that intends to bring the historical and cultural context back to Hip Hop (p. 136). The pedagogy MacPherson (2018) uses to teach Hip Hop has four principles that highlight the socially responsible features of the genre (p. 138). These are “love

energy, elemental synergy, past-to-present connection, and the individual as part of the whole" (MacPherson, 2018, p. 138). Since social justice is and always has been a priority of Hip Hop (MacPherson, 2018, p. 138), it becomes a perfect conduit for social justice learning. MacPherson (2018) reflects on the ways Hip Hop can be used within lessons to say that Hip Hop is a message in motion (p. 138), and a genre that not only incorporates movement but music as well. This brings us to our final medium for social justice education: music.

Music Arts and Social Justice

The final section of this review will address some relevant literature on how music can be used as a social justice tool in the classroom. Music, of course, is a key component of the Ontario Arts curriculum in grades 1-8. Music can be taught through skills-based objectives (see Overall Expectation 1), or critical thinking-based objectives (see Overall Objectives 2 and 3), the latter of which opens the door to social justice topics. Through my research, themes such as decolonization, race, and culture appeared as some of the topics that educators are tackling through the music curriculum. Juliet Hess (2015; 2018; 2019), a prominent music scholar, points to the ways in which music education can address topics of social justice in through critical thinking. Other scholars examine the music curriculum to consider how it might reinforce messages of oppression and privilege (Palmer, 2018), propose ideas of multiculturalism might be infused (Dobrota, 2015), or how music could be a vein of critical education (Rashid, 2016).

In their article discussing multicultural music education, Snjezana Dobrota (2015) illustrates how multicultural education is facet of social justice education, emerging out of the civil rights movement and "addressing cultural perspectives, biases, and stereotypes" (p. 211). Dobrota (2015) explains how music education can also be multicultural by teaching culture-specific qualities of different music practices (Walker, 1990, p. 81, as cited in Dobrota, 2015, p.

212). Since the Ontario public school system is dominated by Western ideals, and the music program is no different than others, it is more important than ever to include world music education for students (Dobrota, 2015, p. 213). Through multicultural music education students are able to alter their perceptions on other cultures and gain an understanding of other cultures before making preconceived judgments (Anderson, 1983, as cited in Dobrota, 2015, p. 214). With multicultural education embedded within the music curriculum, Dobrota (2015) argues that students are able to “decrease negative stereotyping based on gender, race, religion, politics, age, ethnicity, and…ability” (p. 215), increasing their understanding of social justice issues in their world.

Oppression and privilege are two other social justice topics that can be addressed through music education. In a literature review that addresses social justice music education, Elizabeth S. Palmer (2018) highlights how music education can be affected by issues of social justice such as lack of funding or resources, disenfranchisement, high teacher turnover, and more (p. 23). As such, music education provides an appropriate platform to discuss issues of social justice. However, Palmer (2018) argues that traditionally music education focuses on performance rather than social and contextual learning (p. 24). Palmer (2018) pushes for critical pedagogy within music education so that teachers can play the role of facilitator while students contribute to their own learning experiences in a democratic way (p. 24). Since music education faces its own social justice barriers, Palmer (2018) argues that it is important to address the issues of privilege and oppression that come with it. Palmer (2018) identifies privilege in music education through the content taught in classrooms, which more often than not is Westernized (p. 25). In terms of oppression, Palmer (2018) explains how voices of minority group individuals are not often heard through music education and therefor those folks do not participate (p. 25). However, since these

realities are evident in classrooms, the music curriculum offers a unique place for social justice education to occur.

In discussing which musical traditions take the forefront in music education, Kamau Rashid (2016) describes how Hip Hop is used in music education in the city of Chicago. Rashid (2016) argues that Hip Hop is a "potent resource in the conceptualization of social justice pedagogy" (p. 341). The practice of Hip Hop, including graffiti, rap, MCing, beat boxing, as well as dance, can be explored as a tool for critical social justice work (Rashid, 2016, p. 341). Rashid (2016) explores how Hip Hop pedagogy can be used as resistance pedagogy to tackle issues of racism, white supremacy, and neoliberalism (p. 342). While this article focuses its attention in the city of Chicago, these practices can be applied globally in music education classrooms. Rashid (2016) points to how music classrooms are not neutral spaces (p. 342), and this is something that should be addressed through education. In spaces of music education, since they are not neutral, teachers can use Hip Hop as a direct link to social justice topics (Rashid, 2016, p. 344). Since Hip Hop has a long history of Black liberation and social criticism, Hip Hop can be a platform for social critique (Rashid, 2016, p. 334). While these conclusions are positive, the ultimate question is how? Rashid (2016) discusses ways that Hip Hop can be used as pedagogy within the music classroom as a textual discourse, which will provide "counternarratives to…intolerance, racism, imperialism, and class subordination" (p. 348). These counternarratives occur through students examining and cultivating their own Hip Hop lyrics. Through music assignments like this, Rashid (2016) argues that "students [can]…see the salience of social criticism inherent in many…[Hip Hop] works, even works that [do] not have an explicitly political orientation (p. 356). Overall, Hip Hop music has an inherent orientation to

social justice, which can "illuminate social issues, as well as the varied ways that people mobilize to positively shape the world" (Rashid, 2016, p. 358).

On the topic of counternarratives, Juliet Hess (2019) discusses the concept of counterstorytelling as a way for social justice to take place in the music classroom. Hess (2019) claims that the ideals of grit and resilience taught in elementary schools can be critiqued and reframed in different ways. Because the current framework for understanding grit and resilience locates the problems within the child, Hess (2019) argues that students need to be given political agency to question the systems that support the need for students to be resilient in the first place (p. 489). While resilience education focuses on vulnerability in students, Hess (2019) proposes we look to examine the root causes of students' problems through resistance rather than resilience. Interestingly enough, Hess (2019) suggests that music is a possible site for this potential shift in thinking may happen (p. 489). Counterstorytelling through songwriting is a strength-based pedagogy where students can share their stories from a perspective where they are seen as "fundamentally powerful and willing to name oppressive forces that affect them" (p. 496). This perspective lies in opposition to the deficit-based approach that grit and resilience education supports (Hess, 2019, p. 495). Hess (2019) argues that music can provide a "counternarrative to the dominant discourse" (p. 499) and identifies Hip Hop as a potential way for students to engage in this kind of learning.

Hess has a number of other articles relevant to the discussion of social justice music education, including another article of hers, which discusses music education as a way to decolonize. In this article, Hess (2015) argues that the current curriculum can be seen as a colonizer that reinforces dominant power relations in schools (p. 337). The idea of curriculum as colonizer argues that what is taught becomes dominant knowledge, and since Western practices

are often at the forefront of music education, this kind of knowledge becomes more important than other musical knowledge (Hess, 2015, p. 336). However, music has the opportunity to shift the narrative in the curriculum and allow for teachers to decolonize the knowledge shared in the classroom (Hess, 2015). Hess (2015) provides a number of different models for decolonizing the curriculum, two of which she pokes holes in. These models are based on Chandra Talpade Mohanty's curricular models and adjusted for the music classroom. First, Hess (2015) suggests a shift through seeing the musician as a tourist, where students can dip in and out of different cultural experiences at their leisure (Hess, 2015, p. 339). Hess (2015) identifies this model as problematic since it is an "add world music and stir" approach (Morton, 1994, as cited in Hess, 2015, p. 339). The next approach to decolonizing music education is the musician as explorer approach, where students value the musical perspectives of other cultures but do not disrupt the narrative (Hess, 2015, p. 340). Finally, the last model that Hess (2015) discusses is what she refers to as a new curriculum, a comparative music model (p. 341). In this model, Hess (2015) suggests that students would see the "interconnectedness between the musics [of multiple cultures] and the contexts of the musics. It is also attentive to power relations" (p. 341). This version of music pedagogy would bring together intersectional identities such as race, gender, and ability, to "focus on the way that these fluid categories intersect with and inform each other" (Hess, 2015, p. 341).

In the next article by Hess that proves relevant to this discussion, Hess (2018) examines whiteness in music education and how it can be addressed from a social justice perspective. In her article, Hess (2018) follows music educators who "challenge dominant paradigms in order to consider what an equitable music education might be" (p. 129). Hess (2018) used her case study to examine the different approaches to teaching multicultural music education, and found that

one of the most important components is to include sociocultural and sociohistorical context with learning (p. 134). This allows for teachers to address social justice issues such as race, oppression, and privilege in a tangible way, considering multiple musical viewpoints and encouraging open-mindedness in students (Hess, 2018, p. 140). However, Hess (2018) does outline some potential stumbling blocks for teachers to be aware of, which include additive programming, assuming cultural knowledge based on cultural heritage, and reinscribing dominant culture, therefor reinscribing power roles (Hess, 2018, p.136-137). Ultimately, Hess (2018) argues that music education has the opportunity challenge dominant paradigms and address issues of social justice.

Conclusion

The term social justice is a wide umbrella encompassing issues of multiculturalism, race, equity, gender, democratic citizenship, and more. These topics are addressed in schools in a many different ways, sometimes directly and others indirectly. It is clear that school boards intend for social justice topics to surface through the curriculum, but how and where seems to leave teachers with a sense of unease. When considering the multitude of ways to teach social justice to students, especially of a younger age, most would argue that method of delivery for such content is important. As such, an inquiry into a particular method of delivery was relevant.

There is quite a large body of literature that supports the combination of social justice education and arts education. Most literature shows that this is because the arts act as an appropriate conduit for such content. In fact, social justice art education can be understood as its own discipline within literature, perhaps a sub-discipline of social justice education. This is because not only do the arts act as a conduit for exploring issues of social justice, but also allow for the learner to explore and expand their understanding through a number of different mediums

such as visual art, theatre, dance, and music. Topics considering social justice are multifaceted, and because of this, the approaches to teaching such must be multifaceted as well (North, 2008). Given this, the use of the arts as a vehicle for social justice learning is beneficial for a number of reasons. The arts have been shown to inspire provocation and open individuals up to new expansive and surprising ideas, increasing critical thinking and democratic citizenship (Quinn, 2010, p. 226). Art acts as a tool to enhance students' active citizenship and epistemological development (Silva and Menezes, 2016, p, 40), while also developing consciousness among individuals (Siegesmund, 2013, p. 307). Some articles in particular pointed out how art education is about much more than aesthetics, but rather it has a more important role to play through the development of cultural citizens (Kuttner, 2015, p, 74). Nevertheless, regardless of the medium through which social justice is taught, exploring social justice issues brings students awareness of themselves and their personal and global communities (Cammarota, 2011).

Through an exploration of some literature on art and social justice education, it is clear that the two are directly correlated since art is "necessarily… multicultural, exploratory, and rooted in life experiences" (Quinn, 2010, p. 227). As such, numerous articles depict the use of the arts as a vehicle for social justice. Music, theatre, dance, and the visual arts are all expressive modes of understanding and the involvement in such is both political and personal. Art is considered a vital component of social justice education to some since it stimulates cognitive and creative development while awakening critical thought (Quinn, 2010, p. 224, 226). Direct links have been made to demonstrate the effectiveness of art in "developing critical responsiveness…about the discourse of human rights, democracy and social responsibility" (Nanackchand and Berman, 2012, p. 476). Since there is an overwhelming discussion on the benefits of art as a tool for social justice education, one must wonder where the resources are

that connect these topics to our curriculum. In doing research on some of the literature surrounding arts education and social justice, examples of pedagogy that support social justice arts education are abundant. Less abundant are resources for educators that give way to how this pedagogy can be used in an elementary education setting. Moving forward, this is an area for further development.

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Conference Presentation - From the Outside Looking In: Putting Toronto Youth Arts Organizations in the Cypher

Madison Byblow

Lakehead University

Prezi Component

1.

A PDF copy of this presentation is included in this package, labeled MB5; however, this presentation is best viewed through an interactive link at:

https://prezi.com/view/jGEU1hnTeVIolnvBOzph/

Conference Script Outline

Conference Presentation Outline
Arts for Community and Culture

INTRODUCTION:
M: Hello and welcome. My name is Madison Byblow, and I am a Masters of Education student at Lakehead University and an Ontario Certified Teacher.

E: Hello everyone. My name is Elesha Daley and I am a Masters of Education student at Lakehead University and an Ontario Certified Teacher. Madison and I both work for school boards within our local communities.

E: Our presentation today is part of YouthSites, a SSHRC funded, longitudinal research project. The project researches and examines community arts organizations within the non-formal youth arts learning sector of Toronto, Vancouver, and London. Specifically, YouthSites works with organizations that provide services for youth from socially excluded backgrounds. We map the youth participation in out-of-school arts learning and investigate the structural relationship between the development of this sector and the changing role and meaning of creative education.

M: Elesha and I have been involved with YouthSites since June of this year. We have worked with a number of organizations in Toronto that are a part of the non-formal youth arts learning sector. Today, we will highlight two of those organizations, UrbanArts and Unity Charity. As teachers, we are outsiders looking in on the non-formal youth arts learning sector to consider the unique and powerful contributions that these organizations make within the community. For this presentation, this is how we have positioned ourselves in relation to the concept of the cypher.

M: Without further ado, welcome to the cypher.

VIDEO.

M: We have organized this presentation around the idea of a cypher, which is a concept we encountered this summer at a community arts festival. A cypher is a hip-hop space in which there is a circle of supportive community onlookers and dancers who are ready to go into the middle to share their expertise.

E: For the purposes of our presentation, we are considering the cypher as the non-formal youth arts learning sector, and the organizations as participants within that cypher. Each organization makes unique and powerful contributions to the cypher as they interact with youth and one another in the community of Toronto.

E: The first organization we will highlight today is UrbanArts. Formerly known and founded as Arts York in 1989, UrbanArts has developed into a community arts organization that focuses on arts programing for youth in Toronto. UrbanArts enhances Toronto neighborhoods by engaging youth in community development through the arts.

M: The second organization highlighted here today is UNITY Charity. UNITY Charity is an organization that focuses on mental health strategies for youth through hip-hop culture. Founded in 2007, UNITY engages with youth in in-school and out-of-school settings, fostering community, artistic development, and positive mental health strategies.

M: So, how might these organizations function as a cypher for community arts and culture in the non-formal youth arts learning sector of Toronto?

E: These organizations step into the cypher to do something unique for community arts and culture through two key ideas.

- Knowledge Exchange and Cultural Capital
- **We are going to share three claims that we have witnessed through our research that demonstrate how these organizations step into the cypher to provide youth with unique opportunities to exchange knowledge and build cultural capital.**

E: Through the Graffiti Transformation Project and more recent Mural Project, UrbanArts engages youth in reshaping spaces with their own art. UrbanArts gives youth a platform to exhibit their art and take accountability for their community spaces by creating murals that represent stories of diversity and community. Prior to the project commencement, youth, professional artists and community members come together to collaborate on mural designs. Once a plan and mural location is decided, youth participants are provided with basic employment skills training. Finally, youth and facilitators begin painting murals, incorporating images that encourage diversity and community development. Youth may utilize the acquired skills in society and life. Inevitably, this enables youth to build cultural capital.

M: UNITY Charity creates spaces where knowledge and experience are exchanged intergenerationally, removing the teacher/student power dynamic, cultivating a community.

M: UNITY Charity has two program streams for participants, ENGAGE and INSPIRE programs. Centered around mental health strategies for youth, UNITY's programs address tough conversations head-on. By using hip-hop culture as a way to express stress, artist facilitators open the floor up to the youth to develop in and out-of-school community conversations about mental health. Youth and facilitators exchange stories and experiences with one another. Ultimately, this is where knowledge exchange happens.

E: UrbanArts develops youth art programs in response to youth needs. They provide a space for youth to interact with each other and the facilitator, using technology to develop their own products. UrbanArts runs a mobile and in-house program that allows youth to produce their own beats with the use of digital audio workstations and software. Facilitators are experienced beat makers and music producers that support participants during the creative process. This provides youth and facilitators the opportunity to share ideas, techniques and musical styles while creating a final musical product. These products may then be presented during a summer community arts festival that showcases their musical products to the community, professional music producers, and artists. Not only does this encourage a network of knowledge sharing within the sector but it ultimately allows youth to have the opportunity to build cultural capital.

M: So why is this relevant? Our presentation has focused on two key ideas that are developed within the cypher of the non-formal youth arts learning sector. These are key ideas that we have witnessed as researchers with the YouthSites project. First, these organizations provide *art for culture* by helping participants develop cultural capital such as marketable skills. Second, these organizations provide *art for community* by allowing a mutual knowledge exchange among participants, facilitators, and community members.

E: Our intention is to shed light on a community that is sometimes overlooked. By way of it being non-formal, this sector of education is often viewed as supplemental to in school learning; however, these organizations bring much to the table than just arts education. Organizations in this sector develop engaged citizens who gain the skills to interact with the world and community around them. This is made meaningful through art for community and culture.

M: We hope you leave today considering what part you play in the cypher. How does the organization you work with, the art you create, or the work that you do contribute to the cypher of the non-formal youth arts learning sector?

M: Thank you so much for coming today and taking an interest in a sector that contributes widely to the success of youth and the urban infrastructure of Toronto. If you have any questions about the YouthSites project or any organizations involved, the principal investigator of YouthSites is Stuart Poyntz in Vancouver, with Michael Hoechsmaan in Toronto and Julian-Sefton Green in London. We hope you enjoy the rest of the conference and have a great day.

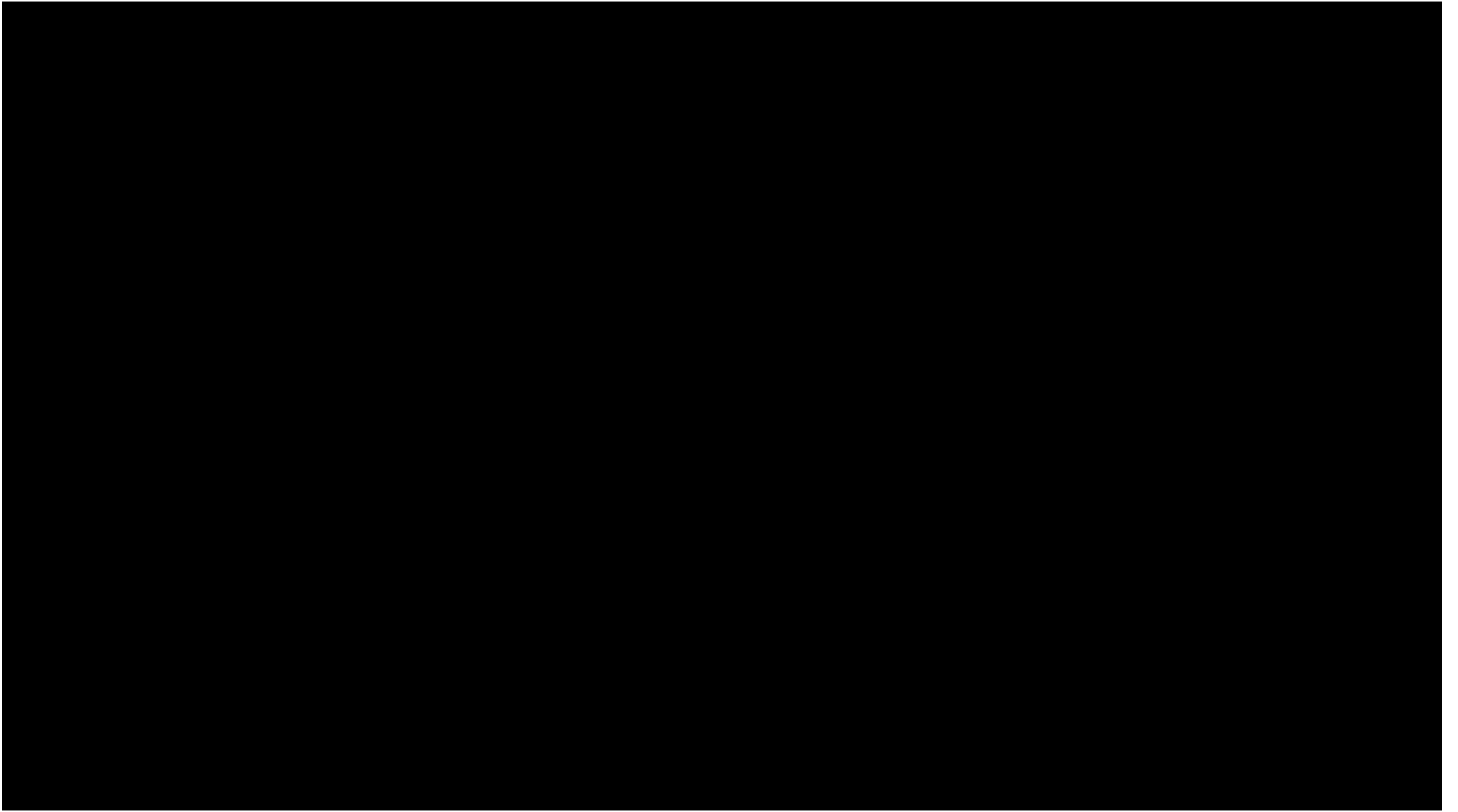
Conference Schedule

Arts For Education 2018 Schedule (OISE) Page 1

	RM 2296	RM 2279	RM 2281	RM 2211
8:45-9:25	**Registration** **Coffee & Refreshments** **OISE 2nd Floor**			
9:30 – 10:15	**Improvisation-Based Storytelling through Tableau** Kayla Warburton, & Christina Tjandra (OISE) *Examining stories through tableau creation and improvisational methods*	**Painting for Experiential Practice: An Arts-Based Method for Understanding the Classroom Culture of Learning** Catherine Shea (Central Montessori School), Mimi Masson (University of Ottawa), Simone Côté, (McGill University) *A hands-on abstract painting activity*	**Bridging Isolation Through Co-Creational Culture with Street-involved Adults in a Low Barrier Environment** Terri Roberton (Ontario Expressive Arts Therapy Association) **'LearningMethods': A Radically Simple Solution to Performance Anxiety** Orlena Bray (Western University) **Investigating Imagination in Adults with Autism with Art-Based Assessments** Olena Darewych (Wilfrid Laurier University)	**Student Engagement through Diverse Representations: Comics as Pedagogy** Sabita Ramlal & Aaron A. Weiss (York University) **Making Things Across Difference: Media Creation and Cultural Production** Esther Maloney (OISE) **Getting "Drop Outs" to "Drop In": Product-based Learning through Skateboards** Craig Morrison (OISE)
10:15 – 11:00	**Kandinsky and the Noisy Paintbox** Catherine West (University of Toronto) & Sophie Bell (Ryerson University) *Explore connections between movement, sound, shape and colour*	**Our Story – Our Stories: Art Activity for Team Building** Elzbieta Uher (Concordia University) *An artmaking activity to promote team building*	**Possibilities and Challenges of Using Dance in Life History Research** Derrick Tu (York University) **Unorthodox data-gathering - 'The (City) Doctor is In'** Anne Frost (Humber College) **Arts for Educational Research: Exploring Leadership Experiences through Visual Images** Fauzanah Fauzan El Muhammady (McGill University)	**Comedy, Tragedy, and Radical Hope** Shannon Boeckner (Ryerson University) **From the Outside Looking in: Putting Toronto Youth Arts Organizations in the Cypher** Madison Byblow & Elesha Daley (Lakehead University) **Ensuring Equitable Access to Elementary Arts Education** Natalie Florence Sanchez & Joyinn Ying Zuo (OISE)

LEGEND:
Interactive Workshop
Panel Presentation
Research Presentations
Refreshments Available

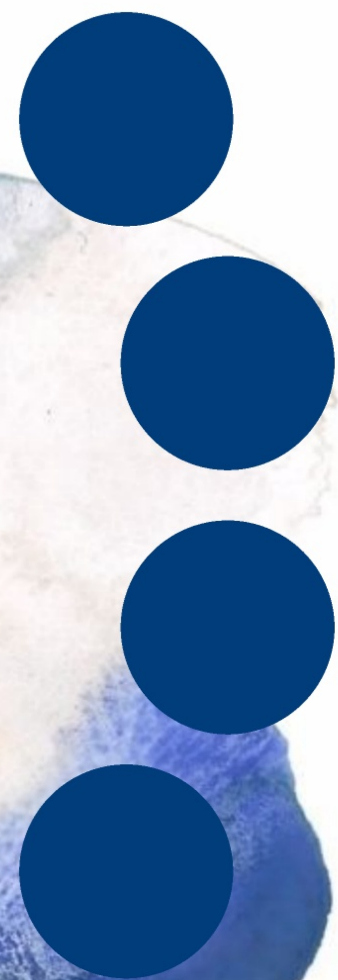
Presented by: ELESHA DALEY
& MADISON BYBLOW



From the Outside Looking in: Putting Toronto Youth Arts Organizations in the Cypher

http://euclidobserver.com/read/2017/08/04/shore-cultural-centre-to-hip-hop-with-funk/photoGallery

How might these organizations function as a cypher for community arts and culture in the non-formal youth arts learning sector of Toronto?



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UNITY

URBAN ARTS
ENGAGING YOUTH THROUGH THE ARTS

URBAN ARTS

ENGAGING YOUTH THROUGH THE ARTS

UNITY

How might these organizations function as a cypher for community arts and culture in the non-formal youth arts learning sector of Toronto?

Big Idea

These two organizations step into the cypher to do something unique for community arts and culture.

They do this through two key ideas

- Knowledge Exchange
- Cultural capital

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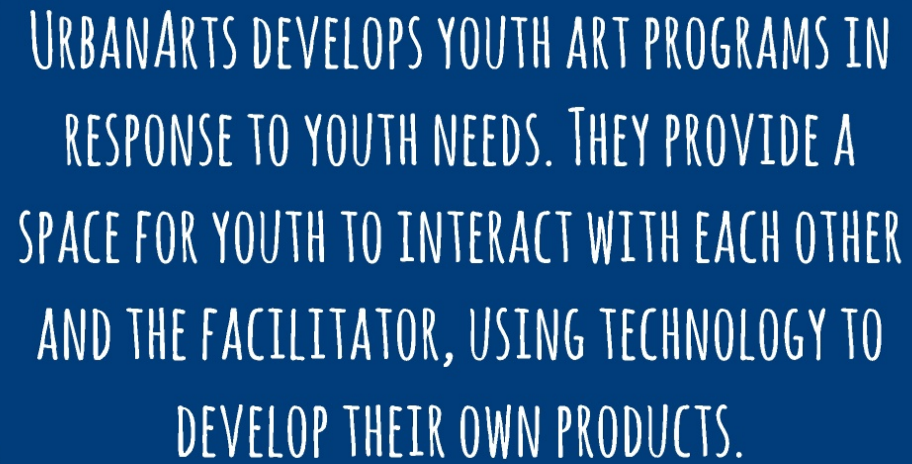
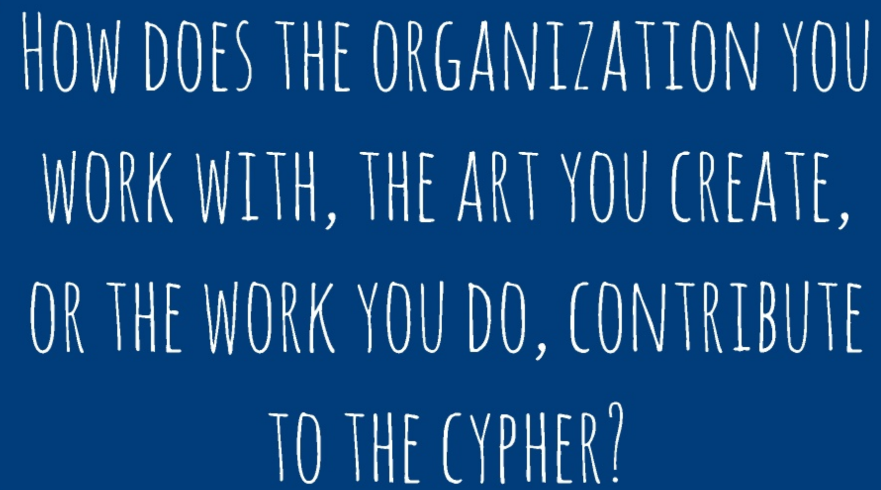
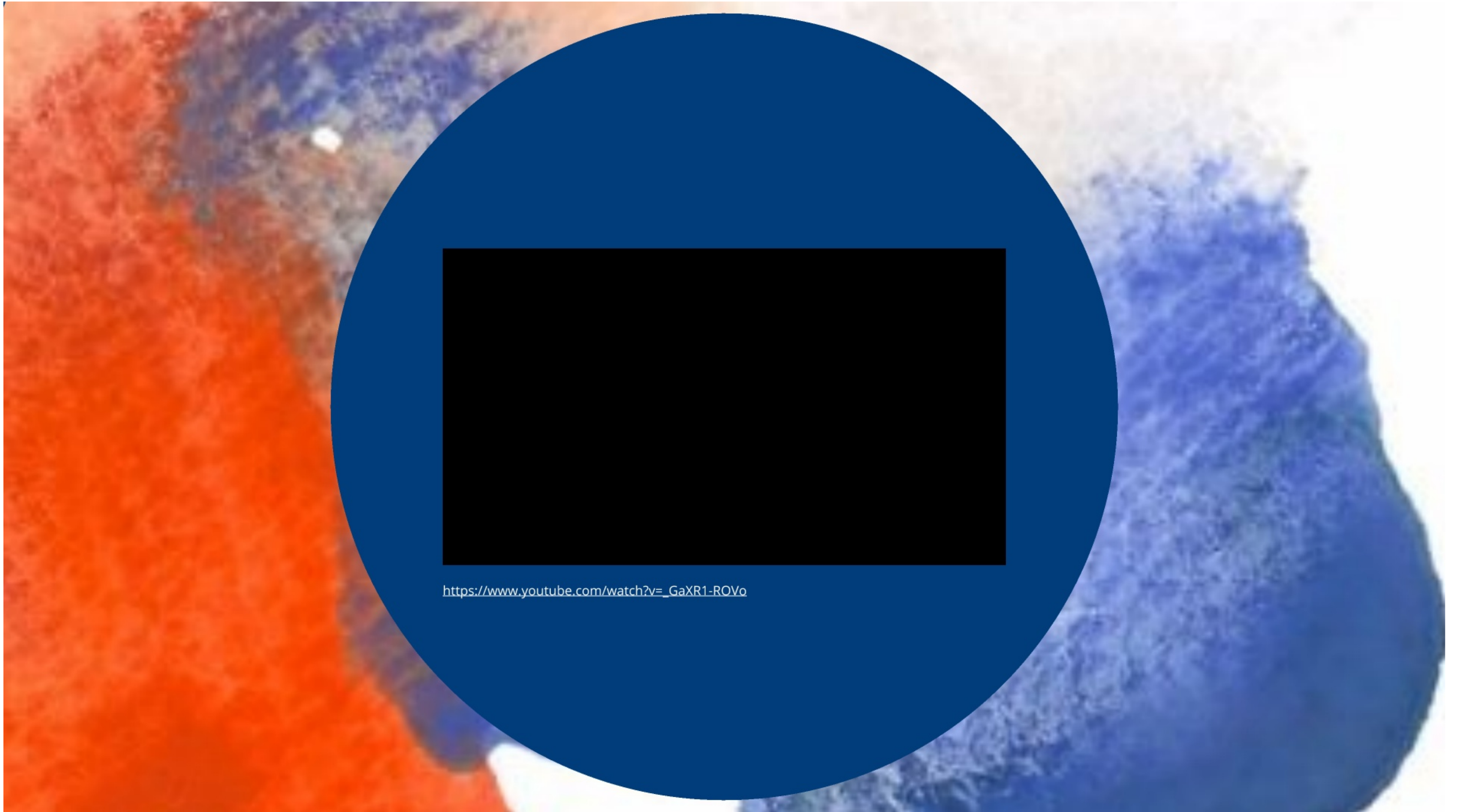
Through the Graffiti Transformation Project, UrbanArts engages youth in reshaping spaces with their own art. Urban arts gives youth a platform to exhibit their art and take accountability for their community spaces by creating murals that represent stories of diversity and community.

UNITY Charity creates spaces where knowledge and experience are exchanged intergenerationally. This removes the teacher/student power dynamic, cultivating a community.


UrbanArts develops youth art programs in response to youth needs. They provide a space for youth to interact with each other and the facilitator, using technology to develop their own products.

- THESE ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDE ART FOR CULTURE BY HELPING PARTICIPANTS DEVELOP CULTURAL CAPITAL SUCH AS MARKETABLE SKILLS.
- THESE ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDE ART FOR COMMUNITY BY ALLOWING A MUTUAL KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AMONG PARTICIPANTS, FACILITATORS, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS.


How does the organization you work with, the art you create, or the work you do, contribute to the cypher?


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GaXR1-ROVo

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GaXR1-ROVo
Presented by: ELESHA DALEY
& MADISON BYBLOW

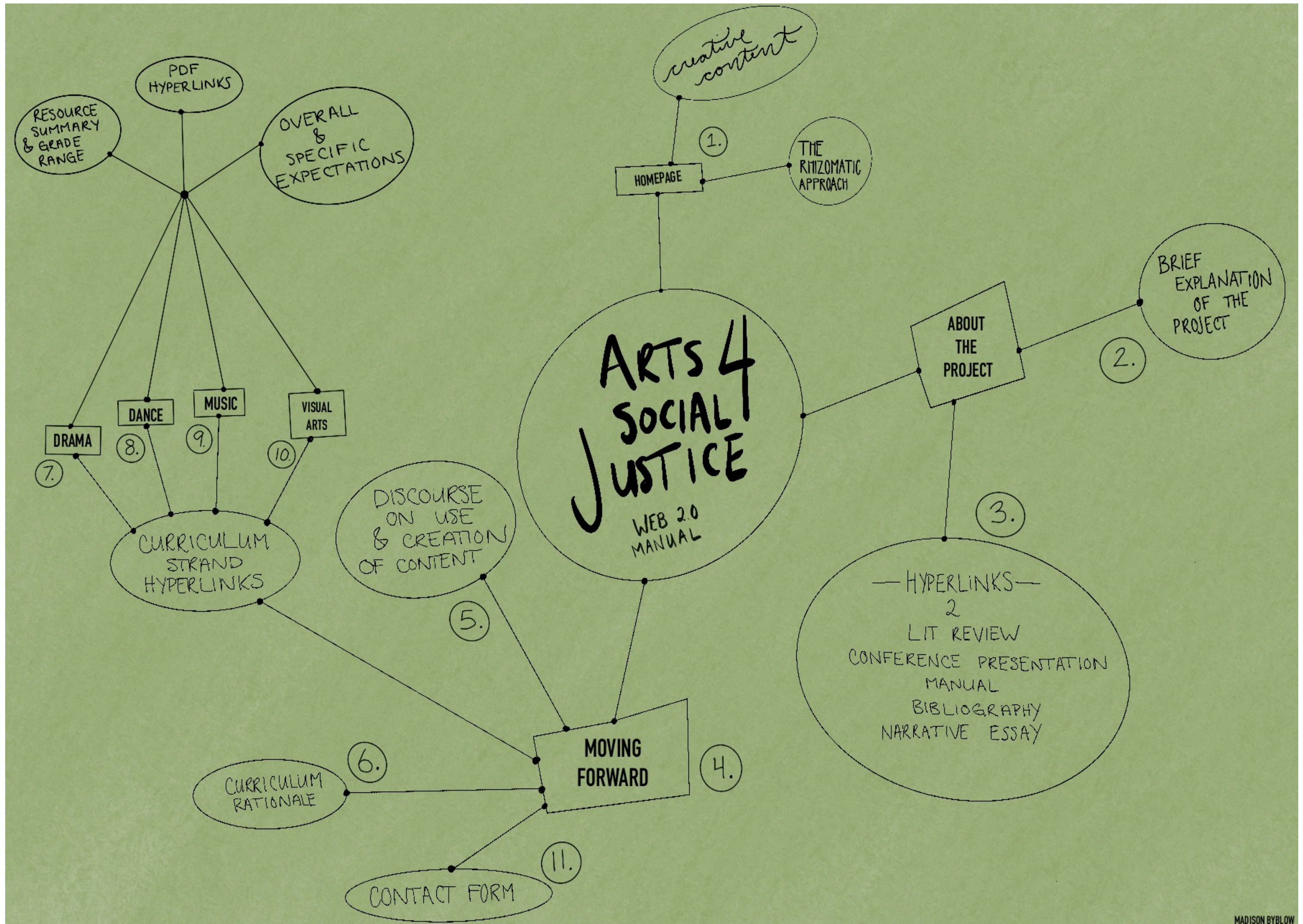
Web 2.0 Manual

Madison Byblow

Lakehead University

Website Map

Please use the following mind map to guide you through reading this website. Starting at number 1, moving through to number 11. Although this process does not have to be linear, this guideline will help you experience the website as it was intended. Feel free to move forwards and backwards as you see fit.



Website Link

https://www.arts4socialjustice.com/

Web 2.0 Manual Bibliography: Arts4SocialJustice

Madison Byblow

Lakehead University

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