

ANIMATED AUTOETHNOGRAPHIES: USING STOP MOTION  
ANIMATION AS A CATALYST FOR SELF-ACCEPTANCE  
IN THE ART CLASSROOM

Jeremy Michael Blair

Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

August 2015

APPROVED:

Laura Evans, Major Professor  
Terry Barrett, Committee Member  
Mary Stokrocki, Committee Member  
Amy Kraehe, Committee Member  
Mickey Abel, Interim Chair of the  
Department of Art Education  
Costas Tsatsoulis, Interim Dean of the  
Toulouse Graduate School

Blair, Jeremy Michael. *Animated Autoethnographies: Using Stop Motion Animation as a Catalyst for Self-Acceptance in the Art Classroom*. Doctor of Philosophy (Art Education), August 2015, 181 pp., 34 figures, references, 329 titles.

As a doctoral student, I was asked to teach a course based on emerging technologies and postmodern methods of inquiry in the field of art education. The course was titled Issues and Applications of Technology in Art Education and I developed a method of inquiry called animated autoethnography for pre-service art educators while teaching this course. Through this dissertation, I describe, analyze, interrogate, value, contextualize, reflect on, and artistically react to the autoethnographic animated processes of five pre-service art educators who were enrolled in the course. I interviewed the five participants before and after the creation of their animated autoethnographies and incorporated actor-network theory within the theoretical analysis to study how the insights of my students' autoethnographies related to my own animations and life narratives. The study also examines animated autoethnography as a method of inquiry that may develop or enhance future teaching practices and encourage empathic connections through researching the self. These selected students created animations that accessed significant life moments, personal struggles, and triumphs, and they exhibited unique representations of self. Pre-service art educators can use self-research to create narrative-based short animations and also use socio-emotional learning to encourage the development of empathy within the classroom. I show diverse student examples, compare them to my own animations, and present a new model of inquiry that encourages the development of self by finding place in chaos, loving the unknown, embracing uncertainty, and turning shame into a celebration of life.

Copyright 2015

by

Jeremy Michael Blair

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I could not have had a better advisor than Dr. Laura Evans. Her scholarship is awe-inspiring, and her constant encouragement and confidence in me as a student, scholar, and future colleague has been forever invaluable to my development as an art educator. Dr. Evans' flexibility and compassion empowered me to create a dissertation I never thought was possible. She has convinced me that research needs to be personal, empathic, cathartic, and imperfect.

In addition to Dr. Evans' mentorship, an amazing committee of world-renowned art educators has supported me. Dr. Terry Barrett, Dr. Mary Stokrocki, and Dr. Amy Kraehe have been immensely influential throughout the duration of this project and my time as a doctoral student at UNT. I hope that my dissertation reflects their impressive careers and links my young career to their lifetime of achievements. I also want to acknowledge the support of Dr. Denise Baxter, who was the chair of the department of art education and art history during my four years as a student at the University of North Texas. Dr. Baxter's candid feedback, openness, and support were essential to my success in the program.

I cannot overemphasize the value of the personal and emotional support others have given me over the last several years, especially my parents, Jeff and Terri Blair, and my future wife, Bevin Butler. My cohort and professors at UNT were integral to establishing the high expectations I needed to thrive in the program. Without their support, I could not have been successful, nor could I have felt comfortable enough to write and design this emotional project.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	vii
PROLOGUE .....	ix
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
Background .....	1
What is an Animated Autoethnography Project?.....	5
Statement of the Problem.....	6
Research Questions and Objectives .....	10
Design of the Study.....	12
Theoretical Framework: Actor-Network Theory.....	15
Context of the Study .....	18
Methods of Data Collection .....	23
Data Analysis .....	32
Significance of the Study .....	35
Limitations of Study .....	38
Review of Literature and Media .....	45
Autoethnography.....	45
Empathy in Art Education .....	49
Animation .....	52
Summary to Literature and Media Review .....	57
Conclusions.....	58
CHAPTER 2 TEACHING ANIMATED AUTOETHNOGRAPHY .....	59
Course Structure and Classroom Practices .....	59
Fusing Animation and Autoethnography.....	61
Animated Autoethnography Assignment Criteria and Lesson .....	63
Initial Teacher Discoveries .....	66
Impact of Student Animations on the Researcher.....	66
Conclusions.....	68

CHAPTER 3 WRITING AND CURATING.....	70
Animated Vignettes .....	70
Curation of Animated Autoethnographies .....	73
Weaving of Participant’s and Researcher’s Animated Works.....	73
CHAPTER 4 ANIMATED AUTOETHNOGRAPHIES.....	75
<i>Monster</i> .....	75
Chris’ Animation: <i>Monster</i> .....	77
Researcher’s Animated Response to <i>Monster</i> .....	83
Applying Actor-Network Theory to <i>Monster</i> .....	86
Forming Self .....	89
<i>Here and Away</i> .....	91
Alex’s Animation: <i>Here and Away</i> .....	92
Researcher’s Animated Response to <i>Here and Away</i> .....	96
Reconstructing Social Spaces .....	100
<i>Bad Choices Aren’t Genetic</i> .....	101
Chelsea’s Animation: <i>Bad Choices Aren’t Genetic</i> .....	102
Researcher’s Animated Response to <i>Bad Choices Aren’t Genetic</i> .....	106
Applying Actor-Network Theory to <i>Bad Choices Aren’t Genetic</i> .....	110
Attentive Living .....	111
<i>Rupture</i> .....	112
Dorothy’s Animation: <i>Rupture</i> .....	113
Researcher’s Animated Response to <i>Rupture</i> .....	117
Applying Actor-Network Theory to <i>Rupture</i> .....	122
Empowered Making.....	123
<i>New in America</i> .....	125
Grace’s Animation: <i>New in America</i> .....	126
Researcher’s Animated Response to <i>New in America</i> .....	130
Applying Actor-Network Theory to <i>New in America</i> .....	134
Not Knowing.....	135
Analysis of Animated Autoethnography Vignettes .....	136
Intersecting Themes .....	137

CHAPTER 5 FINAL FRAMES.....	144
Animated Autoethnography as a Catalyst for Self-Acceptance .....	144
Re-Animating Art Education and Implications for the Field.....	148
Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research.....	152
APPENDIX ANIMATED AUTOETHNOGRAPHIES LESSON PLAN.....	160
REFERENCES .....	167

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
<i>Figure 1.</i> Screen shot of <i>The Day I Held His Hand</i> , Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation, 2012. .....	62
<i>Figure 2.</i> Screen shot of <i>Monster</i> by Chris, Stop motion animation, 2012. ....	78
<i>Figure 3.</i> Screen shot of <i>Monster</i> by Chris, Stop motion animation, 2012. ....	79
<i>Figure 4.</i> Screen shot of <i>Monster</i> by Chris, Stop motion animation, 2012. ....	80
<i>Figure 5.</i> Screen shot of <i>Monster</i> by Chris, Stop motion animation, 2012. ....	81
<i>Figure 6.</i> Screen shot of <i>The Day I Held His Hand</i> , Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation, 2012. .....	85
<i>Figure 7.</i> Screen shot of <i>The Day I Held His Hand</i> , Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation, 2012. .....	85
<i>Figure 8.</i> Screen shot of <i>Here and Away</i> , Alex, Stop motion animation, 2012. ....	92
<i>Figure 9.</i> Screen shot of <i>Here and Away</i> , Alex, Stop motion animation, 2012. ....	94
<i>Figure 10.</i> Screen shot of <i>Here and Away</i> , Alex, Stop motion animation, 2012. ....	95
<i>Figure 11.</i> Screen shot of <i>I Love U to Texas &amp; Back</i> , Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014. .....	97
<i>Figure 12.</i> Screen shot of <i>I Love U to Texas &amp; Back</i> , Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014. .....	98
<i>Figure 13.</i> Screen shot of <i>Bad Choices Aren't Genetic</i> , Chelsea, Stop motion animation. 2012. .....	103
<i>Figure 14.</i> Screen shot of <i>Bad Choices Aren't Genetic</i> , Chelsea, Stop motion animation. 2012. .....	104
<i>Figure 15.</i> Screen shot of <i>Bad Choices Aren't Genetic</i> , Chelsea, Stop motion animation. 2012. .....	105
<i>Figure 16.</i> Screen shot of <i>Civil War</i> , Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014. ....	107
<i>Figure 17.</i> Screen shot of <i>Civil War</i> , Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014. ....	108
<i>Figure 18.</i> Screen shot of <i>Civil War</i> , Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014. ....	109
<i>Figure 19.</i> Screen shot of <i>Rupture</i> , Dorothy, Stop motion animation. 2012. ....	114



<i>Figure 20.</i> Screen shot of <i>Rupture</i> , Dorothy, Stop motion animation. 2012.....	115
<i>Figure 21.</i> Screen shot of <i>Rupture</i> , Dorothy, Stop motion animation. 2012.....	116
<i>Figure 22.</i> Screen shot of <i>Rupture</i> , Dorothy, Stop motion animation. 2012.....	116
<i>Figure 23.</i> Screen shot of <i>Rupture</i> , Dorothy, Stop motion animation. 2012.....	117
<i>Figure 24.</i> Screen shot of <i>Colorblinded</i> , Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014. ....	119
<i>Figure 25.</i> Screen shot of <i>Colorblinded</i> , Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014. ....	120
<i>Figure 26.</i> Screen shot of <i>Colorblinded</i> , Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014. ....	121
<i>Figure 27.</i> Screen shot of <i>New in America</i> , Grace, Stop motion animation, 2012.....	127
<i>Figure 28.</i> Screen shot of <i>New in America</i> , Grace, Stop motion animation, 2012.....	127
<i>Figure 29.</i> Screen shot of <i>New in America</i> , Grace, Stop motion animation, 2012.....	129
<i>Figure 30.</i> Screen shot of <i>New in America</i> , Grace, Stop motion animation, 2012.....	129
<i>Figure 31.</i> Screen shot of <i>Ziggy Artdust the Art Teacher from Mars</i> , Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014.....	131
<i>Figure 32.</i> Screen shot of <i>Ziggy Artdust the Art Teacher from Mars</i> , Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014.....	131
<i>Figure 33.</i> Screen shot of <i>My Life</i> , Dustin, Video Game Design. 2015. ....	158
<i>Figure 34.</i> Screen shot of <i>The Day I Held His Hand</i> , Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2012. ....	159

## PROLOGUE

I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder when I was 19 years old. I aggressively pursued years of psychotherapy, electroshock therapy, art therapy, and psychiatric medications to reassemble my broken life. Many relationships ended and rumors spread as I gained 100 pounds within a year and lost the trust of my family, friends, and self. A year earlier, I was happy and beautiful. I was a senior in high school, the assistant captain of the varsity ice hockey team, an accomplished artist (for a 17-year-old), and an honor roll student at a competitive school in Fairfield, Ohio. But a sudden shift in my brain chemistry that year turned my last few months of high school into a confusing and chaotic period filled with emotional tantrums, uncontrollable weeping, delusions of grandeur, and fear.

After high school graduation, I quickly ballooned up to 260 pounds due to taking Depakote, a drug to control seizures and stabilize mood. The weight gain caused stretch marks that wrapped around my stomach, love handles, and upper arms, and a lack of sleep painted deep blue circles under my eyes. I could sleep for 20 hours straight and eat what seemed like an endless amount of food. My girlfriend of two years broke up with me because of my self-hatred and neglectful behaviors; I quit my rock band, stopped exercising, and dreaded looking my parents in the eyes. My physical changes led to me covering all the mirrors in my parents' house with brown packing paper and avoiding friends and family who were once the foundation of my life.

As overwhelming as the physical changes were, they were at least tangible, unlike the avalanche of emotions that submerged my days in irrational hopelessness and erratic fits of crying and self-loathing. Instead of attending classes or enrolling in my first year of college, I

stayed home eating my feelings, going to therapy appointments, and scheming ways to escape from myself. I would also grab the fat rolls that hung over my beltline and scream as I dug my nails into my flesh. The actual number on the scale was less of an issue than the inability to control my weight, which affected most elements of my life. During the day, while my parents were working, I would shamefully sneak to the basement and choke myself with the black plastic cord to my electric guitar, or I would repeatedly punch myself in the chin trying to knock myself unconscious. These upper-cuts to my own jaw progressed to sucking on the barrels of my father's antique guns, somehow remaining sensible enough to not pull the trigger. Experiencing physical pain distracted me from my mental instability and gave me a sense of relief.

After months of struggling with the day-to-day process of living with manic depression, I quickly left the blackness of my depression and entered the world of mania. My doctors had warned me about mania, but I had neither fully experienced nor understood it until October 2001. On that day, I wrote a letter to my parents on a piece of college-ruled notebook paper. I still have the letter today in a shoebox in my closet in Athens, Georgia, but I have never unfolded it or reread it. From what I can remember, the letter shared my disappointment with myself and explained just how embarrassed I was to be Jeremy. After the note was penned, I folded it tightly and tucked it into the front chest pocket of my navy blue t-shirt. I left the house that day, telling my father that I was going to the local record store. I got in my 1989 Chevy Cavalier and drove to the Ace Hardware store three miles from my house. I walked in, feeling clear and poised, and purchased 2 pounds of rodent poison pellets and a Diet Coke. I read the label while sitting in my car and discovered that animals that ingest this product will most likely die from internal bleeding. I buckled up and drove to my favorite park: Harbin Park, in Fairfield, Ohio. I parked in a familiar lot near a spot where I had created many great memories. I did not realize it at the

time, but parking in that exact spot led to deep reflection and much-needed change. I opened the box of poison and rubbed a few green pellets between my fingers, then grabbed a handful and stuffed them in my face. They tasted like industrial chemicals, so I washed them down with Diet Coke. I cried and screamed and prayed as I ate the entire box.

Memories of my past life emerged throughout the hour-long feast. I remembered those earlier times at the park—looking up at the stars while holding my girlfriend’s hand; lighting cheap fireworks in the field close to the parking lot. These memories had been dormant due to medications, shifts in brain chemistry, and the blinders I had chosen to wear for an entire year. My gut rumbled, and the reality of my actions dawned. I ran to a nearby construction site and asked a worker to call 911 on his cell phone. I sat on his tailgate ashamed. The ambulance arrived within 10 minutes. The life squad called my father, and he arrived just as I was being loaded into the back. The look on his face is something I can never forget. My father looked at me while listening to the paramedics and scanning the scene. It was a look of disappointment, failure, anger, fear, but also unconditional love. His look was not a reaction to my suicide attempt; rather, his face reflected his own bewilderment, his not knowing how to support me even though he had been overly proactive and supportive throughout my struggles. As the hospital nurses pumped my stomach, my father stood by my side, holding my hand the entire time, displaying his faith in my ability to overcome. My father’s specific moments of support on that day became just as integral to my recovery as the therapy, medication, and years of treatment. The incident at the park was, sadly, only one of many life events between 2001 and 2004, but today, the physical and mental weight is gone, and the scars from my stretch marks map my journeys, revealing a new culture of self.

It is difficult to narratively relive these moments of struggle and self-abuse, but revisiting them with purpose has been important to my growth as an educator. Becoming a visual arts educator after many episodes of mania and depression has helped me to contextualize that pain and hardship into learning and appreciation. The field of art education and the methodologies and practices that exist within its umbrella most often embrace strife and hardship and provide a way either to escape or to embrace those experiences through making, investigating, or experiencing. In this dissertation, I describe, analyze, interrogate, value, contextualize, reflect on, and artistically react to the autoethnographic processes of five pre-service art educators. They accessed culturally constructed fears, investigated moments of childhood, and exhibited unique representations of self. The diverse student examples in this dissertation showcase how art educators can use self-inquiry to encourage the development of self by finding place in chaos, loving the unknown, embracing uncertainty, and turning shame into a celebration of life.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In this first chapter, I revisit the origins of this study and investigate how it matured from a raw creative spark to an experimental assignment, to a published pilot study, and finally into this doctoral dissertation. I also investigate the study's background, dimensions, problems, questions, objectives, and architecture. To conclude this first chapter, I posit the potential significance of this study and discuss the limitations of animated autoethnography as a form of qualitative inquiry in the field of art education.

#### Background

In 2011, I was asked to design and teach a course based on emerging digital technologies and postmodern methods of inquiry at the University of North Texas. The university course was titled Issues and Applications of Technology in Art Education, and a goal of the course was to encourage students to investigate themselves and others through art-making and digital and connective technologies. Based on my earlier experiences with animated research, I developed a method of arts-based inquiry for pre-service art educators that I called animated autoethnography. These art education students created stop motion animations using small objects, children's toys, and their bodies and investigated moments of childhood and exhibited unique representations of self through animation. The animated autoethnography project revolves around a primary autoethnographic self-research question and establishes stop motion animation as an artistic vehicle for qualitative research.

Because the 22 students in my class were too many to focus on for this dissertation, I chose five exemplary student works to examine and use as examples for this study of empathy

and stop motion animation. Prior to further explaining my methods, I establish how I define autoethnography. The way I use autoethnography is to view it as a method of qualitative research that merges autobiography and ethnography and provides a self-reflexive way of knowing that attempts to break away from the confines of disciplinary constraints, which is in line with many other established theorists on the method, such as Reed-Danahay (1997); Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2010); Bennett (2004); Ellis and Bochner (2000); Griffiths (2011); Humphreys (2005); Ellis (1997); and Duncan (2004). I was exposed to autoethnographic methods during my doctoral course work, and in it I recognized an increased level of critical reflexive dialogue in my own studies and related art works, similar to the observations about it that Griffiths (2011) made. As described in the prologue, I started to combine the narrative-based vulnerabilities celebrated in autoethnography into my own stop motion animated works. Additionally, as a former high school art teacher, I specialized in teaching stop motion animation and many other technology-based modes of expression, so possibilities and opportunities for merging these interests appealed to me from the start.

Aside from establishing the way that I use the term autoethnography, I also identify two central resources for this study. The first is Anniina Suominen Guyas' (2003) dissertation, *Writing with Photographs, Re-Constructing Self: An Arts-Based Autoethnographic Inquiry*, and the second is Olivia Gude's (2007) article "Principles of Possibility: Considerations for a 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Art and Culture." Guyas' (2003) dissertation was an exploration of her cultural identity and self-perceptions, concentrating on the intersections of art and qualitative research. Her photography-based self-research advanced the methodology of arts-based autoethnography in the field of art education. Because stop motion animation consists of a sequence of individual

photographs (Gambrell, 2011), Guyas's photographic research provides a framework for exploring and developing the autoethnographic possibilities of stop motion animation.

Olivia Gude's work informed art educators on managing art classroom practices within an ever-changing postmodern world. She looked to connect teachers and students of all backgrounds with several core principles that can help embrace difference and community and make connecting with self and others a vital objective for the field of art education. Gude's postmodern possibilities for art education include play, forming self, investigating community, empowered making, encountering difference, empowered experiencing, attentive living, deconstructing culture, believing, reconstructing social spaces, and not knowing. She accompanies all of these themes with specific methods, resources, and examples from contemporary artists to support teachers' using a new approach to instruction. I seek to utilize and reflect many of these postmodern possibilities by combining reflexive inquiry, digital technologies, narrative inquiry, and empathy-based approaches to inquiry, art-making, and instruction through this study on animated autoethnography. All of the possibilities identified by Gude (2007) reflect the recent visual culture paradigm shift in art education that embraces the expression and inquiry of self and others through diverse implementations, which have been characterized by Freedman (2003), Keifer-Boyd (2005), Gregory (2009), Buckingham (2007), Delacruz (2009b), Evans (2011), Hall (2012), Gude (2000, 2012, 2013), and Hardy (2009). Art-making can be used with students to further develop their emotions and intellect (Gude, 2007). Art can help students discover who they are and who they might become. Art-making reflects a student's complex social identity and media consumption. But, according to Gude (2007), "unfortunately, many projects in art classrooms do not actually promote expanded self-awareness because students are directed to illustrate or symbolize known aspects of self-identity"



(p. 8). Although many art teachers use personal symbolism in projects, that practice promotes a more narrow and limited comprehension of identity. Using materials like magazine clippings, for example, also limits their self-investigation because students are limited in choice and are forced to use images they may not relate to, thus precluding some elements of self from emerging. Gude (2007), in contrast, suggests that teachers should ask students to “reveal the real you” through art. She wants students to reveal the hidden elements of self that might be masked by social constraints, arguing that reflecting and recalling life experiences would most likely provide more authentic insight into self. Additionally, she suggests that students can reconstruct memories of spaces from childhood, creatively depict a least-liked body part, or illustrate their identities with desired objects. Through implementing various types of investigative and reconstructive projects, students have choices and might understand self-origins.

My initial objective in designing the animated autoethnography assignment for my students was to discover if stop motion animation could be effectively used as a medium for self-research that pushes pre-service educators to create works that investigate self and connect to the emerging postmodern and digital paradigm shifts in art education. The combination of autoethnography and animation appealed to my students and inspired works that went beyond my expectations. Animation fused with autoethnography excited my students and produced compelling works and rich classroom discussions. Students enjoyed learning a new medium, taking risks, and revealing elements of self to their peers. Students discovered a newly found excitement for research and looked to add methods of autoethnography to their past projects and lessons. The animated autoethnography project quickly became the flagship assignment for AEAH 3770/5767 and the animated works created inspired me to design this study.

## What is an Animated Autoethnography Project?

The animated autoethnography project revolves around a primary self-research question and uses stop motion animation as an artistic vehicle for the research. This research method helps artists and art educators understand the impact on the self of a given personal experience, prompting the subject to use animation to investigate answers to his or her self-research questions. The formal applied requirements for the assignment are to post a detailed proposal with research questions on the class blog, draft a self-narrative and create an animation that addresses the research question, post a thoughtful reflection blog entry reviewing all processes, and present the finished animation to the class.

Theoretically, since most students have not previously attempted this type of animated, arts-based, and/or reflexive inquiry, they might be surprised to learn that research can move beyond observations, interviews, and statistics by looking inward at the vulnerable self (Ellis, 2002; Griffiths, 2011). But, after a brief overview of autoethnographic theory and practices, most students are able to embrace art-making, personal narrative, and emotion as viable data (Barone and Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2009). Students soon realize that art and personal experience can be, and should be, viewed as valuable data. These classroom-teaching experiences led me to collect a set of thoughtful self-research questions my students designed for their animations. Examples of these questions include:

- Which one of my socially constructed flaws do I embrace?
- What was the happiest day of my life?
- What makes me feel most vulnerable?
- If my memory were erased tomorrow, what would I want to relive?

Once students establish their own research question, they draft a narrative that will be animated through various stop motion animation techniques. Stop motion animation forces the artist to break the story down sensitively and to dissect a personal narrative into minute fragments and subtle moments (Purves, 2008; Furniss, 2008; Wells, 2006; Harryhausen and Dalton, 2008). I require the students to use at least three different animation techniques throughout the film to add diversity and promote experimentation. Most students are novice animators at the beginning and have no background in animation, but they learn quickly. The stop motion animation techniques that I formally demonstrate in class include whiteboard animation, pixilation, claymation, object manipulation, and puppet animation, all of which can be executed with a low budget and limited resources. Students often gravitate toward specific techniques, and some even innovate their own. All students use common point-and-shoot digital cameras for image capturing and iMovie video editing software for animating, editing frames, adding titles, and syncing music.

### Statement of the Problem

Most pre-service art educators in the United States are being trained to teach art for a formal normative public school environment, and this type of school is often limited in creative expression and artistic spaces of dialogue (Nieto, 2007; Fehr, Fehr, and Keifer-Boyd, 2000; Sumara et al., 2006; Eisner, 1998a; Olson, 2009; Galbraith, 1995; Crowther, 2003; Kim, 2009). This is not at all unusual—all organizations, whether they are businesses, schools, churches, or social clubs, have a normative order (Kim, 2009), and within this order is a system with its own set of rules and expectations. Kim (2009) contended that American school systems are not only broken but also outdated, and they no longer have the capability to adopt new, postmodern approaches to instruction and inquiry. This idea is taken up in the acclaimed Davis Guggenheim

documentary *Waiting for Superman* (2010), which dissects the normative system of public education in the United States and highlights the valiant efforts of frustrated administrators, educators, and parents who are developing new ways to educate underprivileged and overlooked students. Guggenheim also depicts the unpreparedness of many new teachers, which he claims greatly affects the current educational system, hobbling students' development and wasting millions of dollars in funding.

Furthermore, pre-service art educators in the United States are being trained to enter these types of normalized schools, but I can attest, based my personal experience working in a public school district and becoming a teacher educator, that pre-service art teachers are not being well prepared mentally and emotionally for the difficult tasks ahead of them (Pio, 2000; Connors, 2000; Delacruz, 2000). Normative school structures like tracking, ability grouping, standardized testing, and social stratification can restrict the powerful potential of art and inquiry in the classroom and can cause pre-service teachers to disengage from contemporary and progressive art educational scholarship (Weitz and Suggs, 2000; Check, 2000; Galbraith, 1995; Eisner, 1998a; Stokrocki, 1995a; Kim, 2009; Olson, 2009; Robson, Sumara, and Luce-Kapler, 2011; Sumara et al., 2006; Nieto, 2007). And, although I am quite confident in my pre-service students' skills in art-making and curriculum development at the University of North Texas, I also argue that innovation and rigor is needed concerning their experiences with reflective and reflexive thinking and teaching practices. Reflective thinking is similar to critical thinking and refers to the internal processes of analyzing and judging a specific experience, behavior, or outcome (Halpern, 1996). Philosopher John Dewey (1933) suggests that reflective thinking is an active, persistent, and careful consideration of a belief that supports that knowledge. Reflection is a state of mind and an ongoing practice for educators, not an activity or technique (Bolton, 2010).

Reflective thinking is a practice that enables educators to learn from personal experiences, creative works, relationships, and the cultures surrounding them (Bolton, 2010).

I view reflexivity as a deeper layer of reflective practices. Reflexivity finds and invents strategies that question our own attitudes, assumptions, and processes to better understand ourselves in relation to others (Bolton, 2010). Reflexivity can be used to counter our own biases, acknowledge limitations, and raise awareness of marginalizing practices that may be hidden in many circumstances (Cunliffe, 2009; Bolton, 2010). Learning reflective and reflexive skills before pre-service art educators actually start teaching in a classroom might help young teachers learn from experience and grow as professionals.

Like Mary Stokrocki (1995b), I have personally observed a lack of critical reflexive dialogue in my pre-service students the last couple of years, which adds tension to learning and restricts students from absorbing new and complex teaching concepts. More and more, experienced teachers in the field of art education are recognizing this dilemma and are adding various types of reflective and reflexive practices into teacher education programs (Susi, 1995; Griffiths, 2011; Gude, 2000; La Jevic and Springgay, 2008; Cole and Knowles, 2000; Duarte, 2007; Check, 2000; Miller and Williams, 2013; Mantas and Di Rezze, 2011; Overby, 2009; Thornton, 2005; Bain, 2004; Delacruz, 2011; Stokrocki, 1995a).

Similarly, I have noticed the ability of select students to recite quotes from legendary art educators John Dewey (1934) and Elliot Eisner (1998a), for example, but the same pre-service teachers struggle to express why they want to become teachers or how they will address an unruly student. Some knowledge of and answers to these issues come with teaching experience, but as I dug deeper, I found that many pre-service students had rarely been asked to reflect on formative experiences, confess fears, or openly communicate their flaws with their own

instructors or peers. However, with the animated autoethnography assignment, I quickly realized that my pre-service teachers were choosing to investigate and animate life episodes that had been buried for years. By researching, animating, and ultimately accepting these fears, histories, emotions, and experiences, my pre-service teachers were able to connect with self and others more effectively; also, they seemed to be interested in how to incorporate deep and meaningful elements of life into their future classrooms. Many pre-service students stated that this type of self-research and reflective activity did not exist in their K-12 art classroom experiences, and they wished they had been exposed to it earlier.

After many students created and presented their animated works in class, I observed boosts in their overall confidence. In many cases, students confessed that they accepted themselves and embraced self after they shared their animated autoethnographies. Observing their personal growth through practicing autoethnography led me to wonder if self-acceptance could be a key component to the future success of an art teacher.

Legendary art educator, Viktor Lowenfeld established that self-acceptance was foundational to an art student's development and stated that making art bridges the inner and outer world: "Through the experience of the self, the individual gains contact and connection with the environment, which can bring him out of his isolation" (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1987, p. 146). Lowenfeld and Brittain also add that "acceptance of the individual self ultimately leads to true self-expression" (p. 115) and believe that students who discover self and a positive inner voice can fully engage in others in the classroom.

Before I started this study, I read Lowenfeld's words in the context of a teacher seeking knowledge about their much younger students, but after teaching at the university level, I have realized that Lowenfeld's discoveries also resonate with my adult pre-service art education

students. I agree that individuals who discover self through art and have a positive inner voice can fully engage in others in the classroom, especially if that individual is the teacher. Ballengee-Morris and Stuhr (2001) advocate for the importance of self-reflection stating that recognizing ones socio-cultural identity and personal biases makes it easier to understand the cultural identity of others. Art educator Rebecca Plummer Rohloff (2008) also supports self-awareness and self-acceptance and adds that awareness of self encourages the development of a unique, diverse, and life-giving culture.

Understanding and discovering self in order to connect with others is the foundational objective to this study and has been an internal need of mine ever since my major medical incidents. I believe that self-acceptance is a key component to understanding and empathizing with students and that pre-service art educators can use vehicles like animated autoethnography to investigate and re-animate elements of self that may lead to personal evolutions and acceptance of self. I aim to provide evidence that animated autoethnographies have led my study participants to self-acceptance and that their newly found self will inspire them to empathically connect with their future K-12 students.

### Research Questions and Objectives

My interests in animating and narratively researching significant life experiences come from living through intense situations involving my personal health that directly constructed my present identity. I want to use my dissertation to encourage art educators to use art, animation, and autoethnography to voice, express, and learn from the study of self. I am using this project as a way to share my own life and to make space for others (Evans, 2011). I am using my personal knowledge of bipolar disorder and other life situations to interpret the animations created by the

five participants from my recovered perspective. I believe that my words, along with the words and works of the participants, will reflect the need for more empathy and emotional connection in contemporary education. I want this dissertation to offer a model for pre-service art education programs. I want this research to help prepare young teachers to be able to share their lives with their future students and I believe that empathy and communication need to be the new foundations of classrooms and teaching practices, especially in a climate of standardized education. This dissertation is strong evidence that the field of art education can and should lead the way to more effective teaching, because we can deeply connect with students in ways that other fields have yet to discover.

For this study, my central questions are as follows: Is animated autoethnography an effective way to express and research the self in an art education classroom? Can conducting self-research through animated autoethnography lead to self-acceptance in pre-service art educators? Investigating and answering these questions will add validity and purpose to the compelling animated works created for this study and will hopefully inspire future adaptations and interpretations of arts-based autoethnography for the field of art education. In addition to these central questions, I need to address several sub-questions:

- In what ways does animated autoethnography build upon and separate itself from traditionally written autoethnography?
- How can creating, viewing, and sharing animated autoethnographies encourage, enhance, and/or develop empathy in the classroom community?
- In what ways does expressing experiences and elements of self through animation reflect postmodern directions in art education?

The research questions listed above narrow the purpose of this study and create a guide for the reader. Like most qualitative researchers, I am asking a set of central questions and several sub questions that support and investigate the intersecting themes of the study



(Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007). Throughout this study, I illuminate new contexts and ask questions that help me understand the participant's processes and self-discoveries. I explore, describe, and share myself openly and invite my participants to present their ideas and life experiences parallel to my own in order to build community and connection.

### Design of the Study

In this section, I present in detail the qualitative blue print of this study. The foundational components of this study include the self-research methodology of arts-based autoethnography, the theoretical framework of actor-network theory, and my methods of data collection, which include animation and art criticism. I also describe my approach to data analysis and how this design of study provides direction and systematizes my research.

#### Research Methodology: Arts-Based Autoethnography

The central research methodology for this study is arts-based autoethnography. Arts-based autoethnography is an interpretation of autoethnography that encourages the researcher to explore self and culture through art-making processes and artistic mediums in lieu of or in addition to written narrative. I chose this emerging methodology because the hybridity of arts-based research and autoethnography reflects the field of art education and promotes postmodern reflexive thought in art educators (Alexenberg, 2008; Smith-Shank, and Keifer-Boyd, 2007; Eisner, 2006; Cahnmann-Taylor and Siegesmund, 2008). Arts-based autoethnographic texts appear in a number of forms and can be crafted as short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, artworks in various media, musical compositions, reflective journals, films, digital and hypermedia works, and performances (Bickel, 2005; Spry, 2001; Smith-Shank and Keifer-Boyd, 2007; Suominen Guyas, 2007; Robinson-Cseke, 2006; Morawski and Irwin, 2008;

Eisenhauer, 2010; Ownby, 2013; Lammer, 2009; Murthy, 2008; Powell, 2010; Dicks et al., 2005).

Arts-based research relies on several core concepts that set it apart from traditional methods of quantitative and qualitative research (Barone and Eisner, 2012; Cahnmann-Taylor and Siegesmund, 2008). Animated autoethnography is a form of art-based autoethnography that mirrors the arts-based research guidelines published by Barone and Eisner (2012):

- Humans have invented a variety of forms of representation to describe and understand the world
- The purpose of arts-based research is to raise questions and start conversations
- Arts-based research can capture meanings that traditional measurements cannot
- For arts-based research to advance, teachers will need to diversify instruction and teach methods of art-making and inquiry beyond the canon
- Arts-based research is not just for artists, actors, musicians, and arts educators
- Arts-based research is not meant to replace other methods of inquiry but to enhance and diversify available methods
- Arts-based research must utilize the specific expressive properties of an art medium

Arts-based autoethnography fuses art-making and research to reveal new knowledges that are not typically accessed through standard qualitative research (Minge, 2006). Art can reveal an artist's perceptions and feelings, but the viewer of the art might also recognize his or her own (Bochner and Ellis, 2003). I am implementing and interpreting arts-based autoethnography to investigate self through art-making in order to better understand my students, self, and the interworkings of the animated method I am developing.

The animated autoethnography method is founded on the design of a primary self-research question that each participant independently develops. The question must investigate a significant life moment, illuminate an element of self or culture, or reflect on a significant

relationship that has influenced one's conceptions of self. Drafting a question is often the most difficult component of the method. Most students were unfamiliar with autoethnography and had never investigated self through research, so I consult with each student to help them perfect their questions. Participants draft a short written narrative that investigates their question once a thoughtful and precise question is established. Students then gather various art and animation materials and create a stop motion animation that investigates their self-research question. The key is for participants to actively investigate and seek answers and connections through the animation process and not solely illustrate their written narrative. Most of my pre-service students fully understood the difference between exploring self and culture through arts-based autoethnography versus creating an illustrated narrative. Those students that exemplified the method presented amazing findings and discoveries of self and community and the students that did not fully implement the method, and fell into illustration, presented entertaining and aesthetically pleasing animations that often lacked connection to self and the classroom community. Additional formal requirements for the animated autoethnography method are to post a detailed proposal with research questions on the class blog, post a thoughtful reflection blog entry reviewing all processes, and present the finished animation to the class.

Students gravitated toward specific animation techniques that I presented in an earlier lesson and some even innovated their own hybrid animation techniques to best fit their autoethnographies. I required them to use at least three animation techniques throughout the film in order to add diversity and promote experimentation. Utilizing this arts-based autoethnographic method has led me to discover the unique qualities and charms of stop motion animation. The basic process and nature of stop motion animation forces the artist to sensitively break the story down and dissect a personal narrative into minute fragments and subtle moments (Furniss, 2007,

2008; Purves, 2008, 2010; B. Wells, 2011; P. Wells, 2006). Re-animating life experiences one frame at a time through stop motion animation can lead to the discovery of integral details and cultural connections that may go unnoticed if one was utilizing a different artistic medium.

The broad aim of the animated autoethnography methodology is for pre-service art educators to actively investigate self through art-making to better connect with and empathize with self and others. By studying my life, and the lives of my participants, through animated autoethnography, I have gained a complex understanding of the changes in my self-perception caused by life-altering traumatic events and past struggles with mental illness. My growth as an educator has been exponential since I adopted an arts-based autoethnographic lens when investigating the most significant and vulnerable moments of my life. Before I was introduced to arts-based autoethnography, I purposely separated my personal life from my life as a teacher, but autoethnography has exposed just how intertwined my life experiences and teaching practices really are. I chose to re-interpret arts-based autoethnography to include stop motion animation as the central medium so that digital natives might intrinsically explore self through a digital medium and so that these autoethnographies would be filled with elements of time, space, emotion, place, and empathy.

#### Theoretical Framework: Actor-Network Theory

In this study, I explore the applicability of actor-network theory (ANT), a recent paradigm of social theory, to investigate the social impact and the relationships formed by the animated autoethnography class project. ANT has been utilized across a plethora of academic disciplines, including art history, art education, museum studies, anthropology, business, education, sociology, psychology, and medicine (Law and Hassard, 1999; Fenwick, 2010;

Fenwick and Edwards, 2012; Tillander, 2008; Latour, 2005). I use the lens of ANT to study the interrelationships among students, teachers, and animations, and I attempt to qualitatively measure how these relationships have developed and changed while creating animations and viewing the animated works of others.

Further, ANT extends ethnography by allowing the analysis of both humans and technologies through a single register, avoiding the need to consider one as context for the other (Tillander, 2008). Through ANT, my definitions and preconceived notions of self will not overshadow the importance of the animated works. For example, Latour (2005) stated that it is common for social researchers to study face-to-face interactions with human beings, but relationships among humans are being constantly intervened in and influenced by objects, so the study of people and networks often involves human-mediated objects. My relationships with the students selected for this study changed drastically after I viewed their animations, so the animations need to have equal representation in the classroom network.

The key actors in this specific adaption of actor-network theory are the study participants, their animated autoethnographies and processes, the instructor and researcher, the animated autoethnographies I created, and the classroom community. Actor-network theory privileges objects as critical agents in creating, sustaining, and extending social ties (Fenwick and Edwards, 2012; Fenwick, 2010; Latour, 2005; Law and Hassard, 1999). Actor-network theory offers this study a model for capturing the dynamic underlying classroom interdependencies among my students, their animated artworks, and myself the teacher. Through ANT, I studied the reciprocal ties that bonded my network of students, participants, and animated autoethnographic works. By using actor-network theory, I was able to grant the animated works featured in this study equal importance to the people that created them.

Actor-network theory and arts-based autoethnography can combine and collaborate to identify and study human and non-human nodes in my classroom network. For example, ANT can be used to examine the relationship between the student participant (human actor) and the digital camera (non-human actor) being used to capture the individual frames of the animation. The interaction and relationship between the camera and the participant is significant in most animated autoethnographies and evidence of this relationship can be seen in the overall craftsmanship of the animation and even how the participant chooses to document or represent themselves with the camera. Some participants truly act and perform in front of the camera for the animations and others completely avoid being captured on screen and invent other ways of representation. Non-human actors, like cameras or especially computers, can affect and change the established classroom networks and human behaviors. Through ANT, I examined the moment when I introduced basic animation practices with a digital camera to my students and how the introduction of a technology can alter the classroom. Even though it might not be obvious, rich data did emerge when students held cameras and experimented with animation in class for the first time. Some participants were frustrated and rejected the initial introduction of animation; others became co-instructors and voluntarily helped their peers to understand the animation process. Many participants were able to instantly use the camera and the medium of animation as an investigate tool but many others had little experience with technology and were not able to fully engage in the project until they became much more accumulated. I would have never realized these intricacies and behaviors without utilizing ANT in my study.

I also chose actor-network theory as my theoretical framework because my research questions require me to have a meticulous understanding of the interworkings of my classroom network, an awareness of the empathetic relationships built within that network, and the ability

to dissect specific life events that participants and myself may be exploring through arts-based autoethnography. I want to fully understand why and how these animations were so profound to the classroom community and myself and how I could apply animated autoethnography in other contexts to build connection and empathy to self and other.

### Context of the Study

The focus of this study is on the relationships and connections between and among the personal animations I created and the animated works of five student participants from the 2012–2013 school year. These students were once enrolled in the course I taught and designed titled AEAH 3770/5767 Issues and Applications of Technology in Art Education at the University of North Texas in Denton, TX. The criteria for selecting the participants of this study were established through communal classroom nominations, student engagement, and voluntary student participation. Each student animation was created under my guidance and fully met the requirements for the animated autoethnography assignment at the time of its creation.

During the initial pilot study for this dissertation in 2012 (Blair, 2014), I invited all 22 of my students to participate in the study, but I quickly realized that 22 participants were going to produce too much data for an autoethnographic study. Instead of randomly selecting or handpicking participants, I decided to utilize the classroom community as a data-gathering instrument in order to focus the study and define the participant criteria through community nomination. When I published the pilot study (Blair, 2014) for this dissertation the journal editor urged me to focus my data and findings and suggested that I remove several participants from the study to add clarity and direction. I took their advice and reduced the number of participants by deleting multiple pages of text and streamlining my discoveries. The final article (Blair, 2014)

included only three participants and was clear and focused. For this much larger and detailed study, I decided to expand the participants to five which felt much more manageable and intimate than the entire class, but still large enough to produce diverse results.

To discover the five participants, I closely observed the classroom community as students presented their autoethnographic animations and took notes on how the community collectively reacted to each animated work. Their reactions and insights to student animations led me to create a list of criteria for inclusion in this study. My dissertation committee member, Dr. Kraehe, coined the term “community nomination” during conversations leading up to my oral defense, which seemed to encapsulate the concept perfectly. Classroom observations I recorded while watching the classroom community react to the animations included various emotional reactions, turning away from the screen, tears, gasps, apparent boredom, doodling, and verbal feedback and questioning. I used these reactions to determine the level of engagement the animation sparked within the classroom community. The more engaged the community was with an animation; the more votes I gave it for inclusion in this study. If a student in the audience cried while watching another student’s animation I made a detailed note. If a group of students was not watching an animation and were preoccupied with checking their email during the presentation I made a note too. The more engaged the classroom community was with a specific animation the more intriguing the animated work became to me as the researcher. The animation’s level of engagement with the community became the key criteria for inclusion in this study.

I used the data collected from classroom community observations to compile a list of potential participants. Chris’ animation, *Monster*, was referenced in 10 out of 22 class blog posts and Chelsea’s animation, *Bad Choices Aren’t Genetic*, elicited the most emotional reactions in



class. Dorothy's animation, *Rupture*, inspired the most verbal feedback and positive classroom comments and Grace's animation, *New in America*, encouraged the most questions about her self-origins and animation processes. Alex's animation, *Here and Away*, was referenced 8 times in class blog posts, drove three students to tears during her presentation, and was considered the most aesthetically pleasing animation by her peers. These five students kept emerging as I examined data from the classroom community, but I also connected with these five works intuitively and my reactions as the instructor echoed the opinions of the classroom community. All five animations were different in form, style, aesthetics, techniques, and intent but the commonality was that all five works had strong classroom community engagement.

I discovered in the initial stages of this study that the most influential and innovative animated autoethnographies are not always the most exemplar animations. The autoethnographic method plays a key role in connecting the self to other and creating a deep and vulnerable exploration of self often outweighed the formal techniques and visuals of more traditionally created stop motion animations. The more an animation investigated self, the more it connected and engaged with the classroom community. In context with this study, a good animated autoethnography investigates the self, shares vulnerabilities, and explores unique elements of self in order to connect with others. Students that were most comfortable with sharing their self-discoveries created the most engaging works according to the class community and myself. Many high quality animations were created in class but only a handful engaged and captivated the classroom and fully embraced the autoethnographic method. Some students shared more than others and exposed themselves openly to the classroom community, which led to community engagement. Others were not as comfortable sharing and ultimately did not engage fully with the community, but students still learned from each other and connected to each other's lives no

matter the quality or scope of their works and processes.

To acknowledge and model the importance of the animation itself as research, I also created five short autoethnographic animations that were inspired by the themes, materials, techniques, and narratives that exist in my students' works. By examining the animated works of select students through creating my own, I found evidence that this method of self-inquiry is beneficial to the field of art education. All animations were curated and re-contextualized by the themes portrayed in Gude's (2007) "Principles of Possibility: Considerations for a 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Art and Culture Curriculum." Using these principles as a guide helped me to organize the animations by theme and direction and connect animated autoethnographies to the postmodern paradigm shift in art education.

Select student animations include:

- *Monster* by Chris
- *Here and Away* by Alex
- *Bad Choices Aren't Genetic* by Chelsea
- *Rupture* by Dorothy
- *New in America* by Grace

Personal autoethnographic animations that I created include:

- *The Day I Held His Hand*
- *I Love U to Texas & Back*
- *Civil War*
- *Color Blinded*
- *Ziggy Artdust the Art Teacher from Mars*

Select themes inspired by Gude's "Principles of Possibility" include:

- Forming self
- Empowered making
- Encountering difference
- Reconstructing social spaces
- Attentive living

I curated specific student works, personal animations, and postmodern principles into separate themed chapters. Each chapter of this study was founded on a specific postmodern principle from Gude (2007) and includes art criticism, animation stills, links to the full student animations, observations and thoughts, comparisons to historical works and writings, and a thoughtful narrative-based vignette that bridges my student works with my own. After this vignette, I include a description, screen shots, and links to my personal animations that were inspired by my students' work. All links to animations are posted on my research website (Blair, 2015a), [www.animatedautoethnography.com](http://www.animatedautoethnography.com).

I chose to design a custom website to accompany this dissertation for one key reason. As an educator in my early thirties, all of my K-12 and university students throughout the last several years have been “digital natives” (Prensky, 2001, p. 1). Prensky (2001) describes digital natives as students who are native speakers of the digital language of computers, video games, and the Internet. Prensky (2001) also states that educators, like myself, that have learned to speak the language of technology in order to appeal and engage with digital native students are called “digital immigrants” (p. 2). In Prensky’s (2001) essay, “Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants,” he investigates the problem in education that digital immigrant instructors are struggling to teach a population that speaks an entirely new language. A traditionally written dissertation is comprehensive and a major achievement for any researcher, but a word document that is

hundreds of pages long may lack connection to digital natives that are currently entering university art education programs. I personally want to be an emerging voice in the field of art education that helps model the utilization of online platforms for presenting research. My intentions are that my dissertation website will give readers convenient access to the animations and resources featured in this study and will encourage dialogue, spark inquiry, and challenge the way the field of art education engages in and presents research. I want my dissertation to appeal to digital natives and inspire them to present their research in new and engaging ways. Designing an interactive dissertation website as a hub for information will enhance present and future accessibility to this study for the next generation of digital native art educators and will be a compelling addition to this traditional word document.

#### Methods of Data Collection

Data collection is the practice of gathering information for use in a research study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008), and methods of data collection vary depending on the intentions, scope, audience, location, and nature of the study. This is a qualitative study; thus, researching relationships, communities, creative works, social practices, and the uniqueness of the lived human experience will be critical. Due to the complexity of studying human life and experience, qualitative researchers privilege no single method of inquiry or practice, and the field of qualitative research is largely reflective of the specific practitioners and participants (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). For this study, I collected qualitative data through participant interviews and conversations, classroom observations and blog assignments, narrative writing and art criticism, and art-making through the medium of stop motion animation.

*Animation.* When conducting arts-based research and autoethnography the researcher must choose an appropriate art medium that reflects the subjects, the design of the study, and the self (Barone and Eisner, 2012; Cahnmann-Taylor and Siegesmund, 2008). I used stop motion animation as an art medium for this study. I combined my love for stop motion animation with the qualitative self-research methodology of autoethnography in designing, creating, and analyzing my own autoethnographic animations founded on specific investigative research questions. These animations followed the same criteria and guidelines as the animated works of my former students. Vignettes based on specific themes and codes were established and supported by these animated works, creating an organized framework in which to gather and present data. In arts-based research and autoethnographic practice, research collection entails examining experience as data, and analysis includes informal, personal, or intimate reflections (Taylor, Wilder, and Helms, 2007). Using video as a way to create a layered response to a visual experience offers opportunity for deeper meaning and for weaving of the viewer's self into her or his experience (Taylor, Wilder, and Helms, 2007). Conducting arts-based autoethnography and replicating the model my students explored brought me closer to the students, furthered my understanding of this method, and ushered in new ways of self-reflexive knowing. Not only do these select works inspire me, but also I used each animation as a guide in creating my own.

My design approach to animation reflects the current resources and technologies available to contemporary K-12 art educators, the design also reflects the same technologies my students used during their research. I used the video editing software program iMovie to animate and edit all photographs and movie frames and I used an Olympus FE 4020 point and shoot digital camera to capture the footage. I also thematically curated all of the animated works in this study into separate sections based on Gude's (2007) "Principles of Possibility" in order to

directly connect the participant's animations with Gude's widely respected and progressive views on contemporary art education. I compared each animation with Gude's (2007) research and made an appropriate match with a specific principle from her article. Gude's (2007) innovative principles have forever altered my views on contemporary education and I seek to align my practices with her research and insights when appropriate. Gude's (2007) postmodern principles include: forming self, empowered making, encountering difference, empowered experiencing, reconstructing social spaces, and attentive living.

*Art criticism.* I use art criticism to thoroughly review the visual content of the selected student works. The critical activities of describing, analyzing, interpreting, judging, and theorizing about works of art are interrelated and interdependent (Barrett, 2003). The sections of description, interpretation, and judgment will be separated, but I also attempt to weave all sections into one cohesive criticism of each animation. In analyzing these art products through art criticism methods, I discovered amazing moments of animated performance (Silvio, 2010) and themes like classic closure, depiction of self, representations of culture, and the effects of being othered. I will review visual and aesthetic decisions that the students made in the films, and which led me to break down specific scenes into individual frames for the purposes of discussion and analysis.

*Description.* Description figures prominently in educational models of art criticism, and the concept of description that educators present in their models differ from the concept of description in ordinary discourse (Geahigan, 1999a). As stated by Geahigan (1999a), description is an intrinsic part of the process of art criticism and is concerned with listing or inventorying the objective features of a work of art. I also employ description in art criticism as defined by Terry Barrett (2012; 1991) as telling, reporting, quoting, mentioning, and comparing. I watched my

student works and described with vivid visual language exactly what my eyes saw. In formulating these descriptions, I learned more about my students' backgrounds in art, the materials that appeal most to them, and their cultural connections to animation.

**Interpretation.** Interpretation is an articulated and complex response to works based on wonder and reflection (Barrett, 2003; 2012a). "Artworks have 'aboutness' and demand interpretation" (Barrett, 2012a, p. 119). Interpretation is a process of translation and is concerned with uncovering meanings of a phenomenon or work and understanding them more deeply (Stokrocki, 1983). Interpretation involves explaining the social significance of findings, finding patterns, themes, and narratives within a broader context (Powell, 2010). Interpretation is important to historical understandings, and interpreting artworks makes them meaningful (Barrett, 2003). Artistic endeavors lack life and definition without human reflection, and the interpretation of art should not be limited to the artist's intentions (Barrett, 2003). Interpretation is interested not in generalization but in possible meanings, placing artworks into philosophical and artistic contexts (Barrett, 2003; Stokrocki, 1983). Interpretation has no precise system, but a logic that evolves through dialogue and feelings and interpretations that are not right or wrong but informative and hopefully enlightening (Evans, 2011).

Writing an effective interpretation is a layered process, and interpretations must be persuasive arguments (Barrett, 2012a). Barrett (2003) states that good interpretations provide satisfactory answers to questions of meaning posed by viewers responding to artworks. Interpretations should satisfy curiosities, relate to your unique perceptions, expand your experience with art, lead you to think deeper, and motivate readers to investigate works on their own (Barrett, 2003). Interpretation is often used as the key element of inquiry in qualitative research, and a good interpretation should bring a piece to life. Interpreting art can be about

transformation, and learning more about yourself, the artist, the context, and the world, rather than being about finding the right answer and stating it as your own interpretation (Evans, 2011). I agree with Evans (2011) and Barrett (2003) that there are no right or wrong interpretations, there are good interpretations and there are better interpretations. Educators should not silence interpretations just because they do not share the artistic sentiments of the artist or researcher (Evans, 2011).

A central purpose for formal interpretation is to understand art in language (Barrett, 2003), but every word I write affects the next, so my interpretations and judgments need to be thoughtful and thorough. Before starting descriptions and interpretations and overall analysis, a short autobiography for each student will be included so that we can familiarize ourselves with each student's unique background and basic conceptions of self. I have implemented a comprehensive art criticism section for each select animation. The critical activities of describing, analyzing, interpreting, judging, and theorizing about works of art are interrelated and interdependent (Barrett, 2003). Principles of art interpretation (Barrett, 2003) that I applied to the participant's animated autoethnographies include the following:

- Feelings are guides to interpretation.
- The critical activities of describing, analyzing, interpreting, judging, and theorizing about works of art are interrelated and interdependent.
- Meanings of artworks are not limited to what their artists intended them to mean.
- The objects of interpretation are artworks, not artists.

Due to the rigorous nature of this study, I engaged in an exhaustive pursuit of knowledge through interpreting the animated works of the selected students and my own. Similarly, Terry Barrett (2003) stated that applying all principles of interpretation while writing a piece of criticism would likely be beneficial but exhausting, except in cases of serious pursuit. Additional



principles of art interpretation that I applied to in this study can be found in Barrett's (2003) text *Interpreting Art: Reflecting, Wondering, and Responding*. I use a number of principles of interpretation set up in Barrett's (2003) text:

- "Artworks are always about something" (p. 198)
- "To interpret a work of art is to make it meaningful" (p. 1)
- "Medium affects meaning" (p. 139)

Additionally, one central purpose for formal interpretation, according to Barrett (2003), is to understand art in language. Prior to writing this dissertation, I had viewed and presented my student's animated works many times, but I hadn't yet formally engaged in written interpretations; thus, my understandings of the animations were limited. Moreover, I also found my knowledge of my students' works were based on the artist's personal interpretations rather than my own. In order to understand these works through language, I rely on my personal observations and interpretations, thereby discovering useful worldviews and new ways of using the medium of animation.

Judgment. According to Barrett (2012a, 2012b), criticism and judgment are not synonymous terms. Judgments, like interpretations, are persuasive arguments, and more than single declarative statements (Barrett, 2012a, 2012b). Here, I use all of the information I gathered about each animation to highlight the video's strengths and weaknesses, showing how it can be used or not used in the classroom. This section divulges a relatively exhaustive list of K-12 classroom and pre-service teacher program applications for animated autoethnography. Emerging from among this list are arts-based reflective and reflexive research practices, increased appreciation and utilization of computer technologies in K-12 art education, and the development of self through art-making. Also included among the judgments are the specific

capabilities and possibilities of stop motion animation as a compelling medium for autoethnographic and arts-based research.

*Field notes.* Butler-Kisber (2010) defines field notes as documents, artifacts, and other materials that contribute to inquiry that researchers gather. For this study, formal and informal notes, sketches, and general insights I recorded while observing my students will be utilized. These field notes are based upon observations in class while students designed their approaches to autoethnography, experimented with the processes of animation, and presented their animations. I extracted specific statements, realized emerging themes, and wrote dozens of pages of reactionary comments that aided in contextualizing the field notes into usage data.

Surprisingly, traditional classroom observations quickly became my most useful type of field note for this study. As an undergraduate student, I thought observational field notes were the highest, and possibly only, form of research, so I designed several small pilot studies (Blair, 2014) that revolved around basic classroom observations as a pre-service educator. That past experience led directly into this dissertation and I gravitated towards walking around my UNT classroom jotting down notes and scribbling simple diagrams and gestures I found provocative.

Observation methods are useful to researchers because they provide researchers with methods to record nonverbal expressions, body language, interactions, habits of communication, and overall time spent on specific activities (Schmuck, 1997). According to deMunck and Sobo (1998), classroom observations give researchers access to the "backstage culture" (p. 43) which allows for detailed descriptions and interpretations of unique behaviors, creative works, situations, and events that are scheduled or unscheduled.

The most useful and data-rich field notes came from observing the study participant's final classroom presentations. During the student presentations, I wrote down questions students

would ask their fellow filmmakers and noted the emotions that I could read on their faces as they watched their peers' animations projected on the screen. Field notes from student presentations read more like poetry than observations that became enjoyable for me to read and decode later in the duration of this study. Recording and reviewing my classroom observational field notes aided in drafting my research questions and led me to discover the empathic nature of the animated autoethnographic project in general.

*Participant interviews and transcriptions.* Interviewing is the most common method of inquiry used in researching the lived experience (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Butler-Kisber, 2010). I interviewed the five student participants about their animated autoethnographies and research processes in the spring and summer of 2014. Each interview session was semi-structured with an appointment time and pre-determined questions. The interviews were conducted individually over the phone and each session lasted approximately one hour. The questions I asked were open-ended and purposely interpretative so that the questions would draw out unique insights and perspectives that may further this study. The interviews quickly shifted to intimate conversations about life and relationships even though the questions were uniform and pre-determined. The conversational nature of the interviews maximized the uniqueness of each student, but a general consistency and respect for each other was always present.

I asked each study participant fourteen questions over the phone. I split the questions into three major topics to encourage a conversational tone and to make the transcription and listening processes smoother. The topics and questions are listed below:

- Animation in the Art Classroom
  1. How much experience did you have with animation prior to creating your animated autoethnography?
  2. In what specific ways does autoethnography appeal to you as a teacher?

3. Did creating an autoethnographic animation in AEAH 3770 encourage you to include animation in your future classroom curriculum?

4. In what specific ways did the animated autoethnography limit your expression or expose you to risk?

- Animated Community

5. Did the classroom community change in any way after students presented their animations?

6. How did students in the class react to your animation?

7. Did you have feelings of empathy for anyone while they were presenting their animation?

8. In your opinion, did the animated autoethnography project help build or encourage confidence and self-acceptance within the classroom community?

9. Do you think students in AEAH 3770 better related to you and your life experiences after they viewed your animation?

- Animated Self

10. What did you learn about yourself through creating your animation?

11. Why did you choose this specific topic to explore?

12. In your experience, did animating your intimate experiences and sharing them with the classroom community lead to new feelings of self-acceptance?

13. Did sharing intimate experiences through animation change the way you view those specific life experiences or add any further context?

14. How does expressing intimate knowledge of self in an animated visual form differ from expressing self in written narrative form?

Each phone interview was audio recorded with Garageband and saved in my dissertation folder on my laptop. I used the transcribing software Transcribe to type out all of the interviews, and I saved their interview responses in a Word document for easy access. I agree with Butler-Kisber (2010) that transcribing interviews is a long and arduous process. I can revisit specific exchanges and even listen for subtle mood changes and pauses while carefully re-listening and

transcribing student interviews. The information gathered from these interview sessions is dispersed throughout the study in order to interlink the different chapters of the study.

## Data Analysis

Creswell (2007) has suggested that analyzing narrative-based data by gathering participants' stories and retelling their newly contextualized narratives is *restorying*. Restorying is a process in which the stories gathered are reorganized into a more general type of framework (Creswell, 2007). The methods of data collection listed above provide ample amounts of information for data analysis. Each animation featured in this study is narrative-based, is composed of hundreds of individual images, and tells a personal story in the first-person point of view. The process of analyzing the narrative content of these animations included recording the basic elements of the story, discovering a predicament or struggle, finding the foundational research question, and establishing and researching the protagonist (Creswell, 2007). I also established themes that emerged from the animations that provide more material to include in detailed discussions of the meaning of their stories. These themes included personal growth, bullying, motherhood, falling in love, and experiencing fear. I performed this type of narrative analysis on my students' artwork as well as my own. The themes that emerged overlapped and created a web of connections.

My data analysis and interpretation involved searching and categorizing collected materials and works to discover and comprehend patterns, themes, and issues in relation to the research questions posed (Powell, 2010; Chang, 2008; Stokrocki, 1997; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). In conducting the data analysis, I discovered emerging concepts, themes, and meanings (Stokrocki, 1997). The objective of my autoethnographic data analysis was to gain cultural

understanding of the relationship between self and other (Chang, 2008). To do autoethnographic data analysis well, I necessarily moved back and forth between the themes I saw emerging from my own work and others' (Powell, 2010). To contextualize this, I like to compare the animated autoethnographic work of my pre-service student Grace with my own experiences. Grace is a female student originally from Vietnam, and her autoethnographic animation explores her journey from Vietnam to living in the United States, as well as her struggles and joys in learning English as a high school student in Garland, Texas. I am not female or Asian, nor have I ever needed to learn a language so quickly and urgently as Grace did, but I immediately connected with her animation. The themes I personally connected with that intersected both Grace's animation and my own life experiences were encountering difference, rediscovering and rephrasing personal darkness, and rebelling against normativity. Grace's experiences reminded me of my first year teaching in Savannah, Georgia. In Savannah, I was a newcomer to the local culture, a newcomer to the profession of teaching, and ignorant about being a young Caucasian male in a city where racism was very prominent in the public schools. Grace's experiences as a newcomer to the United States were different, but the themes that I interpreted from her works were connective, which led me to empathizing with her.

Autoethnographic data analysis is much more open than traditional ethnography, and it does not necessarily require strict methods (Grbich, 2007). Chang (2008) explained that in qualitative research, data collection is not always sequential to or separate from data analysis and interpretation. The collection process is often joined with analysis and interpretation, and these tasks usually happen simultaneously. Thus, I also utilized field notes, sketchbooks, animations, personal narrative, blogging, and Skype interviews as methods of data collection and analysis.

Because of the diversity and sensitivity of materials and subjects, autoethnographic data analysis needs a beginning stage of data collection and basic summarization to identify themes and questions that will need to be addressed throughout the research. This beginning stage is called “preliminary data collection and analysis” (Grbich, 2007). Preliminary data collection can be formal and informal and is an ongoing process. I used folders on my computer to organize animation files, created Word documents to organize literature and resources, and designed and populated a website to ultimately filter, organize, and present my work. For this study, preliminary data analysis involved a process of checking and tracking data, identifying areas that need further investigation, questioning what materials to collect, and deciding where those materials should lead me (Grbich, 2007). I needed this first round of data analysis to discover the major points and directions of the study.

Once I collected all the core materials, I identified a number of themes and categories, which is called “thematic analysis” (Grbich, 2007). The major themes I discovered are, Building Community and Experiencing Empathy. The participants in this study exemplified these major themes through their animated works, blog posts, interview responses, and classroom observations. Thematic analysis reduced my data, trimmed its fat, and created the central database that I used throughout the study. Before writing my dissertation, I gathered, watched, and analyzed 53 student-made animations. Those 53 animations were reduced to a select five after evaluating each animation for compelling themes, powerful visual interpretations, and unique perceptions of self and others. Managing materials and resources would have been overwhelming and counterproductive without thematic analysis. Some of the animations I viewed were either poor quality, off topic, or misdirected, which led me to eliminate them from the study. I did not create a formal rubric or criteria to aid in analyzing the animations. If they

were visually compelling and founded in intriguing self-inquiry, I placed them in a specific folder on my computer. Using this method, 53 animations pared down to 30 pretty quickly, and 30 went to ten within another week of intense viewing.

Additionally, I used comparative analysis with these animations. Stokrocki (1997) explained that comparative analysis is the process of interrelating findings. Interrelation consists of both *internal analysis* and *external analysis* (Stokrocki, 1997). Internal analysis compares works within a researcher's own study. For example, when I compared my students' animations to my personal animations, I used internal analysis, because both items were created within or for this study. External analysis is a comparison with an external source. For external analysis, I used Olivia Gude's (2007) article "Principles of Possibility: Considerations for a 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Art and Culture Curriculum" as the key outside resource. I also curated all of the animated works in this study into separate themed chapters based on Gude's (2007) postmodern principles. Select themes and chapter topics from Gude's "Principles of Possibility" included: forming self, empowered making, encountering difference, reconstructing social spaces, and attentive living. I compared each animation using Gude's (2007) research, and I matched the comparisons appropriately with a specific principle from her article.

### Significance of the Study

The key objective for this study on animated autoethnography is to explore a vehicle for self-research that could be beneficial to pre-service art educators and to expand upon emerging methods of inquiry in the field of art education. Art educators can improve their practices and learn about conceptions of self and others through the creation and sharing of arts-based autoethnographies (Denzin, 2006; DiRezze, 2000; Powell, 2010; Alexenberg, 2008; Bickel,



2005; Smith-Shank and Keifer-Boyd, 2007). Like Humphreys (2005), I claim that an autoethnographic approach enables students to study themselves in order to create reflexive dialogue with the class in the hope that the meanings embedded in their life stories might have relevance to others. Camangian (2010) supported the notion that autoethnographies can promote self and social reflection as well as establish compassionate classroom communities among youth with fractured collective identities.

Moments of life that are often rejected can be celebrated through autoethnography. Highlighting the non-normative elements of self can inspire students to better engage in the world around them and create a vehicle for self-acceptance. While animating life experiences, students are not passive receivers of knowledge (Suominen GUYAS, 2006); they engage in critical self-reflection while participating in the project. Animating the self offers students and teachers an opportunity to challenge themselves, leading to insights about the construction and transformation of their identities and the meanings of their cultural experiences. Bey (2012) echoed this realization when he stated, "Through revisiting and reflecting on our own lived experiences we can better understand how our identities are formed in relation to others" (p. 137). In my case, my students shared such life-changing encounters as language barriers, homelessness, medical conditions, and long-distance relationships. Additionally, my students expressed life narratives that evoked empathy and compassion from those around them (Bey, 2012a, 2012b; Konrath, 2012; Jeffers, 2009; Stout, 1999; Shuman, 2005). My study offers examples of how specific forms of inquiry can be used in innovative ways in order to enrich the lives and educational experiences of pre-service art educators. Many of my undergraduate students have found this project to be emotionally taxing but refreshingly cathartic. Viewing and

experiencing these diverse animated works can create a classroom community founded on difference and empathy.

Combining autoethnography with animation has the capability to expand the canon of art education and qualitative research. Students and teachers might also use other digital technologies to help express non-normativity in the classroom (Lever-Mazzuto, 2012). Since, according to Sweeny (2010), the field of art education is in the midst of a digital and visual culture paradigm shift, this animated study model of inquiry reflects some newer methods for art pedagogy that work well in new, diverse environments. In fact, I have found only one similar study (Madrid, 2012) that highlights the results of animated self-inquiry in an educational context, which shows that animated autoethnography is a thin spot in art education and arts-based research. This study aims to inform and contribute to the field.

In conducting this study and using this methodology, I hope to provide an autoethnographic model that moves beyond traditionally written self-inquiries by infusing elements of art, digital technology, sequential imagery, and powerful visual aesthetics. Animated autoethnographic inquiries are at the intersections of art, technology, and culture, and they can be adapted at all levels of education; they may even increase levels of technology implementation in art classrooms. Technology-driven culture requires innovative methodologies that access technology and culture and that appeal to the new generations of teachers and researchers (Delacruz, 2009a). Stop motion animation provides a compelling vehicle for emotional and self-forming experiences. I have discovered that animation might be able to occupy places of the mind that words cannot (Wells and Hardstaff, 2008). Moreover, I agree with Tillander (2011) that although introducing art education pre-service teachers to a variety of technologies for teaching can be invaluable, it is actually their personal creative synthesis among technology

tools, teaching strategies, and content that offers lasting and invaluable approaches for engaging learning.

The open-endedness of this animated method leads to unique works that are potent with vulnerability, discovery, culture, and spectacle. As one of my students eloquently stated in their animated autoethnography presentation, “I want to express my belief that people’s darkest times are the most beautiful, because it shapes who they are.” In my experience, the teacher gains invaluable knowledge and insight about each student during all of the stages of this research. I witnessed students transcending their own cultural experiences using the animation process as a means of reflection and critique (Coia and Taylor, 2005; Berger, 2001; Dyson, 2007; Austin and Hickey, 2007; Ellis, 2002; Ellis and Bochner, 2000; Humphreys, 2005; Duarte, 2007). But, in order to provide a transcendental art education experience, teachers must work beyond the current system and purposefully introduce difference and diverse methods of forming self (Gude, 2007, 2010, 2012; Check, 2000; Sweeny, 2013a, 2013b; Delacruz, 2009a). Because of this, animated autoethnography has the potential to be an empowering method in art education classrooms.

### Limitations of Study

The animated autoethnography classroom assignment has many components and perspectives for research. In my opinion, the most compelling components of the project are the student-made animations and the influence those animations had on the classroom community and myself. Since the animations have emerged as the central figures, I am focusing this study on the animated autoethnographic works themselves and how these works have inspired me to create my own animations. Placing importance on the art and not how I specifically teach

autoethnography is a key difference to many other studies. A significant limitation to this study is that I cannot have students complete any new artworks or in-class exercises. The participants and I live in different states, and some have graduated from the art education program, so I am limited to phone and electronic communications.

The art form of animated filmmaking has limitations in the context of arts-based research. Animation is considered a special skill and is not commonly taught in public schools in the United States. Most of my pre-service university students were novice animators, but successfully drew on their training in traditional canonized art forms like painting, sculpting, and drawing while animating. Animation is a wonderful outlet for self-expression and dialogue, but it does require an extensive amount of training and experimentation to become proficient. There are many ways to create a stop motion animation, and there are several popular software programs and photographic technologies that animators use (Sawicki, 2011). In order to appeal to the field of art education, I have designed my approach to animation to reflect the current resources and technologies available to contemporary K-12 art educators.

I am aware that arts-based autoethnography as a research methodology can be limiting (Holt, 2013; Gans, 1999; Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 2011; Reed-Danahay, 1997), and even though autoethnography is part ethnography, I am not aiming to achieve the same goals as the canonical work in traditional ethnography research (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 2011). This type of animated inquiry is not meant for everyone and will inevitably have a more limited audience due to its specific methodology, art medium, types of information gathered, and target demographics.

Not only am I concerned about the validity of my own words and works throughout this study; I have the responsibility of representing and interpreting the works of my students. I want

to celebrate their works as much as I can while still keeping a critical perspective. Because of the emotional influence many of these student works have had on me over the last year, I must remember that I am interpreting artworks and narratives, and not the artists or students themselves (Barrett, 2003). Gaining trust and establishing rapport is paramount when conducting qualitative research, and constantly presenting yourself as a learner helps create equality within the researcher/subject relationship (Fontana and Frey, 2008). Developing rapport through expressing empathy can lead to practical insights into the lives of my students, thus enhancing my study, but empathy can also diminish objectivity (Hedican, 2008).

Four out of five of the study participants are female, but I, the lead investigator, am male. Students who enrolled in my technology course at the University of North Texas throughout my time there were predominantly female, so the gender ratio in the participants of this study is close to the population I was working with at the time. Since I am male and live in a society that enforces and promotes gender roles, I did my best to experience and interpret the participant's works using my life experience as foundation and bias, but any gendered viewing of these projects may create discrepancies in interpretation on occasion. My awareness of this difference should have helped alleviate any misrepresentations of the artist's intentions in their animations.

During the brainstorming stages of the animated autoethnography project, I require my pre-service art education students to draft their own research questions and choose their own original topics for qualitative inquiry. Any language, artworks, topics, or products created through this project that cross any emotional or psychological boundaries are quoted from, chosen by, or derived directly from students and not necessarily a part of my designed and presented curriculum. I agree that some student-developed questions may raise eyebrows in an educational context (e.g., "Which one of my socially constructed flaws do I embrace?" and

“What makes me feel most vulnerable?”) Students designed both of these examples, and I did not require them to investigate these exact questions. I did require them to investigate self through aesthetic reflection using animation as their primary visual vehicle.

The psychological and therapeutic elements of this project are prominent at times because I did heavily promote the most sensitive and psychological examples, with permission from the participant, because they were the best works that exemplified the methodology. I do not require any auto-psycho-analysis, but my bias does become strong during my presentations, because I celebrate vulnerability and risk, as does autoethnography (Ellis, 2002). Animated autoethnography is not meant to be a psychological endpoint or healing agent, but an ongoing, evolving dialogue with self.

The most sensitive and controversial topics explored in this project were student-directed and their choice to engage, but should I have encouraged students to explore these emotional and psychological topics in my art education classroom? I want students to produce purposeful works that initiates growth, but I cannot force growth. I can only provide an environment and resources that foster growth and provide guidance for those that want it. My student Chelsea confessed to the class through her animation that her parents were illegal drug users. She even animated a Barbie Doll snorting a line of granulated sugar in order to portray her mother snorting cocaine. Chelsea told them me that the project was therapeutic and that she looked forward to implementing some form of it in her future classroom. Chelsea seemed to benefit personally and professionally from her animation, and her choice to reveal her dark secret was accepted and appreciated by her peers.

The most successful self-research questions and animations in my class have been the most vulnerable and cathartic, which is why the core of this method and study tends to be

dominated by risk-taking students that explore vulnerable personal narratives. Students tend to confess fears, openly communicate their flaws, and experience cathartic release during this animated project because autoethnography gives them the freedom to do so, not because I require cathartic work. Students ultimately have the choice to participate and share their works and have complete control over their methods, research questions, and overall design. I mainly provide basic animation skills, access to technologies, an introduction to the literature, and a fundamental understanding of autoethnographic practices and narrative inquiry. Any sensitive information shared or produced was voluntary and overwhelmingly accepted in the classroom, leading to moments of empathy and compassion. Many of my students chose much less emotionally taxing topics to investigate through autoethnography. Examples of student questions include “How has participating in country line dancing affected my life and relationships?” and “Which people and experiences in my past have influenced my decision to become a teacher?” Both projects were successful, and neither of those questions produced any overtly sensitive content.

The *Art Education Journal* published an article based on this project titled “Animated Autoethnographies” in March 2014. During the thorough article review process, the editors and reviewers did not address my approach to questioning and my lack of experience with art therapy. I was expecting several comments from reviewers questioning my approach due to the uncensored nature of some of my student’s narrative components, but the reviewers supported the sensitive questions my students drafted and did consider this project to be a new contemporary application of art education, animation, and qualitative inquiry. I do not believe that exploring these questions in my higher education classroom is any type of violation since the students themselves developed the questions that are most psychologically risky. If I developed

the questions and required my students to investigate them, then that would definitely be art therapy and require professional credentials. Coincidentally, two of my former students from UNT are currently enrolled in art therapy graduate programs. Both students excelled at this animated project and brought elements of autoethnography into their student teaching placements in 2011 and 2012.

The fields of art therapy and art education intersect historically, philosophically, and in practice (Wexler, 2009; Michael, 1982; Drachnik, 1976; Albert, 2010). Art educators and art therapists serve people of all ages living with autism, ADHD, learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral disorders, visual and hearing impairments, and people suffering from traumatic injuries or traumatic experiences (Wexler, 2009). The core components of art therapy resonate with my art teaching practices. The field of art therapy includes functional art therapy, where the concern is with students with special needs and medical disorders; gestalt art therapy, which is the use of art materials to produce personal growth and awareness; and psycho-educational art therapy, which involves an interpersonal relationship and a learning process within the structure of the activity (Ault, 1974).

A blended model of art therapy and art education that utilizes effective strategies from both disciplines and provides students with a therapeutic process can support instruction, empower students, and produce art the students are proud to have created (Albert, 2010). Albert (2010) believes that a truly integrated art therapy/art education model exists when one cannot tell where one subject ends and the next begins. Art therapist Rachel Albert (2010) states that despite variation among individual student needs, the overarching therapeutic goals for her patients are very similar to student goals in education. Albert's (2010) overlapping objectives for art therapy and art education include increasing self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-advocacy; developing



tolerance and creative thinking; healthy risk-taking; and communicating personal stories and reconnecting to cultural heritage. I agree with Albert (2010) but I also realize it is not appropriate for me to elevate my role to anything above an art teacher. Art educators are not usually professionally qualified to handle the clinical concerns that accompany many students in alternative and special education settings (Wexler, 2009). Art teachers are qualified to initiate and teach the art-making components of art therapy, but they are not qualified to process the sensitive information or offer therapeutic guidance.

Art education and art therapy did merge during WWII with the pioneer research and practices of art educator Viktor Lowenfeld (Drachnik, 1976; Michael, 1982). Lowenfeld was an art therapist, children's psychologist, and art educator who lectured and published texts on the therapeutic aspects of art education and how childhood development can be studied and enhanced through the arts (Michael, 1982). Lowenfeld coined the term "art education therapy," highlighting art-making as a measurement for human development and studying the progression of children through their artwork (Michael, 1982; Wexler, 2009). He felt that while it was not necessary for an art teacher to be an art therapist, a teacher should be prepared to provide motivations adequate to free individuals from their restrictions in expressing themselves in order to work through their problems (Michael, 1982). His idea of providing spaces for freedom inspired me to develop my own methods of instruction that had the ability to empower students. Lowenfeld laid a psychological foundation for the way children develop in and through art in his psychological system, featured in his book *Creative and Mental Growth*, which became one of the major texts with which art teachers have been trained over the last half-century (Michael, 1982; Drachnik, 1976).

I enjoy the psychological aspects of art therapy, but I do recognize my role as an arts educator. I consider this project to have therapeutic aspects and therapeutic effects for some select students, but I do not consider it art therapy. My intention is to prepare teachers for their future careers through aesthetic reflection and self-reflexivity not through therapy. Therapy implies completely different intentions than education. I want students to learn rather than heal. I do not think my students need treatment through art; I want them to reveal hidden elements of self (Gude, 2007).

### Review of Literature and Media

This dissertation is a combination of several different academic fields. Prominent professors and works within the field of qualitative inquiry have influenced this study to include strong elements of life narrative and self-inquiry through several forms of autoethnography. The methodology of autoethnography is significant on its own, but linking it to the field of art education is vital in its inclusion in this project. Many of my future colleagues in the field of art education have provided the context for utilizing autoethnography as a method and text.

#### Autoethnography

Reed-Danahay (1997) defines autoethnography as a form of self-narrative that places the self within the social context. It is both a method and a text. Ellis and Bochner (2000) define autoethnography as an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural. Norman Denzin (1997a) writes that while autoethnography has traditionally been defined as the cultural study of one's own people, more recently, it has been defined as a turning of the ethnographic gaze inward while

maintaining the outward gaze of ethnography. Autoethnography has the capacity to provoke viewers to broaden their horizons, reflect critically on experiences, enter empathetically into the lives of others, and actively participate in dialogue regarding the social implications of the encountered (Ellis and Bochner, 2000).

According to Cahnmann-Taylor and Siegesmund (2008), autoethnography is a merger between autobiography and ethnography that highlights the researcher and his or her own reflexivity and reflections as viable data. Scholars from many different fields, especially those that embrace qualitative research as a vital tool for knowledge, are experimenting with self-research (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). Like Evans (2011), I was introduced to autoethnography while enrolled in Dr. Terry Barrett's graduate art education course on narrative inquiry. Barrett's course on narrative inquiry covered several narrative-based qualitative research methodologies that are being used by contemporary researchers (Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin, Pushor, and Orr, 2007; Freeman, 2007; Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005; Shuman, 2005; Keen, 2006; Bach, 2007). I did not comprehend the power and possibilities of autoethnography until Barrett (2008) presented his collaborative text, *Three Art Educators in Cancerworld*. This autoethnographic work explored the lives of three art educators and their parallel experiences in physically, mentally, and emotionally coping with cancer. Barrett read the text aloud to the class, and I was deeply moved by the vulnerability and honesty and pain exhibited in the text and in his voice. I learned that research can and should be personal. The article inspired me to open doors for dialogue and express my personal experiences with bipolar disorder through autoethnography.

*Art education and arts-based autoethnography.* Autoethnography is an emerging research methodology in the arts and is on a parallel track with arts-based research (Gwyther and Possamai-Inesedy, 2009; Smith-Shank and Keifer-Boyd, 2007; Taylor, Wilder, and Helms,

2007). For example, Bochner and Ellis (2003) state that arts-based research and autoethnography share many of the same aims, including blurring boundaries between the social sciences and the humanities, using forms of creative expression, and including the researcher as the subject. Griffiths (2011) argues that arts-based research and arts-based autoethnography is needed to address the issue of self as researcher in today's contemporary qualitative research. Springgay (2002) states that the creation of visual forms of inquiry should be equal to traditional forms of educational research.

Today's arts-based autoethnographers are communicating research as short stories, poems, novels, artworks, videos, performances, digital works, and other experimental texts featuring action, emotion, embodiment, self-consciousness, and introspection (Ellis, 2004; Denzin, 2006; Leavy, 2009; Kunzle, 2010; Suominen Guyas, 2006; Spry, 2001; Harris, 2012; Minge, 2006; Bickel, 2005; Morawski and Irwin, 2008; Lammer, 2009; Watson, 2009; Murthy, 2008; Madrid, 2012; Dicks et al., 2005). Arts-based autoethnography is being used to explore physical, emotional, cultural, civil, global, and political issues throughout the world (Minge, 2006; Russell, 1999). New and inventive methods of arts-based autoethnography are appearing in journals, conferences, and classrooms across the field of art education (Smith-Shank and Keifer-Boyd, 2007). These new texts and artworks are currently leading the field of art education and qualitative inquiry in new self-reflexive and vulnerable directions (Spry, 2001; Robinson-Cseke, 2006; Morawski and Irwin, 2008; Eisenhauer, 2010; Ownby, 2013; Barone and Eisner, 2012; Erickson, 1999; Sullivan, 2005; Leavy, 2009; Gray and Malins, 2004; Cahnmann-Taylor and Siegesmund, 2008).

To highlight another example, at an Austrian teaching hospital, artistic videos were made by physicians through collaborations with patients, hospital employees, doctors, and nurses, and

were used as qualitative teaching tools to better understand the lives and experiences of patients (Lammer, 2009). Through the videos, caregivers and physicians were confronted by the experiences of sick and dying patients. These autoethnographic works helped to translate some of the intangible human elements of illness and suffering into an aesthetic language. Lammer (2009) reports that through visual ethnographic interventions, sensory and body art-related methods could enhance complex processes of translation and mediation that strengthen empathy, sensitivity, and emotional competency in the medical staff. In my view, Lammer's (2009) videos correlated well with *Three Art Educators in Cancerworld* (Barrett, Smith-Shank, and Stuhr, 2008) and created a strong web of connections between how inquiry is formed in the medical and art education fields. These medically influenced autoethnographic projects appeal to me because the most significant moments of my life have strong ties to serious personal medical conditions. I have discovered through reading life narratives and autoethnographic studies and sharing my research with others that struggles with mental illness, confronting cancer, and seeking empathy from others is a common thread throughout the emerging practices of autoethnography.

*Limitations of autoethnography.* Since autoethnography is part ethnography and part autobiography, critics assume autoethnographers are aiming to achieve the same goals as the canonical work in traditional ethnography (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 2010). On the contrary, traditional methods of scientific research attempt to measure the tangible, whereas autoethnography aims to reveal the ever-changing and sometimes intangible elements of self and others. With its use of self as a central source of data, autoethnography has been criticized for being self-indulgent, too introspective, and overly individualized (Holt, 2003). Additionally, autoethnography has been criticized for being too artful and without scientific sophistication (Gans, 1999). But, many autoethnographies include creative life narratives that weave in and out

of fiction and nonfiction, which challenges the notion that research must explore purely factual accounts of life (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 2011). In my experience, especially with regard to the autoethnographies that are the subject of this dissertation, the many elements that might limit autoethnography often end up being the most useful; they are the impetus to the realizations that lead to unexpected realms of deep introspection. Matched with a compelling art form like animation, autoethnography can completely customize the research experience for each person, producing compelling results and processes.

### Empathy in Art Education

Empathy is a human trait; empathy is a professional state; empathy is communication; empathy is relation (Kunyk and Olson, 2001). Maxine Greene (2001) defines empathy as the capacity to understand and experience the world through another person's point-of-view. The arts have been celebrated as an empathetic field filled with sympathy and awareness ever since the emergence of empathy studies (Stout, 1999). The concept of empathy originated in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, mainly in the West (Bresler, 2013). Studies in aesthetics in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Germany led to appreciating the experiences of other human beings, and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the concept of the human experience became the core of non-theoretical human sciences (Bresler, 2013). Empathy studies and qualitative research based on understanding others is an emerging trend in the field of art education (White and Constantino, 2013; Arnold, 2005). Arts educator Liora Bresler (2013) cultivates empathic engagement with her university students by creating rich interpretations and personal encounters at art museums. Dr. Terry Barrett (2013) taught a course at the University of North Texas that experimented with art and narrative-based 'zines for pre-service art educators. These short, illustrated, and self-published magazines showcased

powerfully written narratives that explored such topics as second-hand cancer and autobiographical tattoos (Barrett, 2013). Barrett (2013) utilized empathy to encourage students to write effectively while conducting arts-based research.

Museum and art educator Dr. Laura Evans (2013) asks whether “viewers struggle to empathize with works of art that are created in a culture they are unfamiliar and uncomfortable with” (p. 41). Evans (2013; 2011) has conducted extensive research on Lauren Greenfield’s (2006) collection of photographs titled *THIN*. Greenfield’s (2006) large-scale photographs document the lives of young women struggling with the physical and emotional effects of eating disorders. Some of the images are shocking, but all are compelling. I had seen photographs depicting people in extreme sickness before, but until I went to graduate school I had never consumed these types of images in the presence of people who have felt the effects of these disorders personally. Being unfamiliar and uncomfortable should not be an excuse for ignorance, so listening to the experiences of others should be a constant in all art and education courses. My views on eating disorders have changed due to Evans’ (2011) study and interpretations, and I have become much more sensitive to topics on mental health and mental health advocacy.

Perceptions of self and others can change through empathetic art experiences. I believe that animated autoethnography fosters the empathetic connections that are needed to influence and prepare exemplary teachers. Over the last two years, I have been working in the state of Georgia. The Georgia Visual Arts Performance Standards include an entire section on the care of people, others, self, community, and materials (Phillips and Siegesmund, 2013). Emphasizing caring and inspiring a desire to feel what others feel through my teaching has been rewarding for my students and myself. Since starting my teaching career in 2007, I have been attempting to

inject elements of empathy into my classroom practices through questioning and art criticism, narrative writing, and autobiographical applications for animation and technologies.

Professor Noddings (2005) proposes a radical change for K-12 schools, stating that K-12 schools should be founded on themes of caring. Her definition of caring dovetails with empathy (Barrett, 2013). Noddings (2005) argues that contemporary schools have not reacted appropriately to social changes and have put unreasonable emphasis on achievement. Noddings (2005) believes that classrooms should be places in which students can act on a variety of purposes, in which wonder and curiosity are alive, and in which students and teachers grow together. Students and teachers learning together is a phenomenon that inspired me to pursue my doctorate in art education. I believe that the arts-based methods of animated autoethnography can fully support Noddings' (2005) vision and bring caring and empathy into art classrooms.

Love and care are not terms that educators usually associate with curriculum development, but care should be required in all forms of contemporary curricula (Phillips and Siegesmund, 2013). Teachers modeling compassion and introducing lessons that require entering the lives of others can help transform a classroom community into a community that cares. I am guilty of completely misinterpreting the role of empathy as young teacher in 2007. I assumed that empathy was based on teaching style and methods of communication. I would adapt traditional lesson plans and inject them with my own brand of what I thought caring and empathy was, but empathetic education must be founded in the curriculum, and not just in the instructor's delivery. Teaching through care and compassion does away with empty learning that relies on mimicry and helps root classroom practices in empathy (Phillips and Siegesmund, 2013). Care and empathy can no longer just be warm and charming elements in our courses. Empathy must be a direct outcome of our instruction (Phillips and Siegesmund, 2013).



## Animation

Animation is the frame-by-frame photographic process in which the illusion of movement is created (Santucci, 2009; Judge and Hertzfeldt, 2004a; Selby, 2009). Animation brings inanimate objects or images to life on screen (Furniss, 2004, 2008; Purves, 2008; P. Wells, 2006, 2011; Norman, 2013). A traditional flipbook consisting of individual drawings on paper uses the same logic and is considered to be one of many precursors to animation (Taylor, 1996; Leinwand and Ye, 2012; Laybourne, 1998). At its core, animation seeks to narrate ideas, stories, and visions in surprising and unpredictable ways, often succeeding over conventional filmmaking techniques (Selby, 2009).

The history of animation is often traced back to the cave art of prehistoric humans (Azéma and Rivère, 2012; Pawlivsky-Love, 2005; Bantwal, 2009). For example, Bantwal (2009) recounted that since the beginning of time human beings have tried to capture a sense of motion in their art. The quest for capturing motion and the essence of life has been a common theme throughout most of humanity's artistic endeavors (Bantwal, 2009). When film first emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was viewed as a novelty, similar to Vaudeville, and early animation had an integral role in the beginnings of cinematic entertainment (Judge and Hertzfeldt, 2004b). Likewise, in the beginning of cinema, theatergoers expected to be entertained by a variety of short comedic and animated films. One of those first animated films was J. Stuart Blackton's *The Enchanted Drawing*, which was produced in 1900 (Judge and Hertzfeldt, 2004b). In this animation, Blackton stands in front of an easel, drawing the face of a man with charcoal on white paper. Magical moments happen as he uses his charcoal stick as a magic wand. For example, when Blackton points at the character's sketched top hat, an actual black top hat pops into Blackton's hand. The animator also steals a drawn cigarette out of the character's mouth,

resulting in the character's cartoon smile turning into a grizzly frown. He also threw physical objects like a bottle of liquor and a drinking glass onto the surface of the paper, transforming the objects instantly into elements within the two-dimensional drawing. Blackton performed with the drawing as if the character (the drawing itself) was a live actor, and his technique wowed audiences.

Similarly, in 1914, animation pioneer Windsor McCray released the film *Gertie the Dinosaur* (Judge and Hertzfeldt, 2004b). Gertie ate whole trees, drank water, and laughed and cried. McCray was limited to black and white due to animation and projection technologies still being in their infancy, but the contour line style of *Gertie the Dinosaur* can still be seen today in the black and white line drawing works of contemporary animator Don Hertzfeldt (2004a; 2004b). The success of *Gertie the Dinosaur* intensified interest in animated filmmaking. Animators began experimenting with time, space, and dimension. New animators viewed it as a free medium without limitations on creativity. With the invention of new technologies, like animation cels (P. Wells, 2006), animators could produce works quickly with higher quality images. Popular cartoonists began partnering with film production companies to bring to life beloved early 20<sup>th</sup> century comic characters (Judge and Hertzfeldt, 2004b).

By the 1920s, independent animator Walt Disney began building his brand of animated films that embraced the emerging technologies of sound and color in film. Disney also ushered in the concept of feature length animated films, establishing animation as equal to mainstream live action film (Judge and Hertzfeldt, 2004b). But, by the end of the 1940s, these types of traditional cel-based animations had started to grow stale. Animation generally remains a copycat industry, so ideas and motives can be overworked if there is commercial success. Because box office success was so high from the 1920s to the 1940s, animators and production companies did not

push the envelope with new ideas, and individual artists who were experimenting with new innovations had no way of exposing their work to mainstream audiences. The animation industry did find an acute catalyst for change and innovation in the 1940s as a result of the declaration of war. Sadly, animators from Disney were laid off due to complications from striking or were called to fight (Judge and Hertzfeldt, 2004b). These unemployed animators found a new market in the war, and several former Disney animators formed a company making training films for the United States military. This company eventually evolved into the National Canadian Film Board, which is well known for supporting highly personal and artistic animated works without regard to market pressures or film industry hierarchies. Ryan Larkin's (1968) *Walking* developed out of this shift and is considered one of the most beautiful examples of drawing animation ever produced.

Animation boomed in the post-WWII era with the invention of television (Selby, 2009). Millions of homes in the United States not only had a television set by the early 1960s but also were filled with young children due to the baby boom. American animation companies like Disney and Hanna-Barbera produced new original programming specifically for children, garnering vested interest from other capitalist countries like Japan, which began selling programming to the United States, changing the culture of animation worldwide (Selby, 2009). This international merger led to many innovations, including the development of computer-generated imagery (CGI) in the 1960s (Selby, 2009). These technologies led to tremendous commercial successes for feature-length CGI animated films, such as *Toy Story* (1994, the first feature-length CGI film), *The Incredibles* (2003), and *Up* (2009).

Today, contemporary methods of animation have evolved into many forms and are used for Hollywood special effects, popular music videos, advertisements and motion graphics, adult-

themed shorts and satire programs, children's entertainment and video games, amateur films on YouTube and social media, fine art and creative expressions, and animated documentaries (Kriger, 2012; Raimi, 1998; Gondry, 2010; Brown and Fong, 2003; Beck, 2003; Quigley, 2009; TenNapel and Southpeak Interactive, 1996; Quigley, 2007; Robinson, 2010; Dorfman, 2010; Avni and Fukushima, 2009; Khajavi, 2011). The art form of animation is so diverse that each category or animation technique merits its own review. In this dissertation, though, I focus on stop motion animation.

*Stop motion animation.* Stop motion animation exists in two-dimensional and three-dimensional forms (Furniss, 2008; Wells, 2006; Taylor, 1996). Two-dimensional drawings, images, typeface, and collage materials can be photographed sequentially and animated, as can three-dimensional materials like clay, Legos, toys, puppets, people, and household items (Purves, 2010; Taylor, 1996; Furniss, 2008; P. Wells, 2006). Forms of stop motion animation that have been most popular in my courses include *pixilation*, which is using the human body as a tool for animation (Jittov, 1988; Mankovsky, 2009) and *claymation*, which uses modeling clay or plasticine to create fluid movement by sculpted actors and environments (Bickford, 1988; Lord and Sibley, 2004).

The charm of stop motion animation and its unique mode of expression is still favored by the majority of animation enthusiasts and animation artists (Bickford and Zappa, 1987). Award winning animators Adam Elliot (2009) and Bruce Bickford (1979, 1988) both work in claymation and deliberately leave their own thumbprints in their clay characters to preserve a natural and human mediated feel in their films. Most of the hard work, innovation, and artistry of stop motion animation does not appear on screen but can be observed through materials and movements of characters. Stop motion is process heavy, requires detailed planning, and

combines elements of science and optical illusion to create movement. Because of these qualities, stop motion animation appeals to educators across the fields of math, science, and art.

Stop motion animation is the process of moving physical objects, such as puppets, clay, or people using very measured movements with each movement captured by photography, creating individual frames (Purves, 2008; Zhao, 2012; Brierton, 2006; Leinwand and Ye, 2012; Delahoyde, 2007; Pawlivsky-Love, 2005). The frames are then rapidly played one frame after the other, accessing the persistence of vision, creating the illusion of a moving object (Lord and Sibley, 2004, 2010; Greenberg, 2004; Leinwand and Ye, 2012; Taylor, 1996; Gravel, 2009). The quality of sequence in the images is more important than the quality of image (Taylor, 1996). Stop motion requires high degrees of patience, rigor, and passion, and a clear understanding of movement (Selby, 2009; Purves, 2008).

*Art education and stop motion animation.* Animation is being used in the art classroom to blend creativity with many different types of intelligences and abilities (Berarducci, 1971; Ruble and Lysne, 2010; Pawlivsky-Love, 2005; Boudjikianian, 2005; Schantz, 1998). When used in the classroom, animation provides opportunities for art teachers to incorporate writing narratives, storyboarding, collaboration, digital technologies, interdisciplinary elements, and expressive art-making (Davenport and Gunn, 2007, 2009; Greenberg, 2004; Bartlett, 2012; Ross, 1996; Hinshaw, 1996; Shin, 2010; Gravel, 2009; Pawlivsky-Love, 2005). Teachers can use stop motion animation to help their students understand, visualize, interpret, and re-create any concept from science, math, social studies, and art (Gravel, 2009). Art educators across the world are implementing stop motion animation lessons and activities inspired by famous animators like the Quay Brothers (2007), Tim Burton (1993), and William Kentridge (Stranieri, 2013; Esslinger, 2012; Pawlivsky-Love, 2005). Stop motion is also being used to explore other cultures through

ethnography and narrative exploration in K-12 art education (Davenport and Gunn, 2007, 2009; Ruble and Lysne, 2010; Rall, 2011). Art educators Davenport and Gunn (2007, 2009), teach stop motion animation workshops in schools across the world, specifically countries that do not have access to digital technologies and animation resources. Through student animations, they study how underrepresented populations with little exposure to global media discourse begin not only to develop a critical stance toward dominant messages in the media but also to assert their own voices and perspectives in unfamiliar formats (Davenport and Gunn, 2009).

#### Summary to Literature and Media Review

Autoethnography is the practice of culturally contextualizing oneself and relating personal experiences to contemporary society (Reed-Danahay, 1997). Most autoethnographic works display elements of hybridity by combining autobiographical writing with different forms of life narrative (Hamilton, Smith, and Worthington, 2008). Today's autoethnographers often communicate their self-studies as short stories, creative essays, poems, novels, performances, artworks, videos, or other experimental texts (Ellis, 2004). Autoethnography is founded on self-interrogation and identity construction, giving autoethnographers the customizable tools to track the formation of their identities. An autoethnographic approach to teaching and art-making enables the researcher to look inward and create self-reflexive dialogue that an autobiography, research paper, or self-portrait may lack.

Stop motion animation is a technique used in animation to bring static objects to life on screen. This is done by moving the object in small increments while filming one frame per fraction of a second. When all frames are played in sequence, the viewer perceives movement.

Animation requires unique qualities, skills, and materials that appeal to educators. Stop motion breathes life into narrative, bridging traditional writing and visual art.

### Conclusions

The filmmaking technique of animation guided by the self-research methodology of autoethnography can lead to unique works that contribute to the field of arts-based research and arts-based autoethnography. Throughout this dissertation, I splice and intertwine these major components to best serve and honor the great works and experiences of my students. In Chapter 2: *Discovering Self Through Animation*, I share how I discovered animation as an artist and educator and how I built a philosophy of teaching founded on animation and the community and connection it inevitably builds in an art classroom.

## CHAPTER 2

### TEACHING ANIMATED AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

As a doctoral student in art education, I was asked to design and teach a course based on emerging digital technologies and postmodern methods of inquiry. The university course was titled Issues and Applications of Technology in Art Education, and a goal of the course was to encourage students to investigate self and others using a multimodal approach to inquiry and art-making through digital and connective technologies. The course was offered at night, which gave me freedom to enroll in courses during the day. During my first semester of teaching this technology course, I was also enrolled in Dr. Terry Barrett's course on narrative inquiry. It was a natural reaction for me to learn methods of qualitative inquiry during the day, including autoethnography, and attempt to apply what I had learned in the course I was teaching at night. Animated autoethnography developed out of this cross-pollination, and while teaching the course I designed a comprehensive unit plan for pre-service art educators to explore animated autoethnography.

#### Course Structure and Classroom Practices

Choosing to come to the University of North Texas in 2010 to pursue my PhD in Art Education was a complicated decision. Moving from Georgia to Texas and leaving a paid position had its risks, but during my spring visit to UNT's College of Visual Arts and Design I received a tour of the art building and a glimpse into my future classroom. The classroom, room 338 at the Art Building, was recently converted to an Apple iMac lab with twenty-five computer stations, an overhead projector, a professional quality document scanner, an ink jet printer, and



the Adobe software suite. All doubts or worries about moving to Texas lifted when I saw the classroom, and within a year of my visit I was teaching a course in that same space.

I started teaching and designing curricula for AEAH 3770/5767 Issues and Applications of Technology in Art Education in the spring of 2011. The course is an exploration of the role of computers as a tool in visual arts studies. Emphasis was placed on the visual, conceptual, and practical use of computers as a medium for making art and connecting to the practice of art education. We explored historical and philosophical issues related to the use of technology in the art classroom, as well as advanced applications of technologies to enhance the acquisition of and manipulation of knowledge and imagery. After teaching the course for a semester, I began to shift the direction of the curriculum to be more inquiry-based and explore the role of digital technologies in art-making, culture, qualitative research, educational instruction, and student-centered pedagogy. In 2012, I implemented four central themes and clearer objectives that reflected the needs and interests of my university art education students. The four central themes for the course were Barriers, Re-Imagining Life, Empathy, and Interaction. The course objectives were as follows:

- To experience empathy through animation and video game design
- To examine technology trends in art education
- To explore arts-based research using digital media
- To develop lessons and philosophies that use social media
- To recognize the social and political implications and impact of digital technologies
- To explore narrative inquiry through animation, podcasting, and blogging
- To increase appreciation and use of computer technologies in K-12 art education

Evolving topics were explored through discussion, experimentation, design, making, reflection, and collaboration. The course aimed to overcome technological and institutional barriers in schools by using dialogue and innovative problem solving. Rebranding the course to include more inquiry and contemporary culture helped reinforce that AEAH 3770/5767 is not about gadgets and operating systems, but is founded in inquiry, community, and possibility.

The required textbook for the course was *Inter/Actions/Inter/Sections: Art Education in a Digital Visual Culture* (2010) by Robert Sweeny. I also required students to bring a digital camera or smart phone, camera tripod, and flash drive to each class session. The classroom was equipped with everything else to ensure students were getting exposed to the latest innovations in art education. The course structure consisted of weekly class discussions, short lectures, online communications, blog assignments, experimentations with art-making and teaching technologies, and curriculum development. Students created several in-depth technology-based art projects and participated in the creation of the course website. A unique environment and even specific lexicon formed within a few months of implementing my new vision for the course. The animated autoethnography project emerged and developed in this environment.

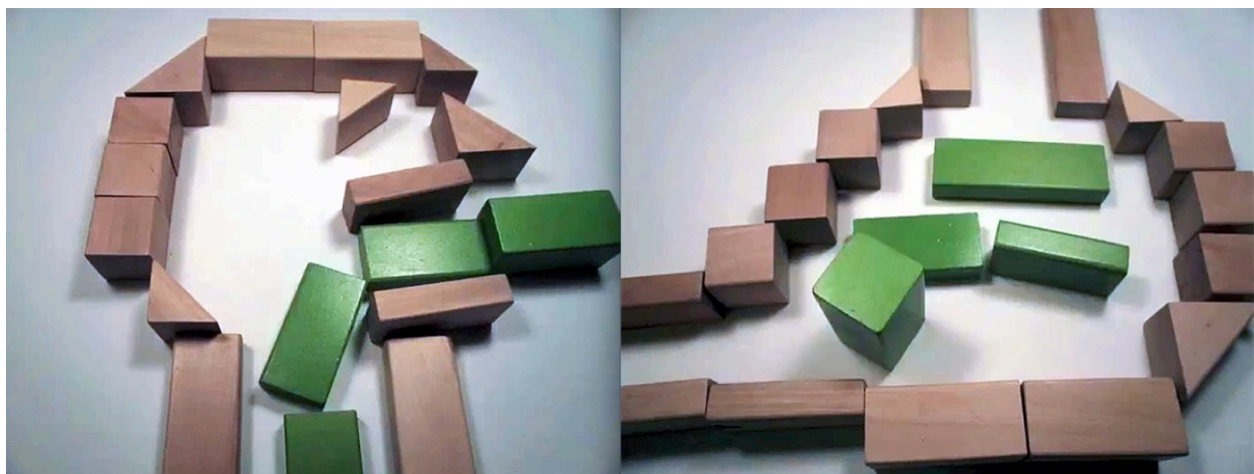
### Fusing Animation and Autoethnography

Autoethnography quickly became a much-needed bridge that linked my life experiences to my scholarship. I did not realize that life could be a strong and viable source of data until I discovered autoethnography in Dr. Terry Barrett's narrative inquiry course. My first exposure to autoethnography was in written form, so I wrote multiple autoethnographic works that school year before merging animation and autoethnography. However, I felt constrained in my expression and articulation by being restricted to writing. As a K-12 classroom teacher, I often

viewed my life experiences, specifically my experiences with bipolar disorder, as a square peg and my professional practices as the round hole. The idea of developing an animated version of autoethnography eventually emerged from these experiments.

I created my first experimental animated autoethnography in 2011 as a pilot project for my technology course AEAH 3770/5767. *The Day I Held His Hand* (Blair, 2015a) is a stop motion animation that investigates my ongoing relationship with my father and how attempting suicide several years ago led to me to discover the experiential meaning of unconditional love. The video uses the art of stop motion animation and depicts my ingesting poison, having my stomach pumped, and being comforted by holding my father's hand (see Figure 1). I used children's building blocks to create the animation because the topics depicted had the potential to be very graphic, making a realistic portrayal distracting for some viewers.

In the animation, the wooden blocks rotate in and out, morphing into different facial features and body parts. At one point, my head transforms into my stomach so viewers can see the consumed poison inside of my body (see Figure 1). In chapter 4, I revisit this animation and provide detailed accounts of my processes, discoveries, and connections.



*Figure 1.* Screen shot of *The Day I Held His Hand*, Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation, 2012.

Animation's frame-by-frame process allows the animator to reflect on and manipulate each individual image in the film. This type of dissection and reflection can encourage insights that would otherwise remain static or hidden. Autoethnographers can similarly dissect specific moments of life through inquiry and discover the minute details and communications that defined those moments or relationships. As evidenced later in this study, stop motion animation, combined with the autoethnographic research method, can encapsulate, celebrate, and reinterpret experiences and encourage a dialogic environment in the art classroom.

#### Animated Autoethnography Assignment Criteria and Lesson

Teaching animation during my first year at UNT was successful, and undergraduate and graduate students who enrolled in my class enjoyed the experiments, many of them proudly posting their digital works on social media. At the time, I was still teaching the same exact lesson plans I developed at my high school years before, but I knew there was much more to discover in the richness of classroom technology. This was my fourth consecutive year teaching animation as part of my art education curricula, and I decided that animation fused with autoethnography could be a possible topic to explore throughout my coursework and even my dissertation.

In 2012, after I redesigned AEAH 3770/5767, I decided to make animated autoethnography the featured project. I added more structure and qualitative components to the project to ensure that I was gathering all available data. Instead of experimenting with animation, like I had been teaching the last few years, I integrated blog assignments, research objectives, filmmaking techniques, and presentations to the assignment. Confident in my planning and organization of the animated autoethnography unit, I decided to conduct a pilot study to see the potential this type of animation and inquiry might have for my future teaching and research

practices (Blair, 2014).

Formal requirements for the assignment are for students to draft an autoethnographic research question, write and post a detailed animation proposal to the class blog, create a stop motion animation that addresses and investigates their research question, post a thoughtful reflection blog, and present their finished animated short to the class community. The criteria for the animated autoethnography project encourages students to produce words and images that are rich with data, but my perspective as the instructor and designer of the project is just as rich. This is why I decided to weave actor-network theory throughout all aspects of this research project. I want to ensure that the perspectives of the students, teacher, community, and the individual animations are treated as equal.

My role as the instructor was to prepare and inspire my twenty-five art education pre-service students to participate and to create animations that investigate self and connect with others. I started my lesson by presenting the history of animation through various DVDs I rented from the university library (Judge and Hertzfeldt, 2004a; Svankmajer, 2007; Larkin, 1968; Bickford, 1988). After establishing a historical foundation, I led students through a stop motion animation workshop where I demonstrated various stop motion animation techniques, introduced new terms, and reviewed basic video editing on iMovie. The large demonstration table in the classroom was covered in action figures, dolls, play dough, fishing line, green plastic army men, glitter, art supplies, cheap digital cameras, and a Mr. Potato Head toy. The animation techniques most popular with students were pixilation and claymation, and I gave students the entire class period to experiment and learn the basics of animation and movie editing.

The next class period was dedicated to introducing the concept of autoethnography by highlighting specific works that I discovered in Dr. Barrett's course that year. I then introduced

the specific criteria for the animated autoethnography project once students shared their animation experiments and proved that they understood the intentions and nuances of autoethnography through our intimate class discussions. I projected the criteria on the screen. The first component was the Animated Autoethnography Proposal Blog. I required students to draft self-research questions and write detailed blog posts so that their peers and I would be able to comment on and support their work. Many students worked collaboratively in and out of class to create their films. Many questions were fielded and resources shared during the animation phase of the project, and I encouraged students to leave the building and explore the UNT campus with their cameras.

After three class sessions of studio time, I led an editing review session and consulted with each student in order to help enhance his or her animations. I discovered through observations that animation was intuitive to most students, especially individuals in their late teens or early twenties. I gave them the weekend to edit their films, and that next Monday students presented their animations to the class. Students projected their animated autoethnographies individually on the main screen, and the classroom community asked each student several questions about the work. Presentations took an entire three-hour class period because of the intimate nature of the questions and responses. Students shared their animation files with me by uploading them onto my flash drive. For assessment, I chose not to grade these works with a strict rubric. Instead, I established a numeric grading scale using the observed classroom community reactions and the insights each presenter shared. It was obvious to me after the first student presented their animation that a traditional assessment strategy would not honor the effort and spirit portrayed on the screen. I was initially shocked by the high quality and vulnerability of the works and gave the majority of students a perfect score for the project.

## Initial Teacher Discoveries

My initial discoveries with the animated autoethnography project in 2012 were exciting and plentiful. My first discoveries were that stop motion animation was compelling to pre-service art educators and that each student had their own unique style. Students voiced that they were highly interested in learning animation, but most had never been exposed to the art form. I later learned through casual conversations with the UNT art education professors that animation was not a part of the department curriculum due to a lack of expertise. This lack of history or expertise was not an issue in the classroom because the method of autoethnography acted as a bridge connecting lived experience and self to a new vehicle for art-making. Students gained voice and exercised artistic license in interpreting their life experiences and self-research through weaving autoethnography with animation.

Community played a key role in the success of the animations. The reaction and connection felt in the classroom was equal to the work itself. A poorly made animation that had rich content had just as much emotional and psychological connection as a polished animation with excellent craftsmanship. That concept seems obvious to me, especially when working in other artistic media, but animation has been known historically for its pure craftsmanship and indispensable formulaic aesthetics. As a researcher, I can examine the classroom community, the work of art, the artist and his or her life experiences, and the teacher by using ANT. My most vital discovery at this early stage was in realizing that all of those actors are equal to but dependent on each other.

## Impact of Student Animations on the Researcher

I could not have predicted the enthusiasm the majority of my students displayed while

preparing and creating their animated autoethnographies. The assignment reflected the needs of the department and the interests and strengths of the students. The most significant element from the assignment criteria for this study was the final animation presentation. Watching these final animations was a visceral experience. I sat at my desk in the dark watching the projected images flash across the screen, and I was blown away by the depth and sophistication of my students. Watching their works invigorated me. The notes I took just on the presentations given during one class period filled half my spiral notebook. I felt overwhelmed at times as my students confessed their fears and shared intimate details of their histories. I have experienced empathy for students in the past, especially my former secondary students that came from broken homes or suffered from a major disability, but I had never felt empathy through a student's work of art.

Consuming the experiences of my students through animation helped me to understand moments and relationships in my own life. I had not realized that watching and listening to my students would lead me to reevaluate my past and be inspired to create and reimagine self. Seeing and knowing that my pre-service student Alex struggled to hold on to a long-distance relationship brought me closer to her because I experienced a similar heartbreak in my own life. In the end, my discoveries and observations during my students' final presents were enough to cement animated autoethnography as the topic for my doctoral dissertation. Their beautiful works changed my life.

I quickly learned that expressing personal experiences of self is not alienating or uncomfortable if conducted within a community of people that are all willing to share and listen. If just one animated autoethnography were presented, the student might feel exposed, but when twenty students share their works in the same session, the classroom opened in ways I had never before witnessed as a teacher. I actually felt love in my classroom. Brown (2010) wrote "We



cultivate love when we allow our most vulnerable and powerful selves to be deeply seen and known, and when we honor the spiritual connection that grows from that offering with trust, respect, kindness and affection. My perspective as an educator permanently changed that night and currently I am interested less in my own perspectives but in how my perspectives and experiences relate to or engage with the lives of my students. It is that “sweet spot” of knowledge; as an educator and a human being, I want to be where we all intersect.

Watching these animations over and over at home helped me realize that I do not want to be an educational middleman or a talking head dispensing information to students at any level. I want my students to teach me about themselves and how they interpret their world. Discovering the importance of learning through empathy with my students is vital to my career in the arts but even more vital to my existence. These student works are invaluable to me and have positively influenced the relationships I value most. This is not another assignment or activity to me. I owe my students a debt of gratitude for creating these sparks of life that will inspire me for a lifetime.

### Conclusions

Like Barrett (2013), my students shared personal narratives in various artistic forms, allowing the classroom community to learn about aspects of their lives, which in turn developed empathy for each other. Developing methods and activities that encourage empathy and compassion in higher education will help prepare pre-service teachers to teach in diverse populations (Hollins and Torres Guzman, 2005). Having empathetic relationships with pre-service students and implementing art-based experiences that spark imagination may inspire future teachers to nurture their future students (Constantino, 2013).

As a researcher, I take a phenomenological approach, wanting to get as close as possible to the essence of the experience being studied (Grbich, 2007). This need for closeness is why I gravitated toward autoethnography as a method. The language I used while developing this project and the lexicon and research questions that have evolved are a direct reflection of my mixed roles as educator and researcher and graduate student. Empathy was a wonderful and surprising side effect of the arts-based autoethnographic process. The in-class animated autoethnography project opened the minds of my students and reminded me that education should be deeply rooted in connection and community. I want to create compelling animated works, but empathy has become an overwhelming element and bright spot in the method. I never predicted my students would be this open with their lives, which is why I want to pursue this topic exhaustively. In my opinion, these charged and reflexive works are reflective of a paradigm shift in qualitative and post-qualitative research in postmodern education.

## CHAPTER 3

### WRITING AND CURATING

In this third chapter, I describe how I curated participant autoethnographies and diverse qualitative data sets into cohesive narrative vignettes. Writing narrative vignettes helped me to transcribe emotionally-charged animated scenes into bursts of colors, sounds, and emotions. Vignettes aided in dissecting complex narratives, encouraged character exploration, and exposed thematic correlations among the participant's works. I wrote bluntly, honestly, and eloquently to best capture each student's voice, intention, and spirit. My goal is to weave a tapestry of words that will permanently connect the overlapping and intersecting patterns of self and other.

#### Animated Vignettes

A vignette can be interpreted into many forms, but the vignettes I have written for this project are personal and connective and look to narratively combine specific moments, moods, visual aspects, settings, and voices into a concentrated and cohesive prose exploration. To be honest, writing about and studying these compelling animations has been difficult. Their richness and liveliness deserves so much more than the textual response of a dissertation. I created my own autoethnographic animations and included them as an element of this dissertation to; I hope, honor and reflect the students' creations.

Like Stokrocki (1995a), I started planning the vignettes by writing down my first impressions of the student works and processes and documenting how my impressions changed throughout the project. I then compared my first impressions with the data I obtained through participant interviews; screen shots of animation key frames, and the field notes and class observations I had made several months earlier. I kept a separate composition notebook for each

of the five participants and compiled in these all the data, impressions, and insights afforded by their work. At this stage, the information was still erratic and disorganized. In preparation for my comprehensive exams, I took that disorganized and chaotic mass of information and created a structured skeleton of headings and subheadings in order to organize and effectively review the information. That effort to create structure resulted in a chunky and clumsy feel and did not appropriately honor the vibrant animations. My committee and I all agreed that I needed to redesign my approach and go in a more narrative and poetic direction. I ended up keeping and using the informational headings and subheadings, but only to prepare the animated vignettes writings that eventually transformed and warmed up the connections hiding in the written data.

For each animation, I wrote short art criticism essays that included vivid descriptions, personal and participant interpretations, and a brief judgment or value statement. These essays became the foundation for the narrative vignettes. I inserted my collected data and insights once the art criticism essay was established. It was enjoyable to weave visual descriptions of animations with the accompanied reactions I observed when watching the classroom community view the animation for the first time. Layering qualitative data narratively helped to contextualize the animations and built an informational structure based on experience and self.

I examined each animation's cultural references, semiotics, symbolism, language use, self-portrayals, techniques, and sound design in order to inject expressive language and sharpness to the vignettes. Any intentional decisions, implied notions, or unintentional actions that are documented in their animations or in my field notes were, I trust, recognized and included thoughtfully in each individual vignette.

To focus my thoughts while writing the vignettes, I asked myself a set of questions to hold myself accountable for the vast amounts of connections and interpretations that are possible within this type of qualitatively designed research project. Those questions were as follows:

- In what ways am I echoing and including the participant's voice?
- In what ways am I weaving my personal insights with the experiences of the participant?
- Are my personal animations reflecting, reacting, and honoring the participants' animation?

It was vital to write the vignettes so that they painted a picture or wove a tapestry, but I also want you see and witness these animated works while reading this study. Throughout the vignettes, I included inserted screen shots and key frames from the animations, but those screen shots are static and limited, especially since animations built from hundreds of individual images. To remedy this, I created a companion website (Blair, 2015a) to this dissertation (which can be found at [www.animatedautoethnography.com](http://www.animatedautoethnography.com)) so that readers can engage with the animations while reading the study. All five participant animations, as well as my personal animations are clearly labeled and organized for convenient viewing. The narrative vignettes will emphasize the deep and diverse modes of reflection I felt when I was first exposed to these brilliant works.

I knew going into this project a couple years ago that my words could never be enough to express the macro and micro nuances that define this form of animated inquiry, but by providing the animations online, I hope to connect you with these amazing works and present to you just how important arts-based autoethnography can be to the field of art education.

## Curation of Animated Autoethnographies

The curation of works to include and create for this project was originally a very layered process. Initially, I was most interested in the animated works that were created by enthusiastic and intrinsically motivated students, but I quickly realized that many quality works were left out based on my bias, so I established a set of criteria to help find the works that best exemplified the animated autoethnography assignment. I decided to scrap the criteria set idea while conducting a pilot study for this dissertation (Blair, 2014). At the beginning stages of the pilot study (Blair, 2014), I invited anyone who was interested to participate. Five students volunteered, and those are the five participants I have examined in this dissertation. The pilot study from 2012 was quite successful and published in 2014, so I decided to move forward with the same exact participants from the pilot study. Only three participants were included in the published article because of word count and time constraints.

## Weaving of Participant's and Researcher's Animated Works

I want to hear my own words loudly throughout this project, but I also want to harmonize with my students when possible. Effectively blending these voices was challenging but necessary to reflect the relational nature of animated autoethnography. I envisioned a marriage between the participants' interpretations of their own works and my interpretations as their teacher. The vignettes are not uniform in structure, but they follow simple guidelines and feature specific components. Below are the components that are featured in each narrative vignette:

- Autoethnographic self-research questions and written proposals
- Stop motion animation techniques and processes
- Art criticism essays with emphasis on vivid descriptions, layered interpretations, and judgments

- Researcher's insights derived from field notes and classroom observations
- Key quotes and comments from participant interviews
- Researcher's inspired personal animation
- Key frames and screen shots of pivotal moments in the participant's and researcher's animations

I started each vignette by describing the connection I have with the participant or with his or her animation. After a brief written introduction, I transport the reader back in time and space to my former classroom at UNT, so they can experience each participant presenting their animated autoethnography to the classroom community. The formal student presentations collectively redefined the classroom community and added deep contextualization to the project as a whole, so I want readers to experience the words, emotions, and empathic connections that emerged through the student presentations. After students presented their autoethnographies, I contextualized their works by immediately describing the animation I created as inspiration. Instead of long sections of detailed summaries and formal analysis, I used my own autoethnographic animations as a contextualization tool that shows the reader how I connected the work of my participants to self and others within the study.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANIMATED AUTOETHNOGRAPHIES

In this fourth chapter, I describe, interpret, interrogate, empathize with, and relate to the animated autoethnographies of the five study participants through creating vignettes that encapsulate the lived experiences and emotions of each student. All five participants have their own sections featuring their animated autoethnography and several other components. Each vignette features rich descriptions, interpretations, art criticism, and detailed screen shots of the participant's stop motion animation. My personal animated autoethnographies accompany my students' works, and I interlace insights from Olivia Gude's (2007) postmodern "Principles of Possibility" to aid in providing context with respect to contemporary art education practices and philosophy. I have curated all five of the participant animated works in this study and paired them with one or more of Gude's (2007) principles. The principles that best connect to these animated autoethnographies are forming self, empowered making, encountering difference, reconstructing social spaces, and not knowing (Gude, 2007). A summary section following each vignette revisits research questions, explores participant interviews, and applies a theoretical lens to each animated work.

#### *Monster*

*Monster* (Blair, 2015a) is an animated autoethnography in which Chris confronts his fear of his own genetics, embodied here by an erratic, lumpy monster that ultimately consumes him. Chris' mysterious medical condition causes mood swings, anger, and physical and psychological scarring that inevitably sends him down a path of self-destruction. When viewing *Monster*, note Chris' use of innovative rotoscoping effects as he transforms into his lifelong fear. Animation



scholar Paul Wells (2006) defines rotoscoping as the frame-by-frame tracing of elements in a live-action film or animation. Chris uploaded select frames of his animation and digitally added yellow shapes on Photoshop to depict his transformation (see Figure 3). Also, please appreciate his vulnerability and candidness in the film, since everything portrayed in his performance had been a secret until its debut. Chris used this animated autoethnography as a way to investigate, confront, and move past his fear of uncontrollable scarring.

Chris is a pre-service art educator and a former student of mine at the University of North Texas. Chris and I share something powerful and destructive that has negatively affected our lives but also inspired us to become better people. We fear ourselves. We fear the things we might become; we fear what others do not know about us. Our monsters lie dormant inside us but they still have control over our conceptions of self and especially our relations to others. Chris has a disease that causes his skin to scar easily and abnormally. His fear of the disease is so powerful that he wears extra layers of clothing and avoids getting in close relationships. But Chris' true fear is not that his existing scars will cause rejection, but that one day his entire body will be engulfed in scar tissue, turning him into a monster, the Elephant Man of his generation. Chris fears the future, but I fear my past. As reflected in the prologue section of this study, I have struggled with bipolar disorder since I was a teen. My fear is that the monster I used to be, the monster that controlled my life and my parent's lives for years, may come back to haunt me. The cyclical nature of bipolar predicts that I will have to confront my monster again sometime in the future. Through this exploration of narrative, I will blend our two fears to create dialogue and connections that can channel our fears into context and wisdom.

### Chris' Animation: *Monster*

It is near the end of fall semester, 2012, and it is animation presentation day in my art education technology course at the University of North Texas. Students have been working rigorously on their animated autoethnographies over the last two weeks, and there is a mixture of excited, anxious, and nervous faces staring at me awaiting instructions for the beginning of class. I do not require students to present but strongly encourage them to share their unique works with their peers. For formal presentations, I first call upon the students that look prepared and confident, assuming such things based on their body language and eye contact. Chris looked prepared, so I asked him if he would like to present first. He quickly agreed and walked toward the instructor computer with his flash drive in hand. I dimmed the lights to the classroom, turned on the overhead projector, and Chris located his animation file on the computer. Chris read aloud an excerpt from his proposal blog:

When I turned 15, I suddenly got this strange protuberance on my shoulder. I went to the doctor and found out that my skin was reacting to a scratch and had developed a scar that never stops growing. They are called keloids, and people who are of darker color generally have them more. Soon, more started popping up, and I went to dermatologists, who told me that there is no cure. So over the years I've been getting injections in order to stop these scars from growing. That is one of my biggest fears, that I will become covered in my scars.

After a slight pause, Chris pressed play, and *Monster* began with an opening sequence of Chris walking toward the viewer along the rusty train tracks of Denton, Texas, with the county prison in the background. Violins and cellos play. The autumn weather is evident from Chris' long sleeves and pants, the leafless trees, and gray brush. A creature made from mounds of brown paper comes into the frame and sneaks behind Chris. He locks eyes with the monster a millisecond before it attacks him (see Figure 2). Chris makes an emotional connection with the beast, like he might be looking at a future version of himself. Due to the nature of the glance, it

seems like Chris has interacted with the monster before and is not surprised by his presence. The creature attacks him from behind, wrapping its appendages around Chris' back. The scene quickly changes in location and time to show the origin of this beast.



*Figure 2.* Screen shot of *Monster* by Chris, Stop motion animation, 2012.

The camera enters Chris' home, and we watch Chris complete everyday tasks, like studying at his desk and eating a snack. While in his home, frissons of bright yellow shapes flash on and off his body (see Figure 3). These drawn shapes resemble the blocky organic form of the monster, providing an omen for the future. The flashing shapes start to cover his entire body, and it looks like he might physically transform. The scene switches to show Chris and a young woman walking down the sidewalk hand-in-hand, away from the viewer. Here we see Chris' entire back covered with the flashing shapes, but it seems as if these shapes are not physically visible to others, not even to Chris.



*Figure 3.* Screen shot of *Monster* by Chris, Stop motion animation, 2012.

As the couple walks down the sidewalk, Chris is overcome with emotion and rage and violently shoves the young woman into the grass (see Figure 4). His body language portrays that he is emotionally overwhelmed and on the verge of self-destruction. This is the critical moment of the film, according to his classmates, and caused the class to gasp collectively. After the shove, Chris walks home and goes to bed, tossing and turning for most of the night. The flashing yellow shapes pulsate and grow relentlessly, preventing him from sleeping.



*Figure 4. Screen shot of Monster by Chris, Stop motion animation, 2012.*

The music swells, and the video shifts from his bedroom to outside of his house. The clumpy monster emerges again, but he is alone. Chris has been overcome by the yellow flashes and has transformed into the monster, physically manifesting his worst fear. The newly transformed creature walks through the yard and reaches for the handle of a car door with his cone-shaped limb. It decides to bypass the car and walks through the gate of a chain-link fence. The camera zooms in and examines the many folds, ugly lumps, crevices, and wrinkles of the monster's paper flesh. The animation ends with the creature collapsing outside of the fence and falling on a bed of rocks. There are no credits and the music abruptly stops, with the camera staring down at the fallen creature (see Figure 5).



*Figure 5.* Screen shot of *Monster* by Chris, Stop motion animation, 2012.

The screen stayed frozen on the last frame of the animation as Chris stood in front of the class. Tears welled in his eyes, and he had to pause for a few seconds to gather his thoughts and emotions. We, as viewers, immediately noticed that this piece was serious and personal and worth appreciating. Chris articulated himself quite well when other students in the class asked him questions, but those few seconds drastically altered the feeling of the classroom and altered the way I viewed him as a person.

The suspense and tension grew with each frame. Everyone in the room knew something was going to happen. Everyone knew he was going to transform. The yellow blobs were the internalized emotions and fears that have been stewing and growing inside of Chris for years.

Chris' main fear at the time of this animation was that his keloid scars would start to grow uncontrollably, the bubbling scar tissue rendering him useless to society. He carried this hidden burden everyday, and it kept him from connecting and trusting others.

Class ended shortly after Chris presented *Monster*, and the students filed out quickly. I did not see Chris leave, but I know he was one of the first students out the door. After everyone was gone for the evening, I stayed in the room and revisited Chris' proposal blog. His autoethnographic research question reads, "Why do I have this disorder, and how does this disorder affect me socially?" I have asked that same exact question hundreds of times over the last thirteen years in relation to my bipolar disorder.

When Chris submitted his research proposal online, I was drawn to his topic but did not fully engage until his words and experiences were animated. I loved the monster character Chris created out of mounds of brown paper. Throughout the video, he implies and foreshadows that he will eventually turn into this bubbling, scarred creature by drawing yellow shapes on top of his body. Just before he fully transforms, he physically pushes his friend away. In 2002, while suffering from depression, I received a handwritten letter in my mailbox from two of my closest friends that demanded, "Why are you doing this? Stop pushing us away!" I physically and emotionally pushed all my friends, my girlfriend, and many members of my family completely out of my life. I felt the need to protect myself, to build up armor, like Chris' armor of scars.

The experiences between the frames are much more important than what the camera actually captures and projects on-screen. Chris' animation was well made and compelling in many ways, but it was not his animation that created emotional connection and social change within the classroom community and himself. The spaces in between were the moments I felt the most. Chris' tears motivated me to further honor Chris and to further contextualize and

understand the possibilities of the animated autoethnographic method, so I created an animation that examined the social ramifications of my suicide attempt in 2002. Through the animation I examine the moments I shared with my father to better understand the influences of my past actions on our present-day relationship. I used Chris' research question from his proposal blog as a guide, "How has my skin disorder affected me and my relationships with others, and also, why do I care so much?" I transformed his question into my own: how has my bipolar disorder affected my relationship with my father, and in what ways did our relationship change after my suicide attempt?

#### Researcher's Animated Response to *Monster*

The element in Chris' film that resonated most with me was seeing him transform into the monster he feared. I felt like a monster, too, during my few hospital stays. I feared rejection, imperfection, and disappointment. As a teenager, I thought I had a mediocre relationship with my father. I treated him more like a coach than a dad. My fear of disappointing my father and of imperfection led me to treat my role as a son like a sports practice. I would do whatever task he requested, saying "Yes, sir" and "No, sir," and only speaking when spoken to. My father did not create this culture; I did, because treating relationships as tasks was easier than acknowledging them as the complex, ever-changing, emotionally complicated things that they are. I needed my relationships to be simple and straightforward. I had no room for social complexities due to the emotional baggage I was carrying. Today, my father and I are very close and will talk about anything and everything. But there was one specific moment that changed our relationship from one of a player/coach dynamic to one based on empathy, compassion, and love and I chose to center my animated autoethnography on that particular life event (Blair, 2015a).



I can remember my mother screaming at the sterile humming hospital lights several years ago. I could not see her mascara dripping, and I wouldn't have wanted to. I was wheeled through the hospital with green poison on my face and coating my stomach. I hemorrhaged blood the color of seafoam. I will never forget the smell of half-digested rat poison. The nurse flushed a mixture of water and charcoal down my throat for several minutes. The plastic tube was thick and clear and could barely fit down my throat. My jaw felt unhinged, like a boa constrictor, and I gagged repeatedly (see Figure 6). The tube triggered a slew of biological avalanches—snot, spit, vomit, bile, tears, piss, and blood.

My father stood next to me the entire time, watching me with one eye and my mother with the other. The nurse needed a urine sample to test my kidney function; due to my physical weakness, my father had to place my genitals into a plastic container for me, a new low. Having your stomach pumped is extremely painful, but my mental pain was much worse. The physical pain from the tube induced moments of clarity for me, distracting me from my illogical thoughts and self-absorbed actions and focusing me on the future. I felt the tube, and not my depression.

I saw my father in a different light after that day. My father reached out and held my hand as tears were running down my face and the tube was clogging my esophagus (see Figure 7). He looked at me with tears in his eyes, too. My tears were of regret and embarrassment and fear. His were tears of worry and unconditional love. There was nothing in the world that would have kept him from supporting me at that bedside. I was a monster covered in regurgitated rodent poison who had rejected every friend I had. I was a monster who was going to make my parents live a life without me, but my father had faith in me.

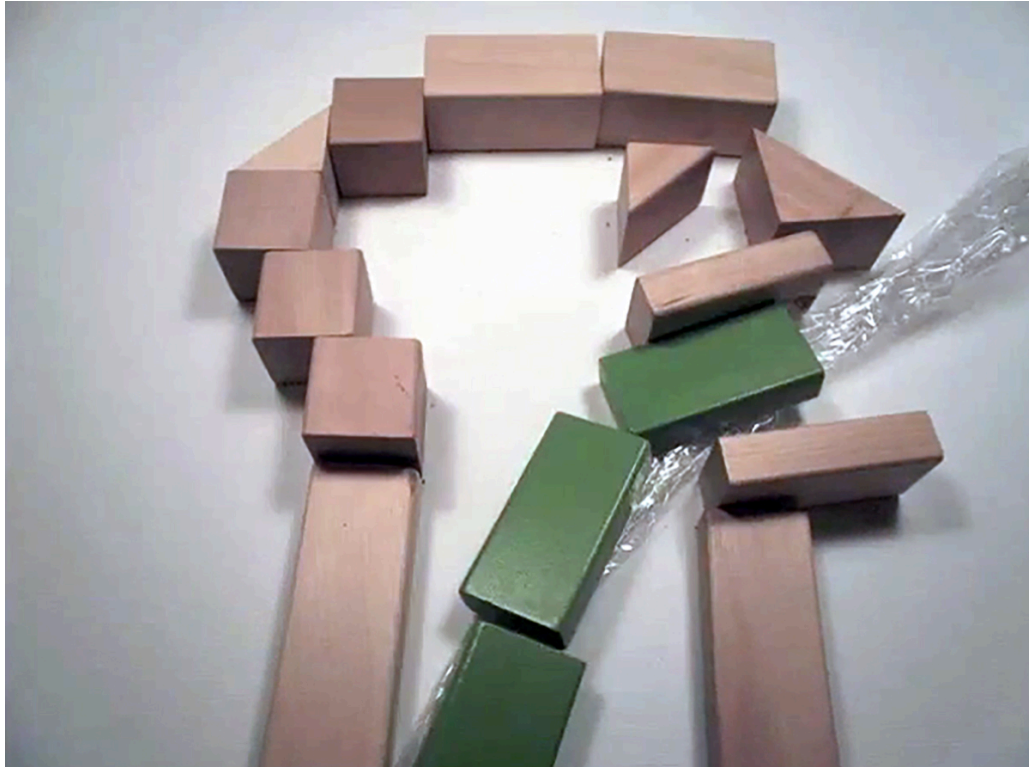


Figure 6. Screen shot of *The Day I Held His Hand*, Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation, 2012.

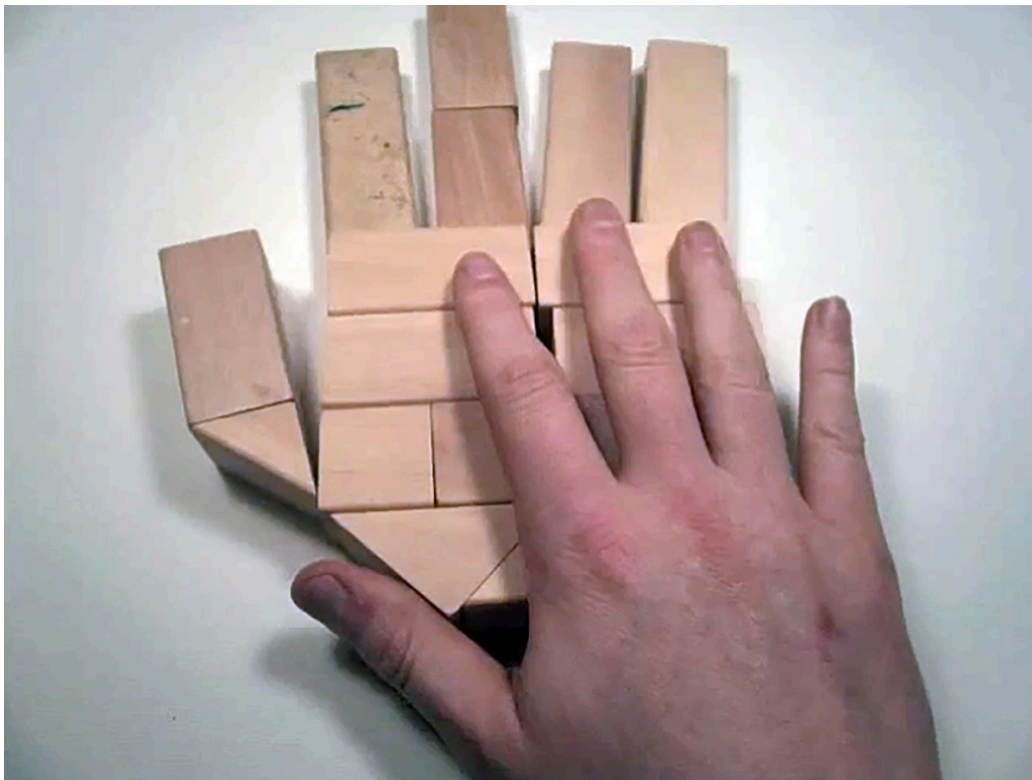


Figure 7. Screen shot of *The Day I Held His Hand*, Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation, 2012.

That horrific event is something I carry with me. But the way I carry it is my choice. I used to view my suicide attempt as a complete shame and embarrassment, but after years of reflection I have realized that it bonded my father and me forever. I may never understand unconditional love, but I have experienced it in a way most people never will. I love my father and respect him more than anyone in the world. Not because he was a great coach or because he is my dad, but because he could see past the monster to the person trapped inside for so long. What a beautiful person!

Chris' animation led me to recognize the sacrifices my father made for me during the weakest point of my life. My father was there to love me when I could not love myself. I did not realize this until I created my animation. He was there to absorb my fear, add clarity, and bring my focus back to love, and away from fear and loathing and apathy. I hope Chris' monster eventually serves an enlightening purpose for him, just as mine has.

The classroom community was shocked to see the vulnerability, expression, and exposure inherent in *Monster* because Chris was generally a quiet student that occasionally shared a sarcastic comment in class. Also, his skin disorder is not visible, so students were learning about his disorder for the first time. Chris created an animated confession that connected with students throughout the room and led to Chris finding and forming elements of self that had been dormant his entire life.

#### Applying Actor-Network Theory to *Monster*

In order to fully examine, investigate, and appreciate Chris' *Monster*, and all other animated works created for this study, I am applying actor-network theory (ANT) as my theoretical framework. The vivid descriptions of animations and the compelling narratives

featured in this study are engaging, but theory is needed to find new connections between and among the participants, the community, and their animated autoethnographies.

In actor-network theory, both human and non-human actors are credited with equal participation within all interactions (Fenwick and Edwards, 2011; Struthers, 2012). This unbiased association between human and non-human actors leads to the development of networks that may not otherwise have been discovered or appreciated. The seen or unseen ties that connect these human and non-human actors are called *actants* (Latour, 2005). Actants and actors are also equal but dependent on each other for the existence of the network.

When multiple networks are combined, *assemblages* are formed (Struthers, 2012). A popular example of an assemblage would be Facebook or any other large social networking site, comprised as they are of millions of individual profiles, rhizomatic communications, and constant interactions. Through using ANT, I have discovered that the classroom community in which Chris presented his animation is a viable assemblage of networks. The classroom community assemblage consisted of college students, Chris, myself, Chris' animation *Monster*, the emotional and aesthetic elements within his animation, the emotional reactions to *Monster*, individual technologies like cameras and computers, and the physical space and architecture of the classroom. All of these elements are considered equal under the lens of ANT (Struthers, 2012).

I witnessed how Chris' *Monster* enabled the classroom community to experience fear and showed how that fear has been shaping and directing Chris' life. The way in which Chris interacted with the classroom community was shaped and affected by the fear he was investigating in his animation. Chris' animation is an actor, representing an entire network of private experiences and interpretations that changed the classroom environment by evoking

emotional connections and empathic reactions from his peers and myself. McLuhan states that “Media, by altering the environment, evokes in us unique ratios of sense perceptions. The extension of any one sense alters the way we think and act and the way we perceive the world. When these ratios change, people change” (Blanchard, 1998).

Through actor-network theory, I rediscovered that the social world of the classroom environment is modeled by the roles, personal histories, and interactions of individual actors. I had been viewing the classroom community as a cohesive unit until ANT and *Monster* showed me that the classroom community was a reactive assemblage sensitive to the actors that existed within its many networks. Chris had the power to change the environment by choosing to explore and share his fears through animation. *Monster* acted as an actant connecting to and eventually altering the classroom network into an empathic community.

I also discovered that Chris’ animation is an extension of his everyday experiences. In the way that clothing is an extension of the skin, providing another layer of warmth and protection, *Monster* is an extension of Chris’ thoughts and fears, providing another layer of context and visualization. All of my participants developed a deep relationship with their animations, which have become integral actors in the assemblage of the classroom community. I was curious to see how the creation of *Monster* altered Chris’ relationship with his fears. During the phone interview. Chris told me that the animated autoethnography project deeply affected him:

Expressing my fears to the group created an awareness and accountability of sorts. I do not fear what might happen with my skin or scars anymore, but I do think and fear what might have happened if I never expressed my fears and thoughts through the animation in your class.

Chris seems like a new person on the phone. His voice was filled with vigor, and he was ready to make a turn in his life. His animation opened his eyes to see just how much his fears were affecting his daily life and happiness; by sharing his fears with the community, Chris discovered

that fear needed to play a different role in his life.

The ANT lens exposed a major breakthrough in Chris' personal growth. The fears portrayed in his animation were individual actors in a network of experience. Since ANT treats all actors as equal (Fenwick and Edwards, 2011), I noticed that Chris did not eliminate or reject his fears, but now viewed his skin disorder as a way to connect to others. Chris did not intentionally create *Monster* to connect with me, or the classroom community, but to explore his fear. That exploration led to his discovery that experiences and elements of self are individual actors, and those actors can shift and change networks depending on how we want to use them. Today, Chris speaks openly about his scars and does not try to cover up or hide behind baggy clothing. *Monster* created an extension of self that connected Chris to people and places he did not predict. *Monster* was the catalyst he needed to break out of his fear-constricted life. He has since internally reformed many of his past experiences and fears to be used for connecting to others through his career in art education. Chris formed a new self by exploring his fears through autoethnography.

### Forming Self

I have curated a thematic connection between Olivia Gude's (2007) *Principles of Possibility* and Chris' animation *Monster* in order to further the voice of animated autoethnography and establish the method as a form of art education that aligns and serves contemporary movements in our field. *Principles of Possibility* informs art educators about how to make art classroom practices reflect the ever-changing postmodern world. Gude looks to connect teachers and students of all backgrounds with a number of core principles that can help

embrace difference and community and make connecting with self and others a vital objective for the field of art education.

Gude states that art-making is a critical activity for students to further their emotional and intellectual development. Art-making can help formulate a sense of identity and who they might become in the future (Gude, 2007). Gude's work supports the idea that quality art-making experiences can aid students in exploring a child's sense of self within a complex network of family, social, and media experiences. She points out that, unfortunately, many art projects do not promote expanded self-awareness because students are directed to illustrate known aspects of self, rather than consider themselves in new ways by investigating elements of self that are often hidden or taken for granted, and she challenges art teachers to start asking their students to reflect on and recall experiences through making art. She suggests projects that reconstruct memories or describe how students' identities are constructed and reflected in the objects that they desire

Chris' animation exemplifies Gude's concept of *forming self* by defining himself and his relationships through the context of fear. Chris recalled his experiences, reconstructed memories, and even predicted his possible future. His unexpected positive insights into self caused emotional reactions and empathy in the classroom community and led to internal changes in his everyday life. Reforming his memories and feelings of fear led to a reformed student ready to implement quality art-making experiences in his own future classroom.

In response to Chris' animation that formed self, I strived for my animation to do the same by examining one of my most influential life events. In *forming self*, Gude (2007) states that quality art projects aid students in exploring how one's sense of self is constructed within complex family, social, and media experiences. I chose to examine my suicide attempt from a new social perspective in order to expand my self-awareness of that event and to connect with

my father and self. Before creating *The Day I Held His Hand*, I took my father for granted and was unable to appreciate the authenticity of his love for me. Reconstructing this vivid memory from one of self-loathing to one of honoring my father created unexpected insights into self. Today, I do not feel shame when I think back on getting my stomach pumped and all the self-hatred and sickness that consumed me years ago. I am proud that I was able to recover and refocus my life, but more proud of my family. I am inspired by my father's relentless trust and faith in me, which will be my foundation of self for years to come.

### *Here and Away*

*Here and Away* (Blair, 2015a) is an animated autoethnography created by Alex that investigates love, distance, and uncertainty through the eyes of a woman navigating a long-distance relationship. As time passes, Alex's bright smiles and laughs turn to worry, and her joyful walks through the park turn to drinking glasses of wine alone at the kitchen table. When viewing *Here and Away*, make sure to observe the evolving symbolism of love and love lost, and connect to the feeling of vacancy Alex feels as her relationship with her boyfriend fades, leaving her devastated and stranded.

In the summer of 2012, my fiancée graduated with her master's degree and left the University of North Texas to pursue her doctorate in art history at Arizona State University. I stayed in Denton, Texas, to finish my course work. Our homes were now over a thousand miles apart. We had been dating seriously for two years, and I had proposed a couple months before she moved. In August of 2012, just a month after Bevin moved to Arizona, I met my former pre-service art education student Alex. I soon found out that Alex was also in a long-distance relationship that had entered a period of struggle and conflict. Alex chose to examine her long-



distance relationship with her boyfriend Kody for the animated autoethnography project. I was excited to read her proposal and listen to her insights, because I wanted to learn from her experiences.

### Alex's Animation: *Here and Away*

Alex read her brief synopsis aloud to the class before presenting her animation. “My animation is based on my boyfriend and our 5-year relationship together, the moment I met him and those feelings you have when you first fall in love, and then when he moved out of state for school 2 years ago and how devastating it was.” After Alex finished reading, I dimmed the classroom lights and double-clicked on her video file. Alex is the absolute star of her film. She is radiant as the camera pans vertically across her body. With bright auburn hair, she is holds a piece of white paper with the word “June” handwritten in cursive. She shows the viewer scenic shots of Dallas, Texas, including beautiful sunrises and sunsets across the North Texas plains. She subtly smiles for the camera as she holds up more signs, one after another, reading, “July,” “August,” “September.” Flowers bud, bloom, and die as she holds up more signs—“October,” “November,” “December.” The mood of the short film quickly shifts from fun and playful to anxious and tense.

The camera locks in on her necklace. She wears large letters “K” and “A” for Kody and Alex on a gold chain around her neck (see Figure 8). Not only is she emotionally connected to Kody; she is openly wearing and presenting her connection to him. Alex is happy and invigorated with true love, running through fields of bluebonnets near the airport. Xylophones ring in the background as she blows a handful of glitter into the camera lens. Students watching in the classroom love this scene and collectively say, “Ahh,” as she dances through the frames. Alex holds up more signs—“January,” “February,” “March.” More and more month signs appear as the music starts pounding. The change in tone and cadence of the music is alarming and makes me think they are going to break up or never see each other again.



*Figure 8.* Screen shot of *Here and Away*, Alex, Stop motion animation, 2012.

Alex films a commercial plane leaving the runway at DFW airport then goes home and self-medicates her loneliness with wine (see Figure 9). The white wine pours in and out as she ponders her relationship. No dialogue is needed. Alex is using universal symbols to describe her love and despair. I intently watched the wine glass scene and remember relating love to watering a plant: it is hard to water and take care of a plant if you are rarely home to tend to it. I interpreted my long-distance relationship with Bevin similarly. Given the vast distance and our modest stipends, Bevin and I could not see each other often. As I watched Alex's animation, I wondered how Bevin and I could keep watering and tending to our relationship so that we could continue to grow together. I never would have arrived at this metaphor without Alex's animation and unique portrayal of her challenging situation.



*Figure 9.* Screen shot of *Here and Away*, Alex, Stop motion animation, 2012.

In the animation, after she pours her wine, Alex walks outside and stares down at her feet, placing her footsteps next to her absent boyfriend's large boot prints (see Figure 10). The symbol of the footprint was haunting but not as heartbreaking as when Alex kicks away a formation of small rocks that she has earlier formed into the shape of a heart. After she revisits the footprint and destroys the heart made of stones, she walks down the road by herself with her hand held out, reaching and reaching, but no one is there. Alex wrote about her experiences in detail through her animation reflection blog:

I wanted to start it off making a stop motion at the place we first met. He moved to California for school 3 years ago, then moved home, and then moved back again, so about 50% of our relationship has been long distance...that is a different animal in itself, and the mood of the piece would probably be a bit darker because the distance has put a strain on both of us.



*Figure 10.* Screen shot of *Here and Away*, Alex, Stop motion animation, 2012.

In my opinion, Alex’s animation was brilliantly executed and embodied emotions and thoughts that she was unable to write or voice. The classroom community was enchanted. I spoke with Alex on the phone this past summer and conducted an hour-long interview about her animated autoethnography. Alex told me that she and Kody had recently broken up after dating for seven years. She became emotional as she related this, and I paused for a moment so she could gather herself. I let Alex control the conversation as she reestablished her comfort zone in the interview. She said something profound: “The animation is a moment in time, a time capsule. And it shows how I have grown and changed, especially since that relationship was the all-consuming part of my life.” She went on to say that her long-distance relationship with Kody

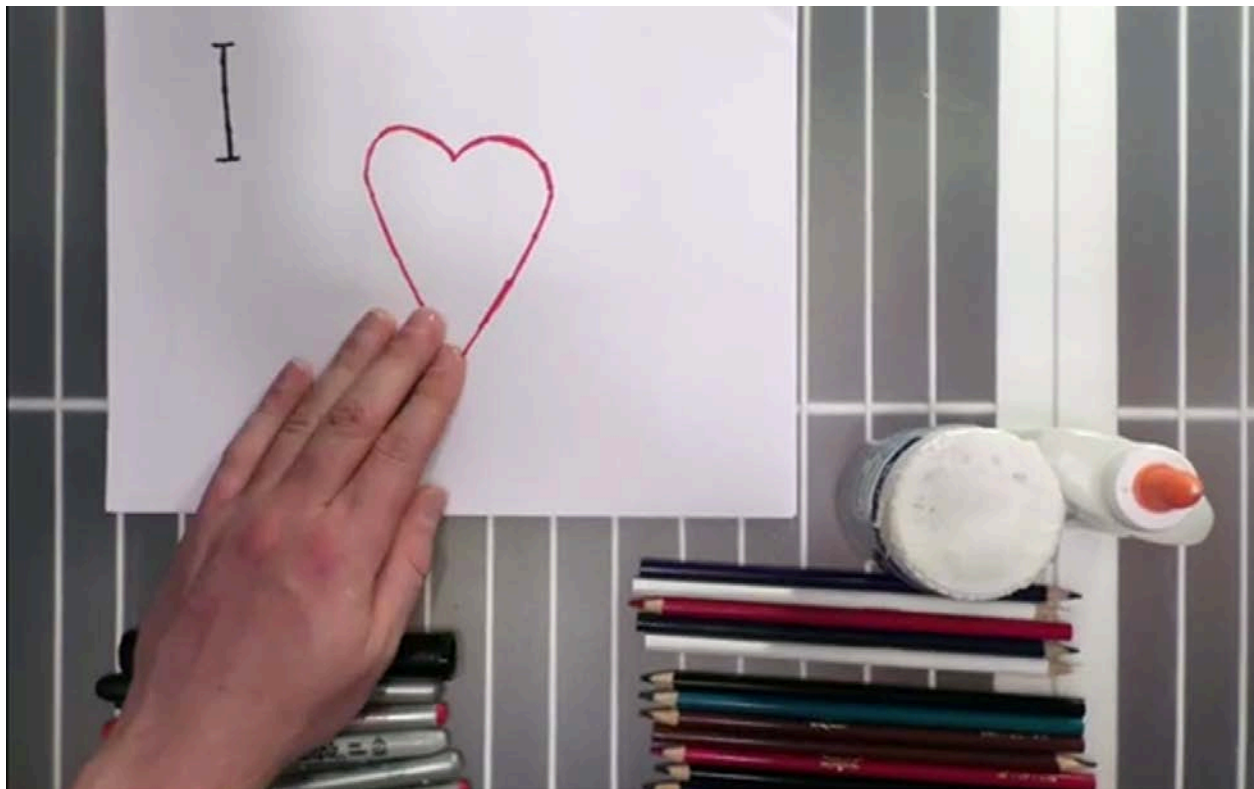
influenced all of her decisions. Something I did not know until this interview was the importance of her small group of friends and overall classroom community. Alex said, “They had seen me struggle. My friends were in your class with me, so throughout the semester they would see and ask me.” Alex got choked up again, and I felt horrible, wondering if I had pushed her too far, but she quickly bounced back and said that even though many students in the class knew about her struggles and supported her often, she still needed to create the animated autoethnography for herself. She wanted to know just how influential the relationship with Kody had been on her sense of self. I was blown away by our conversation and her sophisticated insights into her life.

#### Researcher’s Animated Response to *Here and Away*

Alex’s openness and candor inspired me to create my own personal autoethnographic animation that explored my two-year long-distance relationship with my now-fiancée, Bevin. *I Love U to Texas & Back* (Blair, 2015a) reflects our version of watering, or our new language that would foster growth and encourage healthy communication across the desert. We started making elaborate homemade cards, gifts, and paper crafts for all occasions and mailing them to each other. The extra attention and thoughtfulness of the gift-giving changed the way Bevin and I communicated. Alex’s *Here and Away* not only inspired my animation, but directly supported the ultimate success of my long-distance relationship’. Her images and symbolism and mood changes held me accountable and inspired me to investigate self. Alex’s video inspired me to find a way to grow closer to Bevin during those two tough years.

*I Love U to Texas & Back* starts with an aerial camera shot of me working at my craft table at my apartment in Denton, Texas. All kinds of craft supplies pile underneath my hands, and I begin to make a card for Bevin. I draw a heart on a piece of white paper and fold it into a

square (see Figure 11). Bright, fun music plays in the background as I stuff the heart drawing into a small envelope. I stamp the envelope and move to my next crafting stage, making tissue-paper flowers. Sheets of red tissue paper, scissors, and a stapler all move by themselves to create fluffy, colorful flowers like you might see in an elementary school art classroom (see Figure 12). The tissue paper flowers rotate, and when I touch the petals with my index finger, they spring to life and transform into a real bouquet of fresh-cut sunflowers. The film ends with beautiful sunflowers rotating and growing, but eventually devolving first back into paper flowers and then into flat sheets of red tissue paper.



*Figure 11.* Screen shot of *I Love U to Texas & Back*, Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014.



Figure 12. Screen shot of *I Love U to Texas & Back*, Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014.

I discovered just how vital Alex's animation *Here and Away* was through creating this animation. I enjoy expressing love and affection through making and service. Saying "I love you" is important to Bevin and to me, but the paper crafts have a more important role in our relationship. This coming May, Bevin and I will be getting married in Lubbock, Texas. We will have a large table in the reception area to display all the cards we have created for each other over the years as a way to celebrate our love. Alex's animation and amazing vulnerability played a key role in my own understanding of long-distance relationships. I am forever grateful for her contributions to this project, and I am certain we will keep crossing paths in the future.

#### Applying Actor-Network Theory to *Here and Away*

Through using actor-network theory, I have examined Alex's *Here and Away* and discovered new and intriguing connections to Alex and her work. The purpose of utilizing ANT for this project is to explore the relational ties within a network (Latour, 2005). In *Here and*

*Away*, Alex establishes a strong network of actors that include herself, her absent boyfriend Kody, and the geographical distance that physically separates them. As in Chris' *Monster* network, the actants that connect the actors in the network played a defining role in Alex's and Kody's future. Alex's long distance network featured strong actors and actants, but by examining these connections through ANT, we can better understand why their relationship was filled with loneliness and uncertainty.

For a network to be healthy and function properly, it must be balanced with equal human and non-human elements. For example, in Chris' case, his animation was the non-human actor that balanced the community assemblage filled with human actors. Alex's long-distance relationship with Kody struggled for years because their relationship network was unbalanced. When I interviewed Alex on the phone in 2014, she spoke positively about her relationship prior to its becoming long-distance. Once the distance was added to the network, a major element of their relationship had to be removed from the network, which was their physical contact and non-linguistic communication. Alex and Kody tried to make their relationship work, but after a couple years of trying, they could no longer stay connected due to a lack of intimacy. Physical intimacy, in collaboration with non-linguistic and non-verbal communication, was the vital actant that connected their original relational network, and without that actant, the network eventually failed. The distance forced physical contact out of the network, leaving a void that Alex and Kody could never permanently fill.

Earlier in this chapter, I shared that Alex's animation inspired me to create homemade cards and paper crafts that expressed love and affection for Bevin. I could feel the absence of connection and intimacy while watching Alex's animation, which scared me because I did not want to go through something similar with Bevin. Through the lens of ANT, I discovered that the



homemade paper crafts I made for Bevin became the vital actant that had to replace the missing physical closeness in our relationship network. Making paper flowers and hand drawn cards aided in reconstructing the methods in which we communicated on a daily basis, replacing physical intimacy and non-verbal communications with creative expression, prose, and gift-giving.

### Reconstructing Social Spaces

Alex's animation *Here and Away* best exemplifies and reflects the contemporary art education concept of *Reconstructing Social Spaces*, which is featured in Olivia Gude's (2007) article *Principles of Possibility*. Gude urges art educators to help their students construct new physical, emotional, and digital spaces in which caring and courageous communities can emerge. She states that young artists can reconstruct social spaces by escaping from the dominant paradigms in society (2007). Working collectively, networks of teachers and students can reshape their communities through creating works of art in all forms.

In *Here and Away*, Alex created an elegant problem statement in video form, but was at a loss as to how to improve communications and connections in her struggling long-distance relationship with Kody. Their relationship gradually fell apart once the actant of intimacy and physical closeness was forced out of their relationship. I wish Alex had been able to reconstruct the social connections damaged by the distance. Alex and Kody attempted to repair the original actant in various ways, but a reconstruction of their communication and overall network was needed to inspire caring and compassion and to reject the dominant stereotype that long-distance relationships never work. Sadly, Gude's words might have made a difference in reconstructing their relationship, but I discovered these ideas about a year too late. I am happy to report that in our formal phone interview, Alex said

animating *Here and Away* helped her visualize and understand the issues and that she was inspired to investigate future elements of life through animation and filmmaking.

In response to Alex's animation that reconstructed her social space, I strived to do the same by exploring my own long distance relationship through examining the way Bevin and I expressed our relationship through art-making. In *reconstructed social spaces*, Gude (2007) states that young artists should learn to construct new spaces in which caring and courageous communities can emerge. Long distance relationships are stressful and require adaptation to new environments and methods of communication. After viewing Alex's animation, I knew I needed to reconstruct the way Bevin and I communicated. I wanted our long distance relationship to be filled with caring and become a small courageous community. As exhibited in *I Love U to Texas & Back*, Bevin and I found that art-making and exchanging small homemade gifts could temporarily supplement our lack of physical connection and still effectively nurture our emotional needs as a couple. We had to escape from the negative stereotypes of long distance relationships and reconstruct our relationship by creating new ways in which to be together.

### *Bad Choices Aren't Genetic*

*Bad Choices Aren't Genetic* (Blair, 2015a) is an animated autoethnography that exposes the unfortunate truths that childhood is not always pure and innocent and that nature versus nurture will always be an ongoing debate. The viewer watches Chelsea grow up in a family marked by drugs, neglect, and homelessness, but she rises above her beginnings by rejecting her family's lifestyle, moving out, and becoming a first-generation college graduate. When viewing *Bad Choices Aren't Genetic*, one applauds Chelsea's vulnerability, bluntness, and powerful imagery, as well as her courage faith in her own abilities to design a fulfilling life for herself in

spite of her parents' negative influence.

Chelsea had a frustrating and mostly nonexistent relationship with her parents at the time of this study. She was very open with how she was raised in an environment of drug abuse, neglect, and homelessness. She created an animated autoethnography that investigated her troubled childhood and how she eventually overcame it. Chelsea and I had very different childhoods, but each of us faced a crossroads in our lives where we realized that we had to cut ties with several members of our families. Chelsea decided she was no longer going to live among her family, who consumed illegal drugs daily and neglected their family and finances to chase the next high. At the same time, in different states, my mother and I made the decision never to speak with her side of the family again.

#### Chelsea's Animation: Bad Choices Aren't Genetic

Once Chelsea was ready, I played her animation for the class. The opening sequence portrays her childhood home in Abilene, Texas. The small apartment, made from a torn shoebox, has a crookedly drawn red door and a yellow light shining through the window. Sand, dirt, leaves, and ripped up clover surrounds the box house. The camera examines the façade, and then tentatively enters the home. Different Barbie dolls gathered around the dining room table depict Chelsea and her mother and father.

Chelsea's mother cuts cocaine with a credit card while Chelsea's dad packs marijuana into a brightly colored pipe (see Figure 13). The mother bends over and snorts the cocaine through a straw while the dad lights and smokes his pipe. Chelsea, depicted by a small, pink-haired doll, sits at the table witnessing her parents' self-destruction. The Chelsea doll asks her father questions and tries to get his attention but nothing can get him out of his haze.



Figure 13. Screen shot of *Bad Choices Aren't Genetic*, Chelsea, Stop motion animation. 2012.

The video shifts after an eviction notice is served. Her family is now homeless and forced to live on the streets (see Figure 14). Chelsea chose to act out these scenes herself, wrapping up in a too-small blanket and lying fearfully behind a dumpster. The music builds, the screen fades to black, and then Chelsea re-emerges as a changed person. Now full of life, she proudly displays her high school diploma. Lyrics in the background sing, “How can you say I’ll never change? I’m still here! I’m still here!” The video concludes with a whiteboard animation spelling out the phrase, “Bad choices aren’t genetic” (see Figure 15).



*Figure 14.* Screen shot of *Bad Choices Aren't Genetic*, Chelsea, Stop motion animation. 2012.

Chelsea was emotional when describing to the class her choice to take photographs behind the dumpster and relive those moments of homelessness from her childhood (see Figure 14). Fortunately, she was filled with confidence and pride from having survived that upbringing and thriving in college. The classroom community was incredibly supportive and amazed by her portrayal of self-origin. Chelsea responded to her animated self-inquiry through the reflection blog:

This was an insanely difficult assignment for me. To go from telling no one what happened, to putting my past in the spotlight for everyone to see, was excruciating. And I can never convey what I was feeling or the experience I had, but I can let everyone know that I survived.

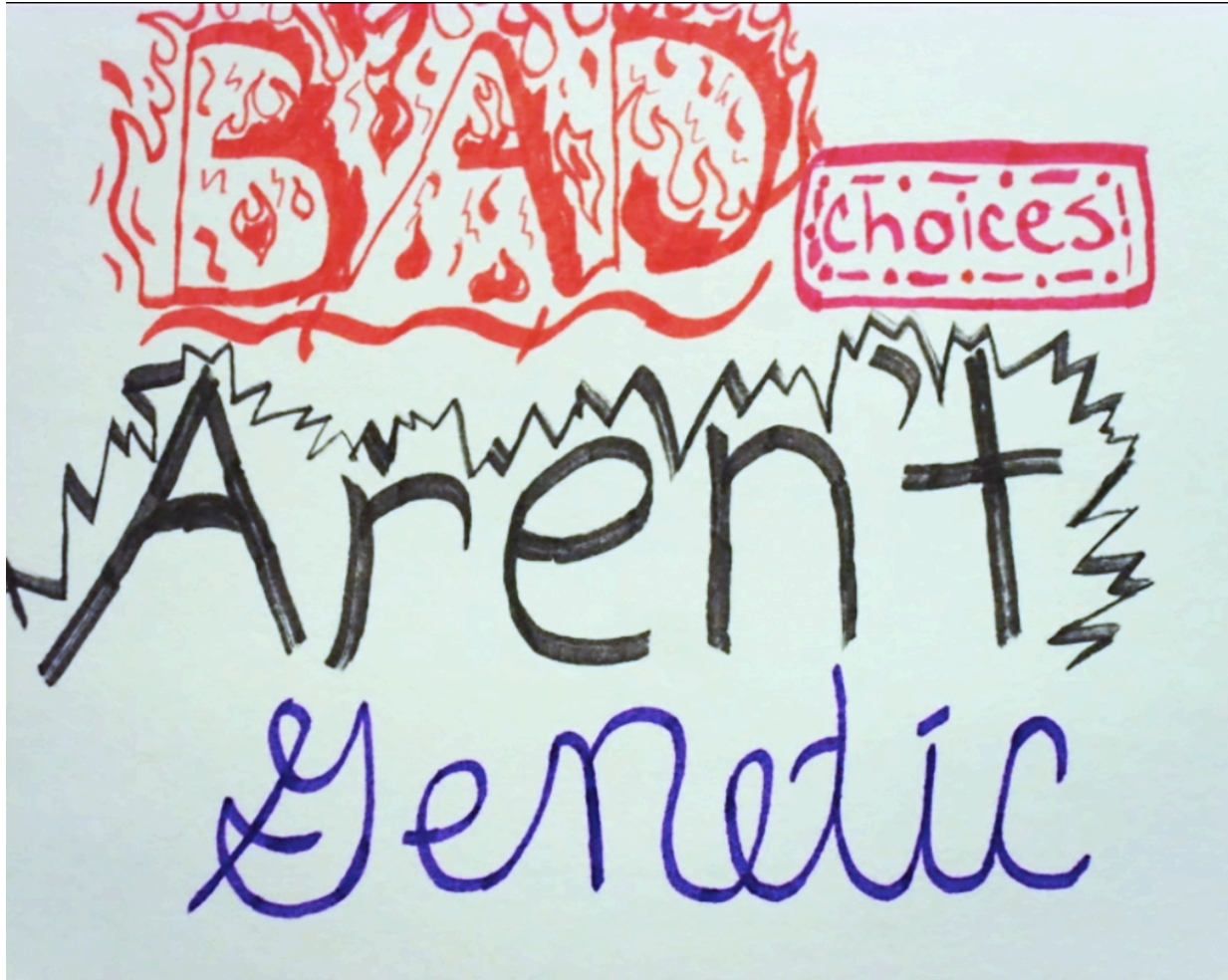


Figure 15. Screen shot of *Bad Choices Aren't Genetic*, Chelsea, Stop motion animation. 2012.

Chelsea's animation was inspiring to the class and visually stunning. The vulnerability she displayed and the pain she detailed in the film made viewers, including myself, forget that this was a stop motion animation using Barbie dolls and cardboard boxes. I could see the visceral reactions of my students. Some wept, some unconsciously held their breath, others looked around for a partner to lock eyes with.

Chelsea presented a compelling visual narrative describing the dysfunctional culture that formed her context of self. She exemplified the multimodal approach to arts-based self-inquiry. Because of her vulnerability, friendships developed that reshaped the way others viewed their

lives. Chelsea found the project to be emotionally taxing but refreshingly cathartic and she expressed herself openly through her project reflection blog posts: “It put me in a place I haven’t been in 13 years. I had to fight not to cry. I hope it can inspire.” Chelsea did inspire many of her peers in class, but she may have inspired me more than anyone else. Specific moments of her animation, especially the cocaine scene, astonished and awed the classroom, and Chelsea raised the bar for vulnerability and transparency. Vulnerable and thrilling works like Chelsea’s are the reason I am so passionate about this study. In my observation, she became a different person after presenting her work to the class. Before the project, she was shy and studious, but afterward became what my mother would call “the belle of the ball.” Chelsea’s smile lit up the classroom for the rest of the semester, and she inspired me to create an animation about a conflict within my own family.

#### Researcher’s Animated Response to *Bad Choices Aren’t Genetic*

My autoethnographic animation *Civil War* (Blair, 2015a) was inspired by the rawness of *Bad Choices Aren’t Genetic* and investigates the aftermath of my grandmother’s death in 2004. Like Chelsea’s animation, my work features vivid memories, conflicting emotions, and serious conflicts with family members. *Civil War* begins with a montage of memories all surrounding my grandma Ruth. As a child, I loved exploring her house. I remember climbing on her old couch that was covered in cigarette burns and rubbing the various types of wallpaper, upholstery, and carpet that covered every inch of her small living room (see Figure 16). I used to watch her stir large pots of macaroni and cheese and salivate as she scooped the yellow pasta shells into glass bowls. We used to watch old westerns on television together as I wiggled my toes through her brown shag carpet. But the thing I remember most was watching the delicate ash of her

Virginia Slims lightly hang and float through the breezes coming through her open screen door.  
Beautiful.

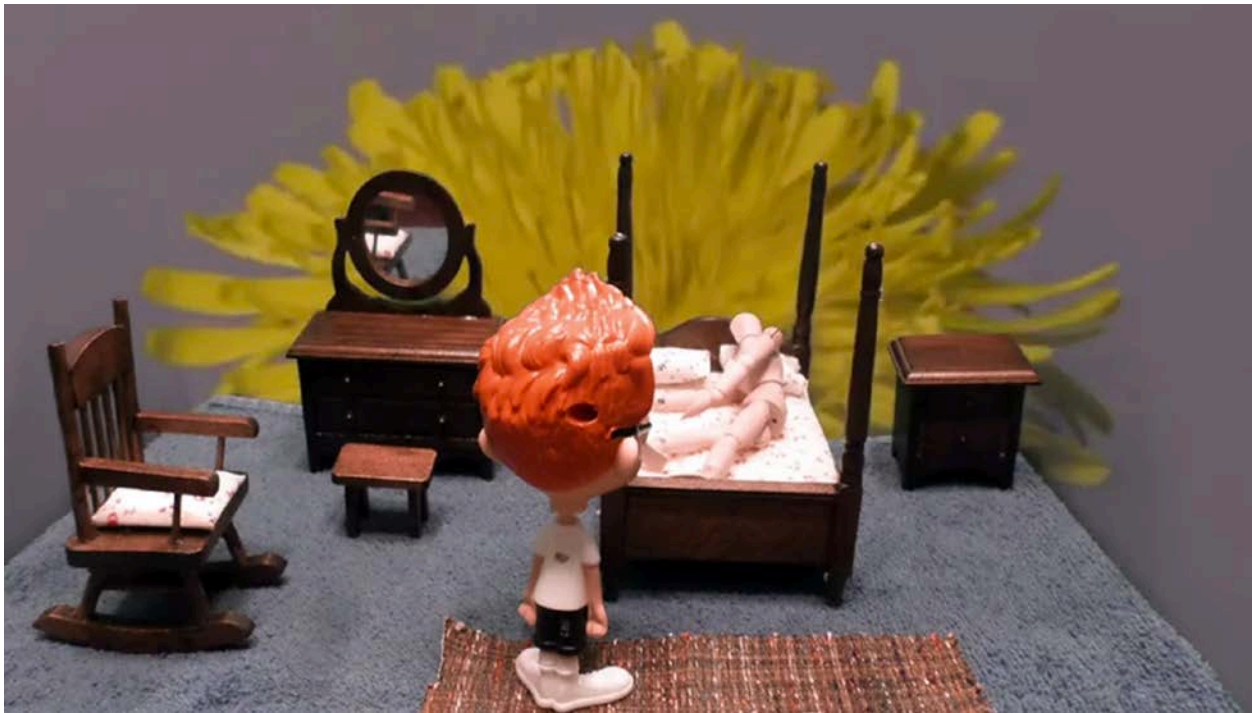


*Figure 16.* Screen shot of *Civil War*, Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014.

These pleasant times ended when Ruth was hospitalized for a laundry list of diseases, ailments, and disorders. To make a long story short, my mother had to make a very difficult choice while listening to the chirps and beeps of various machines keeping my grandmother's heart beating in the ICU of Good Samaritan Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio. On a Friday, my mother spoke with Ruth's doctors, and they decided that it was time to remove my grandmother's life support and let her pass. I was only twenty years old at the time, but I could easily see that this decision, which was best for my grandmother, was going to fracture my entire family.



I remember looking over her lifeless body minutes after the doctors removed her breathing tube (see Figure 17). Flashes of her life ran through my head as my uncle caused an emotional scene in the hospital. Ruth's death started an all-out civil war. In the animation, green and tan plastic army men bombard Ruth's body (see Figure 18), trampling me. In a flash the house is empty, with nothing but memories left to cover the walls. I went into her bedroom soon after her death, just before we sold her house. The carpet indents reminded me of her large marble vanity, and the yellow stains on the wood paneling reminded me of that elegant flicker of ash that used to dance around the dining room every night.



*Figure 17.* Screen shot of *Civil War*, Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014.



*Figure 18.* Screen shot of *Civil War*, Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014.

I have not spoken to six key members of my family since Ruth's funeral in 2004. Like Chelsea, I knew I needed to remove myself from unhealthy and damaging relationships. Over the years, members of my family have mailed hate letters to my mother and even egged my car, angry over the decision to pull the plug, but I have never responded to their efforts to communicate. I would rather honor Ruth's memory by holding on to the things I can control and cherish, which are the patterns and smells and textures of humanity. Today, you can find her antique wooden bed frame in my bedroom. The frame has been passed down throughout the generations, painted white, and covered in dents and scrapes that I will never paint over. Chelsea's animation and mine both examine the powerful influence families have on our personal development, maturation, and futures.

## Applying Actor-Network Theory to *Bad Choices Aren't Genetic*

I have used actor-network theory to examine Chelsea's animation and the effect it had on the classroom community and Chelsea herself. From the perspective of ANT, Chelsea, a young art educator, is simultaneously an active participant in hundreds and even thousands of ongoing networks and assemblages. Some of these networks are thriving and growing; others are struggling and dying. Chelsea, like most people, was a member of two specific networks that were conflicting. Her childhood and family network consisted of many actors and actants that were featured in her animation. Human network actors included her mother, her father, and herself. Non-human actors included her childhood home, illicit drugs, and debt. Her childhood network had many cracks and imperfections, but when her family became homeless, the network collapsed.

Chelsea's childhood home was a key non-human actant that provided a sense of stability and connection for the family, but once the house was removed, Chelsea suffered physically and emotionally. Being homeless was a major turning point in Chelsea's life. Even though she was only an adolescent at the time, she began dreaming and designing her own future network. Years later, once her designed network was viable, she left her childhood network, leaving her parents and unhealthy environment behind. Chelsea's newly designed network included actors that positively influenced her life, making her goals of graduating from college and becoming an art teacher achievable. These new actors included professors, a wonderful boyfriend, and supportive classmates at UNT. I respect Chelsea tremendously for taking risks, rejecting negativity, and moving forward on the path she has created for herself.

## Attentive Living

Chelsea's animation best exemplifies and reflects the contemporary art education concept of attentive living, which is featured in Olivia Gude's "Principles of Possibility" (2007).

Appreciating physical, natural, and relational worlds through art-making sensitizes students to the complexity and beauty of the world around them (Gude, 2007). Through attentive living, art teachers and students can examine the ways physical and emotional environments can shape one's quality of life (Gude, 2007). Students can explore the psychological impact of spaces on individuals and on social interactions through art-making and arts-based inquiry (Gude, 2007).

The psychological impact of space (Gude, 2007) is a powerful theme in Chelsea's animation. Becoming homeless was traumatic, but, paradoxically, it may have saved her. I learned in my phone interview with Chelsea that she was a very thoughtful and observant child. Losing her home made it clear to her that she did not have a healthy quality of life. She was sharp enough to understand that she deserved better. Living through a challenging childhood has made Chelsea sensitive to others who have lived through similar situations. Her role and identity as an art educator is different from most other pre-service students I have taught at UNT. She is, without a doubt, dedicated to providing powerful experiences, classroom structure, and overall accountability in her classroom and curricula, all of which are things she lacked as a child.

In response to Chelsea's animation that explored the phenomena of attentive living, I strived to do the same by examining the beauty and complexity of my grandmother's shared life experiences and the family controversy that followed her death. In *attentive living*, Gude (2007) states that exploring natural objects and phenomena through art-making can sensitize students to the complexity and beauty of the world around them. Gude (2007) also states that these artistic investigations look to explore the psychological impact of spaces on individuals and on their

social interactions. Through animating *Civil War*, I have discovered that the textures and smells and wallpaper patterns of life were vital my relationship with my grandmother. Through animation, I was able to recreate the essence of her personality by making macaroni and cheese, splicing clips from her favorite movies, and by lighting her favorite brand of cigarette and admiring the smoke floated throughout my room. Animating these small moments and elements of her life gave me a deeper appreciation for her role and contributions in my life. Today, like Chelsea, I try to appreciate my relationships and grow from the conflicts in my past. Attentively living allows me to be sensitive to the subtle human connections in my relationships and recognize that conflict looks to separate those connections through selfishness and anger.

### *Rupture*

*Rupture* (Blair, 2015a), an animated autoethnography created by Dorothy, transports the viewer into the acute experience of a panic attack. In the animation, Dorothy is walking back to her dorm room followed by sharp beams of pink light. These little frissons of panic collide and burst as she reaches the safe space of her room. In *Rupture*, Dorothy shows the viewer that panic attacks and being chemically overwhelmed can provide an appreciation for the beauty and complexity of the human condition. As you watch *Rupture*, try to feel the colors and the warm beams of light absorb into your body and use Dorothy's climatic moment of panic as a catalyst to appreciate our ability to feel.

Dorothy and I grew up in different regions of the country, and I am several years older than she, but we both have something significant in common: we both had major mental and emotional breakdowns in the senior year of high school. Dorothy was attending high school in Texas in the late 2000s when she started having panic attacks related to complications she was

experiencing in her everyday life. Several years earlier, while I was attending high school in Ohio, I went on an unexpected downward spiral of depression, panic, emotional outbursts, and suicidal tendencies. I would experience emotional outbursts at school, such as crying uncontrollably at my locker or screaming at the top of my lungs in my car with the windows rolled up. I slowly declined throughout my senior year.

The title of Dorothy's animation represents the physical and emotional experiences she goes through while having a panic attack. I relate to the implication of breaking or bursting without warning. Rupture characterizes the majority of my life between 2000 and 2004. Dorothy spoke eloquently about the illogical rushes of panic. She even wrote a statement in her proposal blog post that contextualizes and gives purpose to her panic:

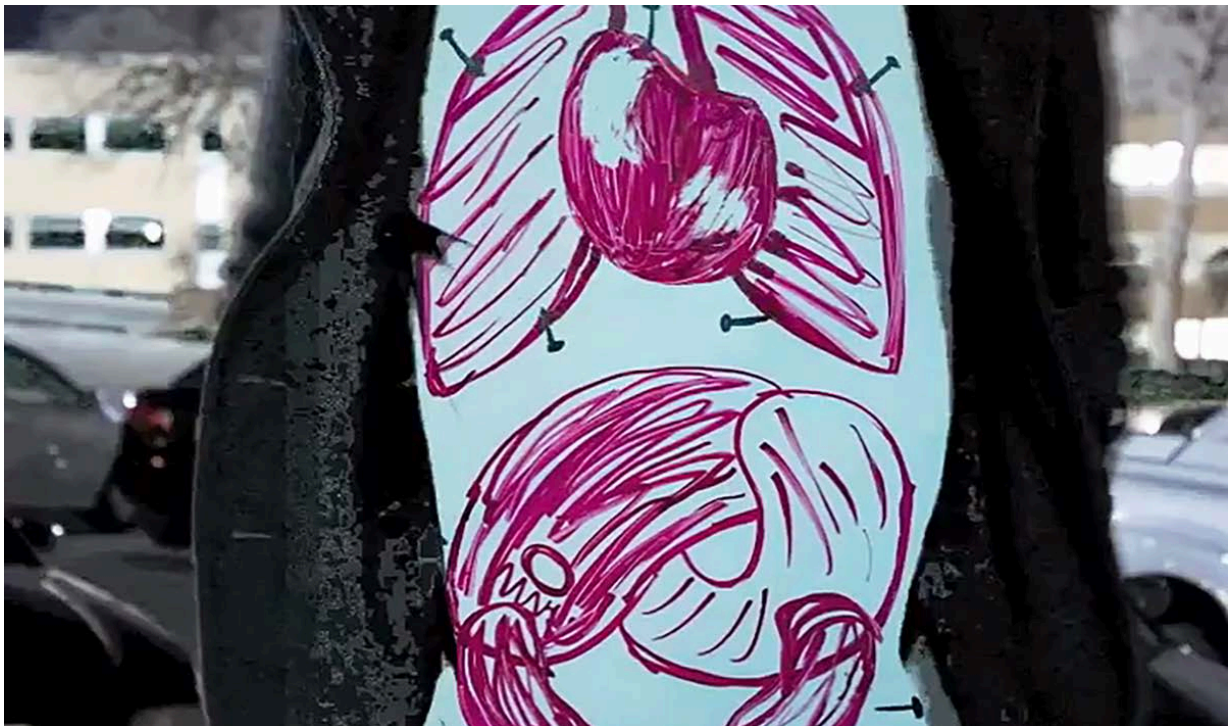
As a senior in high school, I had a breakdown. I started having panic attacks very frequently. A lot of things led to it. Even though it was a really dark time and my rock bottom, that time is what I'm most proud of, because I came back from it stronger than I was before. Through this project I want to express my belief that people's darkest times are the most beautiful, because that shapes who they are.

Dorothy's maturity and willingness to find purpose in darkness was inspiring to the class and to me. Most students in the classroom had never experienced a panic attack, and Dorothy took the time to explain what it feels like. Students were anxious to see Dorothy's animation and were curious about how she could visually and conceptually interpret a panic attack. We were all in awe from the very first frame of her animation. The visual interpretations are so compelling that I immediately started jotting down ideas for an animation inspired by Dorothy's lovely work.

Dorothy's Animation: *Rupture*

*Rupture* begins with Dorothy walking down a sidewalk. The camera pans from her feet

up to her torso. When she opens her jacket, we see her white t-shirt illuminated from her glowing internal organs (see Figure 19). We watch the animated heart pulsate and pound through the screen. Then, as we watch Dorothy climb the stairs to her dorm room, we see a thin red laser beam start to follow her (see Figure 20). The thin beam appears to have a personality of its own, and Dorothy and the light seem to know each other well. The light slows her down, wrapping around her legs as she walks past her neighbor's doors.



*Figure 19.* Screen shot of *Rupture*, Dorothy, Stop motion animation. 2012.



*Figure 20.* Screen shot of *Rupture, Dorothy*, Stop motion animation. 2012.

Dorothy enters her room, closes the door, and is immediately targeted by dozens of individual laser pointers (see Figure 21). Her white shirt is covered in aggressive, glowing dots. She slowly makes her way through the room and climbs into bed. The laser dots swarm and congregate in the middle of her chest. Dorothy now has a large glowing orb radiating heat and energy through the room and through her veins. The music builds from a simple riff into a symphonic explosion, and the red glowing orb of light bursts into beautiful graffiti lines and strokes of green, blue, white, and red. The beautiful lines and colors merge and form gestural shapes that flow around her room (see Figures 22 and 23). The colored lights wildly dance and swirl, engulfing Dorothy as the animation fades.





Figure 21. Screen shot of *Rupture*, Dorothy, Stop motion animation. 2012.



Figure 22. Screen shot of *Rupture*, Dorothy, Stop motion animation. 2012.



Figure 23. Screen shot of *Rupture*, Dorothy, Stop motion animation. 2012.

Dorothy's animated autoethnography amazed the class. *Rupture's* elegance, simplicity, creativity, and breathtaking colors and effects overwhelmed me. Dorothy is quite shy and was not ready for the reaction her animation deservedly received. The students in the class who had experience with panic attacks universally praised her animation. Dorothy responded:

The reaction to my video was surprising for me. That people actually related to what I did was amazing. I had a greater effect than I ever intended. I posted it on Facebook and my sister cried, having been through the same thing I have. People who have had panic attacks though keep saying that it's exactly how it feels. It was just really cool for me for my art to have an emotional effect on people. That's never happened before. I think there's something to using technology as a means to communicate an idea. They watch the video in their home and they experience it, both the visual and sound. I guess it just makes the art more encompassing, which really surprised me.

#### Researcher's Animated Response to *Rupture*

Dorothy's bursts of light that illustrated the experience of having a panic attack inspired

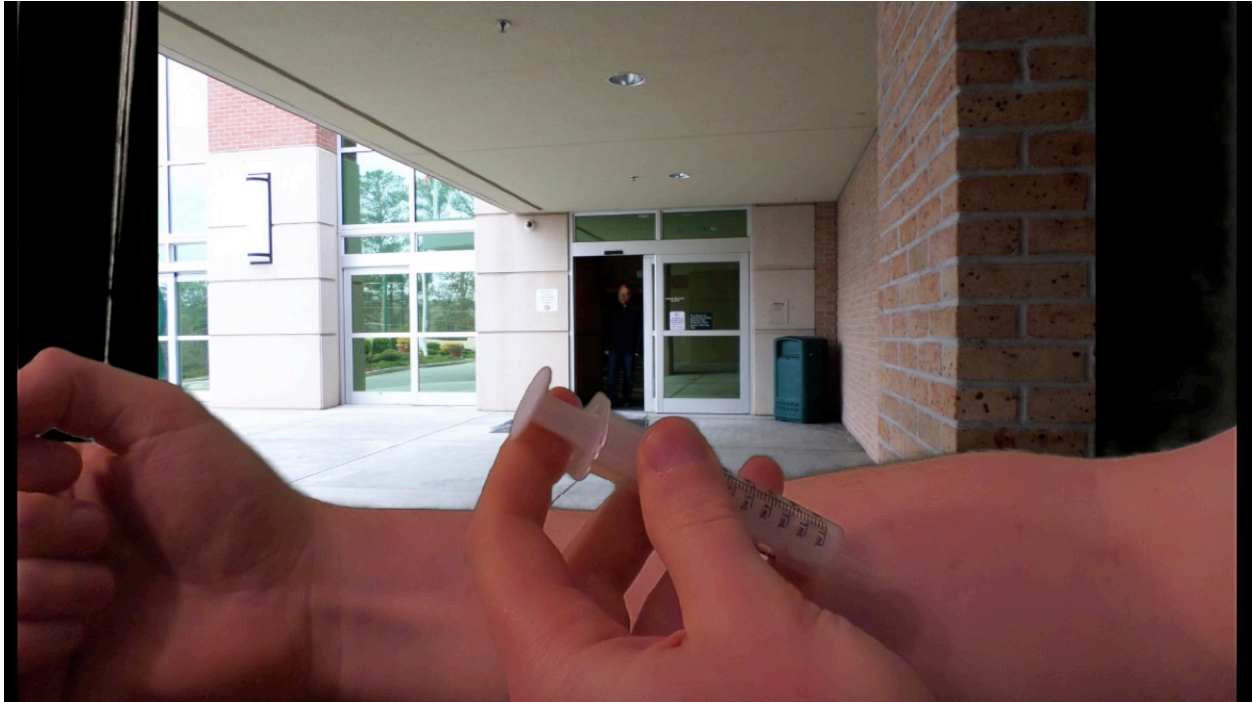
me to create an animated autoethnography that investigates how I became color blind after receiving ten electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) treatments in my late teens and early twenties. The first scene of *Colorblinded* (Blair, 2015a) features a ceiling fan moving erratically at unordinary speeds. The ceiling fan is a representation of an actual delusion I had during my first manic episode in 2002. I was young and living with my parents at the time. One day I stared up into the moving blades of the ceiling fan, and all four blades began to rock back and fourth instead of spinning like a propeller. I stood up to try to shake off the strange sight, and was suddenly hypnotized by a floor lamp that my mother had bought at a thrift store years before. I soaked in the light as the standard 60-watt bulb filled the entire house with white heat light. Beads of sweat formed on my face. I walked towards the lamp. Jesus Christ emerged from the lamp and floated on an orb of light. If the ceiling fan delusion was not enough evidence that I needed help, seeing Jesus in a floor lamp was.

I told my parents that I was having a nervous breakdown, and they rushed me to a hospital, the same hospital where my grandma died. I had been going through some intense emotional problems in the weeks leading up to this, but I had never experienced anything outside of reality. I remember staring out the car window on the drive to the hospital, watching the buildings flicker by. Once we arrived (see Figure 24), the doctors decided it would be best to try ECT because medications and psychotherapy were not working. ECT is a medical treatment for severe mental illness wherein a very small amount of electricity is introduced into the brain through specifically designed electrodes and anesthesia (Stuart and Laraia, 1998). This type of treatment is only for extreme circumstances and is most commonly used for schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Within a few hours of arriving, I was hooked up to an IV drip and wheeled into an exam room (see Figure 25). The doctor slid a leather-wrapped metal headband over my head

and tucked the electrodes against my temples. Once the electrodes were in place, the nurse increased the IV drip, and I feel asleep. I woke up groggy a few hours later, and my parents drove me home. Afterward, my moods were not as unpredictable, and my delusions were eliminated.



Figure 24. Screen shot of *Colorblinded*, Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014.



*Figure 25.* Screen shot of *Colorblinded*, Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014.

Due to the initial success of the ECT, I received ten more treatments. In my animation, I attempt to create an homage to Dorothy's green screen special effects by superimposing colorful bursts on my chest to represent the electricity flowing through my body (see Figure 26). In real life, the ECT only temporarily masked my moods and depression; additionally, the treatments had the strange side effect of sudden colorblindness, which I did not notice until I enrolled in an undergraduate painting class the next semester. The painting professor was a very patient man, explaining over and over the colors he would mix to paint a specific still life set up in class. I could not recognize any of the colors he was describing; he suggested sarcastically that I should get my eyes checked. Before my ECT treatments, I had no problem seeing color, but today I cannot tell the difference between many common colors, especially navy, brown, gray, and black. My animation ends with me walking out of the hospital and looking at a colorful wooded area, except that everything is in gray scale.



*Figure 26.* Screen shot of *Colorblinded*, Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014.

Even though I have a colorful past, I have actively chosen not to hide my experiences but rather to invent new ways of sharing them. Discovering autoethnography has been vital to my experiences the last few years, because I now have a methodology that allows me to embrace and learn from life experiences and present them in an academic context to my students and colleagues. Dorothy's animation inspired me to investigate some of my darkest moments to find the otherworldly colors waiting to be released. In my phone interview with Dorothy, she stated, "I'm glad I have panic attacks sometimes. They make me stronger and I connect more with others...Many people have watched my animation and said that I perfectly described their feelings of depression and panic. Coming out of depression and beating the stigma is beautiful."

I connected with Dorothy throughout this project, because she also has chosen to use her struggles as a way to connect with others, to become a better educator, and to grow as a human being. She told me that the animated autoethnography project inspired her to communicate her life experiences more frequently and that, in her opinion, “Art is empathy. Making art is personal, and deep, and worth the risk if it touches someone else’s life, if it prepares you to accept yourself.”

#### Applying Actor-Network Theory to *Rupture*

Through using ANT, I have discovered that anxiety is not a negative component of Dorothy’s life. Anxiety and panic attacks are one of the many building blocks of her life and life networks. Anxiety actually balances Dorothy’s life by connecting her with family and friends that empathize and sympathize with her panic disorder. This support network of human actors is a significant part of Dorothy’s connection to society.

I have learned throughout the duration of this study that Dorothy’s support network may be the most powerful component of her social life. Making and sharing her animation on social media empowered her social network. People commented on her video and connected to her in ways I did not observe with any other student in this study. Many students who had experienced severe anxiety viewed her as a mentor figure after they watched her animation. Anxiety is a strong actant that causes Dorothy to react emotionally and physically to situations others might not, but anxiety is also the actant that connects her to self and others, similar to the way that my bipolar disorder has enabled me to empathize with those suffering from mental illness. In her phone interview, Dorothy stated, “Anxiety has formed me. Without it I would be a shell of a person.” I admire Dorothy because she is able to use the actant of anxiety as a positive

connection that holds her network together. Most people I know that struggle with anxiety have trouble establishing a healthy network that is understanding and supportive. Dorothy has embraced anxiety and views it as a part of self. I now view anxiety as a part of the human condition because of Dorothy's animation. I also discovered that my own personal network of human and non-human actors that support and nurture me today also supported me through my past personal struggles with bipolar disorder. My disorder, and the vulnerability it creates in me, acts as an actant that connects me with the most important relationships I currently cherish.

### Empowered Making

The Principle of Possibility I chose for Dorothy is empowered making.

Gude (2007) states that making should be at the heart of K-12 arts education. Today's students need to learn how to construct and present visual images that represent and explore self and society (Gude, 2007). Projects and curricula that echo the values and theories and experiences of our era (Gude, 2007) are more important ever. By participating in such projects, students will inherently stifle the universal timeless truths that lack connection and empathy.

*Rupture* manifests the concept of empowered making because its unique, animated interpretation of panic embodied the many of the values of our era, which respects the expression of the vulnerable elements of self and humanity. The more we can create and share the uniqueness of life, the better we can reach out to those in need. The beauty Dorothy created through her animation empowered me to engage in my own making and inspired me to share details of my life that I used to consider shameful. Through making *Rupture*, Dorothy debunked the universal stereotype that having a disorder is a flaw. Dorothy said, "I wanted to create a work



of art that describes exactly how it feels. How anxiety and depression feels. Not what it feels like to suffer from it, but how it feels.”

In response to Dorothy’s animation that explored empowered making, I strived to do the same by animating a mysterious period of my life that I had never expressed through art-making or writing before this study. In *empowered making*, Gude (2007) states that contemporary students are living in an increasingly visual world and art-making is a key component to communication and expression in this era. In *Colorblinded*, I chose to animate my memories of receiving Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) because I wanted to feel comfortable and empowered by going through such a unique and challenging experience. ECT is only used in the most extreme circumstances of mental illness (Stuart and Laraia, 1998), and by receiving ECT treatments; a physician has most likely stated that medications, psychotherapy, and natural treatments are not working well enough to ensure the patient’s safety. Receiving ECT was a significant moment in my life and I want to find ways to visually express what those treatments were like and how they have emotionally and psychologically altered my conceptions of self.

Through animating, I have discovered that the walk from the parking lot to the hospital door was challenging and brought back memories of shame and regret. It was hard to look at the sign above the entrance that read “Hospital” because the building reminded me of feelings and disconnections that I repressed. Through this study and animation, I discovered that the significance of my ECT treatments was not the wires and injections and shocks, but the way ECT has tainted my definitions of medical treatments and hospitals. Some people may view hospitals as a place of life and birth and recovery, but because of the negative connotations of ECT, I view hospitals as spaces of regret, vulnerability, and disconnection. Through empowered art-making, I want to shed the negativity and shine light onto these experiences. *Colorblinded*

was a first attempt at this reconceptualization through empowered making. I plan to create more artworks that explore my experiences with ECT so that I can better communicate and learn from such a unique life event.

### *New in America*

*New in America* (Blair, 2015a) is an animated autoethnography created by Grace that explores the courage it takes to immigrate to a new country, learn a new language, and adapt to a new culture as a girl starting her first year of high school. Grace moved from Vietnam to the United States as an adolescent and chose to thrive and succeed. When viewing *New in America*, note how Grace openly reached out to teachers and peers for help and was proactive in her learning. Grace also shows wonderful skill in illustrating her emotions with simple lines, shapes, and figures.

Grace moved from Vietnam to Garland, Texas, the same year I started my first teaching position in Savannah, Georgia. Grace was new to the United States, and I was new to Savannah and the Southeast. Grace had the daunting task of learning a new language and adapting to a new culture, while I was transitioning from student to teacher in a new culture and city. Grace's journey was much more difficult than mine, but Grace and I used a similar approach when learning our new roles. Grace and I both eventually thrived in our new environments because we relied on others to help teach us and guide us.

Grace was very quiet and shy in my class, but her works of art were always exemplary. Because of Grace's shyness, I was unsure how she might do with the animated autoethnography project. When it was time for her to present, she walked to the front of the room and read an excerpt from her proposal blog:

I came to the United States about seven years ago, and I can never forget how difficult and different things were to me. I did not know English or the culture. I had to strive my way through the first couple months of high school, and over time my English got better and better. I was able to understand the vocabularies to do my readings and to write essays. My listening skills got better as well. The movie is about the difficult time I had as a student when I came to the USA. My English was very limited as I just arrived from Vietnam not very long before I started school.

Grace's Animation: *New in America*

Grace's animation begins with large white text on a black, outerspace background stating, "New in America" (see Figure 27). She shows herself spinning a globe from social studies class and points out Vietnam, her country of origin. She draws an animated map, tracing the outline of her country using a whiteboard and red marker. She then depicts herself as a small doll with brown braids, a polka dot dress, and large eyes. The doll walks over to a toy airplane, sits on top of the jet, and flies away. She draws another whiteboard map, but this one is an outline of the United States (see Figure 28). She lands in Texas, and the film shows photographs of her new high school, North Garland High School.

Grace, depicted by the doe-eyed doll, goes to her first English class in room 215. She meets a new friend and her new English teacher. Her new teacher is warm and inviting even though his assignments and vocabulary are overwhelming. "First Assignment... Write an essay... 500 Words!" Grace gets out a piece of notebook paper and attempts to write her first essay, "I am a newcomer. I came to the USA not long ago..." She turns in the essay and anxiously awaits her assessment.



Figure 27. Screen shot of *New in America*, Grace, Stop motion animation, 2012.

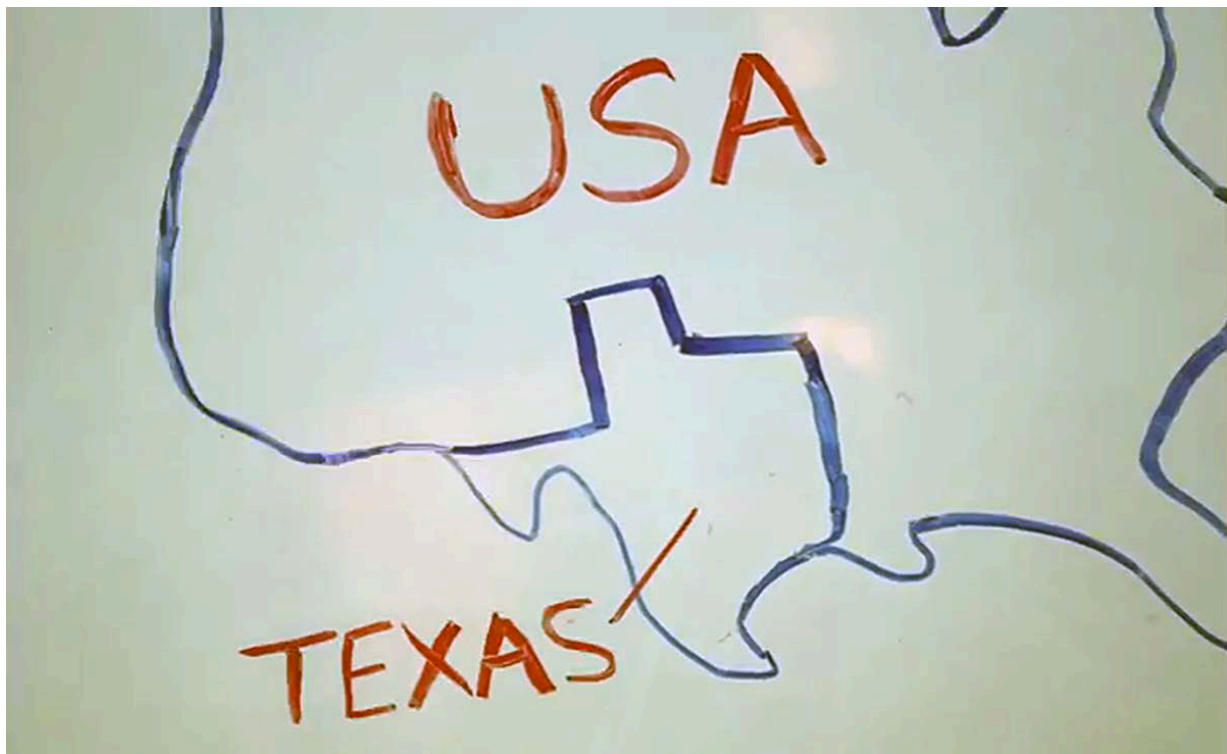


Figure 28. Screen shot of *New in America*, Grace, Stop motion animation, 2012.

The doll sits down in the hallway with a bold thought bubble rising out of her head:  
“NOT MUCH ENGLISH > CANNOT WRITE ESSAYS...BAD GRADES!” She draws herself

crying with a black marker, big tears streaming down her frowning face (see Figure 29). The English teacher finally invites her back into the room with open arms and listens to her frustrations. He tells her, “It is going to be okay! Don’t worry!” She smiles, her tears dry, and the video fades to black (see Figure 30).

Grace recreates her experiences through the doll and ushers us into a situation most of us will never experience. Even though I was born in the United States and am a native English speaker, I experienced deep empathy for Grace’s high school language barriers. The toys she used in her animation reflected her real-life persona. She included a great mix of animation and inquiry techniques and had the best edited video in the class. Grace reconstructed a life-altering experience and introduced us to an important figure in her life. Originally, she had no idea what she was going to research, but she decided learning to speak and write in English was a feat she relives everyday.

Grace is quiet and introverted, and the class community was thrilled to see her animation. Her peers asked her several questions about what it was like to be from a different country. She regarded her experience as normal, but most others were fascinated. Grace was one of the most empathetic students in the class as evidenced in her reflection blog: “I think it helps me to be a little more understanding by knowing a little portion of other people’s lives. And I think that’s what art is strongly about. It helps us relate and connect to each other.”



Figure 29. Screen shot of *New in America*, Grace, Stop motion animation, 2012.

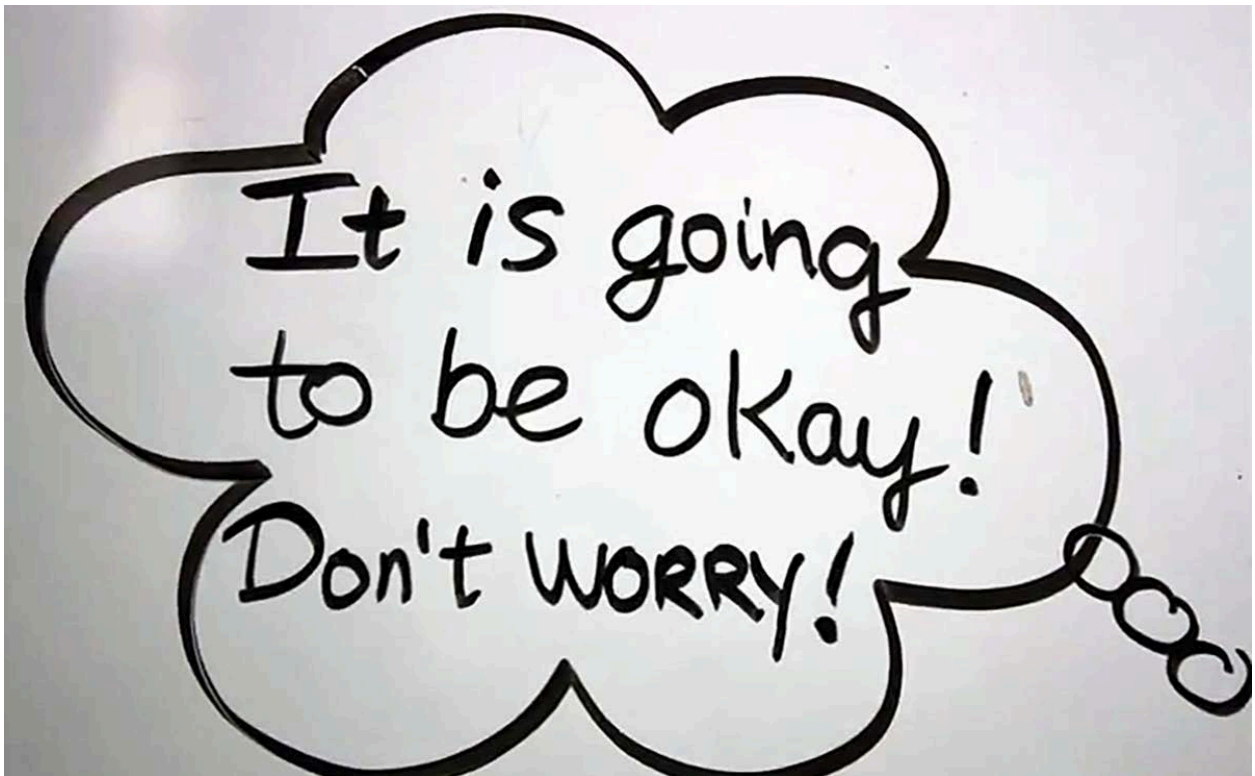


Figure 30. Screen shot of *New in America*, Grace, Stop motion animation, 2012.

## Researcher's Animated Response to *New in America*

Grace's journey from Vietnam to Texas inspired me to write, animate, and investigate a time when I felt new and lost, speaking a different language of sorts, being from a different culture, and reaching out help. My animated autoethnography, *Ziggy Artdust the Art Teacher from Mars* (Blair, 2015a), investigates my first year teaching, a journey I will never forget. My story does not involve the profound distance and risk of moving to a new country, but my first year teaching really pushed me to mature and grow in immeasurable ways.

I graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Art Education from Miami University in 2006. That entire next school year, I hunted for jobs. Having no luck, I decided to take a risk and apply for jobs in cities far from home. The number-one city on my list was Savannah, Georgia, and after several months of searching, I landed a position as an art teacher at Windsor Forest High School in Savannah. I moved to Georgia in the summer of 2007 (see Figure 31) and I had no idea how unprepared I was for living so far away from family and for taking on the responsibility of teaching.

My first week—even my first year—of teaching was not what I expected. The school culture in Savannah was much different from what I was used to in Ohio. My high school students had trouble staying awake in class and complained about having to make art. Art was not an exciting oasis for students at this school; it was viewed as a means to an end (see Figure 32). Lunch was often the highlight of the day for both the students and myself, and I felt like a fish out of water or an alien from another planet trying to communicate. I knew I had to change, because at that time I was only surviving in mediocrity.



Figure 31. Screen shot of *Ziggy Artdust the Art Teacher from Mars*, Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014.

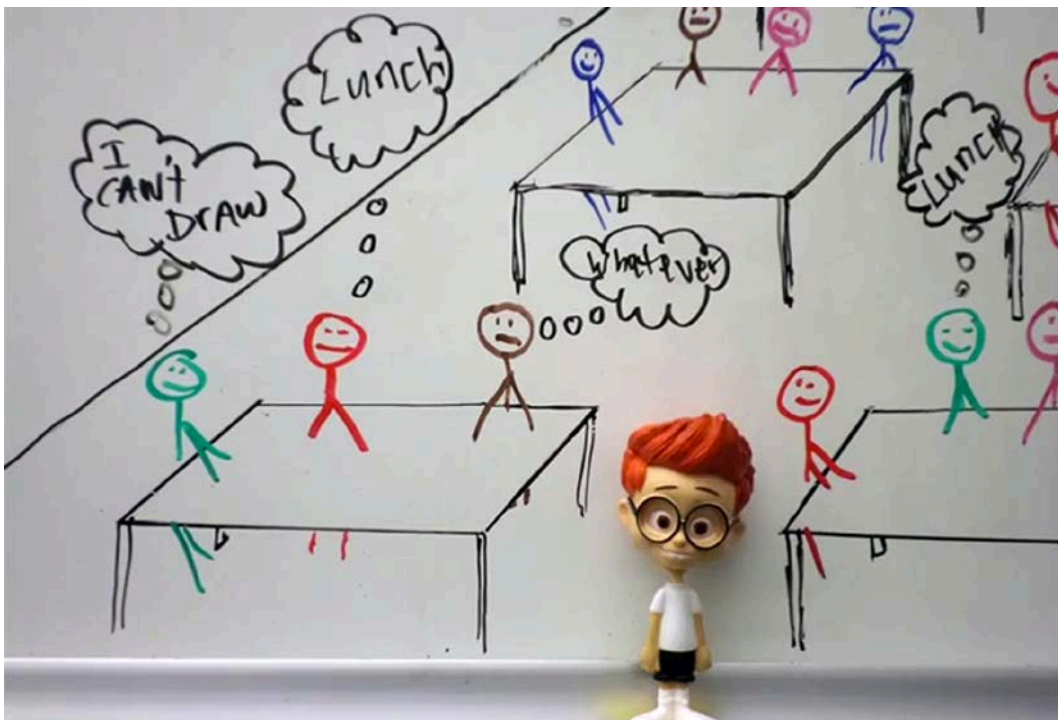


Figure 32. Screen shot of *Ziggy Artdust the Art Teacher from Mars*, Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2014.



I decided I needed to better understand the culture of Savannah and the specific culture of my students. I began asking lots and lots of questions, reforming my curriculum and teaching philosophy based on my students' interests. Like Grace, I went to teachers in the school for help and asked for advice and mentorship on how to connect to a student body that was largely apathetic. The first change I made was to revamp the art-making materials the students used in class. Due to budget concerns, I had limited access to supplies, so students were using off-brand colored pencils, broken oil pastels, and watercolor paints. The teacher who had been in the position before me did not trust the students with more diverse materials. Halfway through my first year of teaching, I starting doing weekly clay projects with students and began experimenting with stop motion animation and digital photography practices in class. These were all new forms of art to the students at my school, and engagement increased steadily throughout the school year.

The school principal took notice of the spike in engagement and production and even suggested that I change my course offerings to reflect my students' interests. In *Ziggy Artdust the Art Teacher from Mars*, I ponder whether my students' interests in the Internet, smart phones, video games, and music videos could be incorporated into my art classroom. My second year, I began teaching photography, animation, video production, and even fiber arts to best reflect the interests and culture of the school. The basic art materials evolved from cheap watercolors, broken brushes, and donated glitter to Legos, green screens, digital cameras, and laptops. In *Ziggy Artdust the Art Teacher from Mars*, I share this overall shift in philosophy by transforming traditional art materials like paintbrushes, pencils, and paint into video games, remote controlled devices, and an animation textbook.

I chose the title not only because I felt like a visitor from another planet, but also because

my reflective practices and willingness to change and serve my students' interests was not the norm in my district. At other high schools in the city it was typical to find that the teacher was the only person not sleeping in art class. Many district principals used art as a babysitting club, and it was a constant struggle to get teachers to reform their practices, both because of the amount of work needed to gather student data and because teachers were not supported enough by administration. My school was different, and I was different, so I quickly became the teacher my students needed me to be. I rarely taught lessons on the Renaissance artists or any other canonical artworks; rather, I built units on graffiti artists, animators, and popular video games. This was not how I was trained in college, but I was ready to move on and grow and serve my students in any way I could so that my program could thrive. Teaching in an environment that pushed me to better understand my students and challenged me to find new and compelling ways to communicate through the arts has proved invaluable to me, and my overall philosophy of teaching has been forever changed. The once-apatetic students in Savannah were able to let go of their preconceived notions of art and redefine what art education was for them and their school culture.

Grace and I had different journeys in different areas of the world, but our overall outcomes were quite similar. I noticed during Grace's presentation that she was one of the most empathetic students I had ever taught. The steps she took to learn and eventually thrive in American culture caused her to mature rapidly and become more sensitive to others. Because she remembered needing others' patience, she was able to be patient and compassionate with others. My experiences teaching and adapting in Savannah had a similar affect on my own life. I am more sensitive, open-minded, and empathetic to my students and family members today because I actively needed to learn from others in order to evolve as an educator.

## Applying Actor-Network Theory to *New in America*

Through using actor-network theory, I have discovered that when Grace left Vietnam, she left a very supportive and balanced network. When she first moved to the United States, she was surviving, but she could not speak the language or actively participate in American culture because she had yet to establish a social network filled with American human and non-human actors. Grace was ambitious and sought out human and non-human actors and actants with which to build her networks. She was determined to thrive in her new surroundings at a large public high school in Texas. Her English teacher became an important human element on her network, and the task of learning how to speak and write in English became the actant that connected Grace and her teacher. I doubt Grace and her teacher would have ever significantly connected if Grace had been a native English speaker. Grace's language skills naturally improved over time, which eliminated her need for direct instruction and tutoring with her English teacher, but her connection and appreciation for her teacher has grown. Her social network has significantly expanded due to the skills and time he shared with her. Grace's teacher was one of the first human actors in her new American social network, and that network has now become her life.

Today, Grace is close to finishing her college degree in the state of Texas and will be getting married this summer to an American man. Grace's English teacher fostered the development of her new Texas-based network and inspired her to become a teacher. As an educator, Grace will inevitably become a key human actor in many of her future students' networks and I am excited to see the connections Grace's journey from Vietnam to Texas will make on her future classroom and school community. Through utilizing ANT, I have discovered that the profession of teaching is significant in the creation and fostering of healthy school-based networks. Teachers are often key human actors in the network of a school and teachers have the

influence to guide students towards new paths and discoveries. Grace is testament that a stable network can be the foundation to life, self, and learning.

### Not Knowing

The Principle of Possibility I chose for Grace's animation *New in America* is Not Knowing. Through a quality art curriculum, students learn that they do not know many things that they once thought were certain (Gude, 2007). Students learn to see their world differently through making and experiencing. Gude states that children learn how to play with ideas just as much as materials, and those children will be able to entertain new ideas and new possibilities in art class. The concept of Not Knowing also explores the understanding that reality is constructed through representations in language and images, and artists have immense power in This type of structure. Gude believes that since reality is shaped in cultural discourse, teachers have the potential to change the world.

When Grace moved to the United States, she knew little English and had very few social connections. *New in America* explores the intangible influence of a teacher who inspires his students to want to invest in the culture and world around them. According to Gude (2007), language and images construct reality, and because of that, Grace's perception of reality was forever altered by living in a new culture with a new language. Grace embraced Not Knowing and built a network in Texas that supported her needs and goals. Grace's animation has shown me that knowing self and connecting with others can cross any language, culture, or social barriers.

In response to Grace's animation that explored not knowing, I strived to do the same by animating select moments from the beginning of my teaching career that exposed my lack of

knowledge and readiness for teaching in a brand new city and community. In *not knowing*, Gude (2007) states that students learn that they do not know many things that they once thought were certain and they can learn to see many things differently through art-making and interrogating their conceptions of self and society. Through my animation, *Ziggy Artdust the Art Teacher from Mars*, I examined how I did not know my students and was initially unable to teach them effectively without knowing them and their culture. I was able to embrace not knowing as a young teacher, which aided in me learning my students' culture and curricular needs. Not knowing my students created a positive discourse and eventual evolution of my teaching practices. Before moving to Savannah, and being exposed to not knowing, I was set in my routine in Ohio and thought I would teach my future students through my personal lens. After moving to Georgia, I quickly learned I had to reverse engineer my conceptions of teaching and embrace not knowing and life long learning to thrive in my new classroom. My first students in Savannah taught me how to play with ideas, concepts, and cultures, not just materials.

#### Analysis of Animated Autoethnography Vignettes

Once I collected all the core materials and wrote the animation vignettes, I identified a number of themes and categories through a process called "thematic analysis" (Grbich, 2007). Thematic analysis trimmed the fat from my data and allowed me to create the central database that I used throughout the study. I also utilized comparative analysis (Stokrocki, 1997) with these animations to interrelate my findings. Through internal analysis I discovered two core, intersecting themes woven throughout each animation. Those intersecting themes include Building Community and Experiencing Empathy. Stokrocki (1997) predicts that the future of qualitative research will entail a polyphonic collaboration voices: teachers, researchers, students,

and others who are trying to understand an educational experience. I could not agree more. Because of this collaborative project, I was inspired to investigate specific moments of my life, gaining newfound understandings of love and fear.

Through content analysis (Stokrocki, 1997), I interpreted and aligned each student animation with one of Olivia Gude's (2007) Principles of Possibility. Interpreting her research on postmodern art education practices and pairing it with the animated autoethnography works showcased in the study will, I hope, further the use of animated autoethnography as a tool for educators familiar with Gude's ideas. In aligning my study with Gude's philosophies, I also intend to show that animated autoethnography is a method of inquiry that attends to the needs of postmodern education and digital natives and has the flexibility to reflect all interests and life experience.

### Intersecting Themes

After collecting the core data for this study, I identified a number of potential themes and categories to help contextualize and organize the immense data. The two central themes I found are Building Community and Experiencing Empathy. The participants in this study exhibited these themes in their animated autoethnographies, proposals and reflections, interview responses, presentations, and classroom observations. Many other themes could have been pursued but, in my opinion, these two core themes offered the richest connections to self and other.

I found it useful to think of this project in terms of its intellectual and emotional challenges and the ways in which its core and emerging themes are discussed, developed, consumed, presented, and responded to across every layer of the assignment. The themes highlighted in this section address trends in empathetic environments and community building

and how the participant's animations connect to postmodern shifts in the field of art education. These intersecting themes appeared throughout my field notes, observations, and interviews, and especially while closely viewing their animated works dozens of times over the last two years.

Building community. The classroom community was a vital component of this project, but so were the communities built in and outside of the classroom due to the influence of these powerful animations. All five participants built community in the classroom through collaborating with their peers while drafting research questions and especially when creating their animations. They shared ideas but also helped each other operate cameras, edit their videos, draft research questions. The most significant role of the classroom community was seen when individual students presented their works at the end of the animated autoethnography unit. The community's responses, emotions, criticism, and encouragement sculpted the environment of the room. I discovered through taking field notes during the final presentations that creative and compelling works that share self have the power to transform classroom spaces into culture.

The participants began to use terms like qualitative research, self-research, and autoethnography often while working on their animations, my classroom began to shape its own lexicon, and a new culture emerged after the entire community shared their animated works. Something significant happens when an entire class of students bares their souls to each other. Alex, who investigated her long-distance relationship, wrote a profound statement in her project reflection blog.

I think that sharing something so personal with your classmates, especially at the beginning of the semester, really breaks a barrier. When you share something so personal with a group of people you barely know, you're automatically opening doors to let them get to know you better without having to go through the long process of making a close friend. We may not think of each other as best friends at this point, but we did get a look into a personal window that otherwise would have probably never been offered.

After reading Alex's blog, I decided I should ask all five participants a set of questions that investigates the roles of the classroom community. During the phone interviews, I asked each question below, recording their responses and jotting down notes.

- Did the classroom community change in any way after all students presented their animations?
- In your opinion, did this animated project help build or encourage confidence and acceptance within the classroom community?

The responses from the five participants were diverse but helpful in defining what community was and should be with regard to creating animated autoethnographies. Grace stated, "It was nice to know the other person's past, to know what they have gone through. You get to understand who they are today because of the past experiences, and I think its important to know your classmates." Dorothy had a similar experience. Dorothy said, "The classroom was different than most other classrooms. I got to know people on a deep level, which made me open up more."

Chris was by far the most enthusiastic about building classroom communities through autoethnography and provided several compelling statements to support the project:

After the animation project, we knew each other so well. Even now we have grown so close as friends, and I would like to implement this type of project in my own classroom. It brings the classroom community together, but it makes you reflect and see what you care about and what people care about. But I would have to be more cautious with K-12 students.

A lot of us, when we presented our project, opened up. We talked about things that we would never usually talk about. Last week, we all went out to eat and shared our ideas on assignments and lessons plans. The people I met through the animation project have become a great support system.

Multiple students remarked that I, the instructor, demonstrated acceptance of all backgrounds and viewpoints, which empowered their inquiries and led to a sense of community. Modeling openness and promoting empathetic dialogue can change a classroom quickly. I have discovered through this study that creating a welcoming environment through décor and



language is not enough in the art classroom. Assignments, activities, and the overall culture of the classroom need to be welcoming and grounded in inquiry and student ownership so that students can fully invest in their creations.

Multiple students also remarked that after viewing the animated autoethnographies they felt more global, or had a more open view. I can testify to that myself. The immediate goal of this project was to understand self and others and to inspire young teachers to connect with their future students. This goal reflects the current social agenda of art education and creates works that expand beyond the walls of the classroom. When my students and I use the term “global” in relation to animated autoethnography we are referencing the construction of community through sharing personal, community, and cultural understandings explored through art-making (Anderson and Milbrandt, 2004). I am a completely different person and educator because I have been so highly invested in this type of inquiry and I feel more global. These featured animations, conversations, communities, and practices thrive outside of the classroom walls and encourage the participants to re-interpret the method of autoethnography, share and connect with others, and deeply understand the culture of others. Exploring the relationship between self and other is the basis for this project, but the community that was built throughout the duration of the project seems to be the most valuable element. Life skills and habits like social learning, collaboration, creative problem-solving, and empathy can all be fostered by such a project. When I asked Alex how the classroom community changed after the students presented their animations, she stated that:

You kind of had to collaborate with each other in certain aspects of it because a lot of us had not done animation before. So being that environment where we were all sitting next to each other and with computers we were able to ask questions and connect and learn from each other. So that was a way that we got more comfortable together. It was a process, and by the time it was done we were borrowing each others’ stuff, we were getting together to help take pictures, so at that point we were becoming better friends,

and you were cultivating an environment where we felt like we could be open and not feel so nervous. So when it was time to present, a lot of people wanted to go first because we still had anxiety, but it wasn't as bad as what I thought it would be, and you were excited to see what we made.

Many students stated that our classroom felt safe, that everyone respected and honored the information they shared within the four walls. I agree with the participants. I have been teaching some form of this animated autoethnographic method since 2012, and I have had students create works about unexpected pregnancies, drug abuse, abortion, child abuse, and chastity, and not once have I ever heard any negative comments or disrespect. Animated autoethnography is probably the most intense icebreaker I have ever created, but that is specifically what I intend. I always teach this unit early in the semester so that students truly know their peers throughout the duration of the semester. The word trust came up several times during interviews. Students said trust was important in all aspects of being a teacher, and they felt as if trust were built into this project and, by extension, to the classroom community. Art educator Mary Jane Zander states:

We must become aware of finding places in schools that provide communicative structures in which students can talk and through which teachers listen to them with respect and seriousness. I doubt that the keys to teaching artistic behavior and encouraging creativity lie in what teachers have to say about curriculum. I think it has more to do with developing an environment in which there is a give and take of communication and trusting relationships. (Zander, 2003, p. 133)

An encouraging discovery I made through this study is that animated autoethnographies, and the entire unit of study they encompass, aid in creating community. Experiencing others' stories adds perspective and context to your own experiences. Both the students and I drew strength from the classroom community.

Experiencing empathy. In my opinion, the most significant outcome of the animated autoethnography project was the development of empathy among the classroom community.

Viewing the autoethnographies of others created a bond between most of my students, which led to budding friendships and invigorated classroom conversations. The capacity to relate to one another and treat each other as living compositions begins with students' ability to empathize and care for each other (Riddett-Moore, 2009). Empathy fosters an environment of understanding, cooperation, transformation, and healing because we set aside our selfishness (Custer, 2014).

The focal point for empathy development during this study was each participant's final animation presentation. For example, as Chris presented *Monster*, many students' eyes began to well as Chris transformed into his monster on-screen. This type of emotional reaction was typical for many animations in class. The empathetic connections were obvious, so I decided to ask all five participants the same empathy-related questions during their individual hour-long phone interviews. I asked the following questions:

- Did you have feelings of empathy for anyone presenting their animation in class?
- Do you think students in AEAH 3770 better related to you and your life experiences after they viewed your animation?

All five students said that they did experience some level of empathy during the presentations and all five added that they empathized with very specific animations, not the overall class necessarily. Grace, the creator of *New in America*, had strong feelings of empathy throughout the duration of the project. Grace stated, "I did feel empathy, especially with animations about family and siblings." Grace's connection to family is what sparked her to move from her native Vietnam and to join family members already established in Texas. Dorothy, creator of *Rupture*, told me during our interview that her emotions teetered between sympathy and empathy. She did relate to specific animations and specific people in the class, but she would need more background information than the short animation provides to feel pure empathy for

most students. Chelsea, creator of *Bad Choices Aren't Genetic*, experienced empathy with some of her peers, as she related during our phone interview:

Yes. I felt empathy for people in the class. There were quite a few people in tears, including myself, but I didn't always understand why the emotions were coming up...No one ever talks about the stuff we carry. Maybe that is what art is.

Throughout the animated autoethnography project, I have attempted to weave empathy into the fabric of the project by examining the personal struggles and celebrations of my pre-service art education students. My students created animations that depicted conflicts and struggles and victories and love, and in response I made my own personal animations to ensure that I as the researcher was empathizing with my students. My student's animations invite readers into specific moments of their lives. The students relived past experiences and immersed themselves in the past experiences of others in order to be able to better serve their future students. Based on the results of this study, I completely agree with Phillips and Siegesmund (2013) that "Teaching students to be empathetic is an explicit objective in the visual arts" (p. 222).

## CHAPTER 5

### FINAL FRAMES

In this fifth and final chapter, I answer my main research question: Is animated autoethnography an effective way to express and research the self in an art education classroom? I will address the question of whether animated autoethnography can be a catalyst for self-acceptance in pre-service art educators. I provide insights, suggestions, and support for how animation can become more widely used in the fields of art education and qualitative inquiry.

#### Animated Autoethnography as a Catalyst for Self-Acceptance

My first three years as a high school teacher were filled with ups and downs but, overall, it was a positive and enlightening experience. I rarely reflect on the lessons I taught, but think often of the people I met, the students I inspired, and how formative the profession of teaching truly is. Over the last several years, I have grown immensely as a person and matured in ways I did not think were possible. I owe that maturation to the reflection and introspection that being, and growing into, a sensitive educator requires. Through this study, I discovered that I thrive as an educator, a thinker, a partner, and a son when I explore the importance of past and present experiences through narrative writing and art-making. The core reason I developed animated autoethnography was to customize a specific mode of inquiry that reflected my individual skill sets, past experiences, and my need to connect with others. Suffering through depression and mental illness initially created a barrier between myself and others. Investigating self through autoethnography has changed my perspective on self, encouraged me to share and celebrate my differences, and aided in building relationships with others that are seeking a new voice.

When I left my teaching position in Savannah and came to the University of North Texas, I had no idea that I would be exploring my darkly colorful past to this degree. As a high school teacher, I tried to escape from my past. That is the key reason I moved from Ohio to Georgia: I wanted to escape from myself and start fresh. I viewed my move to Georgia as akin to enrolling in the witness protection program. I wanted new friends, new furniture, new streets to drive down, and ultimately a new identity. That never really happened, because I rejected my past instead of studying it and learning from it. It was not a coincidence that when I moved to Texas and enrolled in my first doctoral course, I immediately wanted to explore my formative past experiences. I gave up rejecting self and started investing in and mining my memories in order to grow as an educator and person. I thrived at UNT after a short transition period of switching from teacher to student once again. I discovered through the current study that it is difficult to accept and empathize with students if the teacher has yet to invest in exploring and sharing self. I shared my emotional scars and heroic joys through writing autoethnographies as a student and through developing and creating animated autoethnographies as a researcher. Participating in modes of self-inquiry, especially forms of arts-based autoethnography, built up my self-confidence, strengthened my voice, and empowered my practices and experiences.

Over the summer of 2014, I interviewed the study participants over the phone while sitting in my office in Georgia. Out of the fourteen uniform questions I asked each student, one question emerged as the most important. I asked each participant, “In your experience, did animating your intimate experiences and sharing them with the classroom community lead to new feelings of self-acceptance?”

Alex, the creator of *Here and Away*, responded candidly: “Yes! In a roundabout way, going through the entire process, yes! I feel acceptance.” Alex said that the realizations she made

led to self-acceptance and personal growth, but the artistic medium of animation was not vital to these feelings of acceptance. She stated, “I think the topic you research has to be relevant and intense to the person in order to feel more and feel acceptance.” I agree with Alex. A conflict is needed—some sort of barrier has to be examined and overcome for autoethnography to be effective and relevant to art educators. Alex added:

I needed to investigate what I was doing. There were so many things in the back of my head. The things I was unsure of became a part of my process. Now I can go back and watch the animation and remind myself and keep myself accountable for things.

Alex added that consciousness and awareness were tools she needed during her relationship with Kody, and this project helped her attain these. “Since it was animated, it was interactive, it stimulated my senses and included more components, and so I was able to tell a bigger story.” She told me that others are able to relate to her animation better than if she had told her story through painting or writing. The animation she created could serve a bigger purpose because others could relate to it and empathize with it. Alex ended her discussion on the topic of acceptance by saying, “Reflection is everything. Reflection is what can make an impact and make your piece timeless in a way. Timeless to yourself.”

I asked Chelsea, the creator of *Bad Choices Aren't Genetic*, the same question: “In your experience, did animating your intimate experiences and sharing them with the classroom community lead to new feelings of self-acceptance?” Chelsea paused for a few seconds and responded, “Yes. I am pretty independent, but not always very trusting at times, and showing the animation to a class full of mostly strangers was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do.” She added that presenting her animation last, right before the class session ended, was hard, because there was a lot of time for her anxiety to build. Chelsea added, “The animation helped me find self-acceptance by confronting those issues. I didn't just confront it within myself, but I

confronted it in front of other people, so in a way I had to accept myself. I couldn't deny that I am here today."

The animated autoethnography project helped Chelsea examine the catalytic moments and pivotal events of her life that led her to realize that she did not want to ever be like her parents. She left her parents at a young age to live with her aunt, and that action catapulted her into freedom and happiness. Through autoethnography, she investigated the times of neglect and the moments when she realized she had to sever those relationships in order to be successful. It was an honor to watch her animate, and because of her tremendous work she took a more vocal leadership role in the classroom community. She not only accepted herself, but the community fully embraced and accepted her.

Chris, the creator of *Monster*, also felt that self-acceptance and acceptance into the classroom community resulted from this project. Chris said, "I used to never wear less than two items of clothing, and ever since that project I just wear t-shirts. I am still not comfortable exposing my scars, but I don't let things no one can see affect me." Chris quickly added, "I do feel a lot more confident about myself. I had to build up a lot of confidence just to do the project." Autoethnography not only built acceptance and confidence in Chris, but the risks he took to be successful were just as formative.

I am excited that participants in this study developed confidence in their decisions to move on from fading relationships, took pride in overcoming neglect and fear, stated that they wanted to make a difference through their future careers in education. Over the last year, I have been serving as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Art Education at the University of Georgia. Outside of the reception office of the School of Art there is a bronze bust of local artist Lamar Dodd. Above the bust is a quote: "Art arises into the human spirit beyond the reach of words



from the levels of the deepest memories.” Humans have a remarkable ability to draw strength from major life challenges. This is why I believe most of my students chose a challenging moment to explore and sought to understand the origin of that strength. I investigated the time I got my stomach pumped, which led me to understand just how unconditional my father’s love for me was and is. I think my students and I are not so much *finding* meaning but *forging* meaning through these animated investigations. We are choosing to find beauty in chaos. I could opt to use despair as an excuse, but instead, I use art-making to better understand my challenges and interpret them positively for my betterment. These personal challenges then become a catalyst for positive change or positive mindset through formal and artistic reflection. Autoethnography has provided an avenue into the understanding of self, and I want art educators to use the power of autoethnography with any art form they deem suitable.

### Re-Animating Art Education and Implications for the Field

Our technology-driven society requires new and innovative methodologies that access technology and culture that appeal to the new generations of teachers and researchers (Delacruz, 2009a). Stop motion animation is not new, but innovative applications of animation, like animated autoethnography, can provide a compelling vehicle for emotional and self-forming experiences. The implications for this project can be quite tangible for K-12 and pre-service art education programs. Animated autoethnography can provide a mode of engaging inquiry that reflects state standards and the newly formed Common Core Curriculum Standards. This creative practice relies on imagination, investigation, construction and deconstruction, and reflection, which are all elements highlighted in the new Common Core (Coleman, 2012). The act of shooting individual stop motion frames forces the filmmaker to evaluate each shot and each

fragment of a second. This is unlike any other art form. That stopping gives the artist time for reflection—the animations featured in this study have hours of reflection woven through each second.

Animated autoethnography has many in-class and studio-based curricular possibilities, but it also meets the professional teaching standards designed by the National Art Education Association. The second standard on NAEA’s list of professional teaching standards for the visual arts is “Knowledge of Students” (Constantino, 2013). This project has helped me to know my students in ways I had never imagined. Animated autoethnographers engage in aesthetic reflection and develop methods that will aid them in serving their future students on many levels. Animated autoethnography is not merely illustrating experiences but investigating and studying the culture of self through the art of animation. If one asks good and effective questions, answers will emerge eventually, often in a form not predicted.

I have discovered through this study that stop motion animation can be and should be used as an artistic vehicle for autoethnographic research in the field of art education. The combination of autoethnography and animation can open new perspectives and conceptions of self that aid in preparing preservice students for the challenging career of teaching. Stop motion can be chaotic and complex, and both the open-endedness and constraints inherent in this method can lead to unique works that are potent with vulnerability, discovery, unruliness, disconnection, culture, and spectacle. Animation feels like a perfect vehicle for autoethnography.

Throughout this study, I detailed the ways that animated autoethnography has guided my practice as an art educator and inspired empathic connections to my participants by citing data from my field notes, quoting interviews with preservice teachers, and by sharing the animated works of my participants and myself in relation to each other. As the researcher, I have a great

sense of fulfillment and excitement for the findings and discoveries in this study, especially the striking animated works that were created, but what deep and significant contributions can animated autoethnographies make to the entire field of art education? What is this study's relevance beyond my own personal connections, beyond technology applications for art education, and what are the implications this study should ultimately be used for in the future that go beyond the connections already listed in this chapter?

The preservice art educators that participated in this study actively developed identity around their animated works. They began to think of themselves as educators and redefine their philosophy for teaching and research. Participants identified the core life narratives and events that ultimately shaped them over the years and led them to the field of teaching. This project aided in discovering the catalytic moments that may require self-research and unpacking in order to best know one's self. Sharing and investigating self through the medium of stop motion animation became a catalyst for the preservice participants to look deeper into their narrative self and discover that their identities as educators lie within these stories from the past.

Danielecwicz (2001) notes that preservice educators develop both an individual and a collective group identity during their university training. As individuals, preservice teachers align themselves with the profession of teaching and they often reason that they are becoming a teacher because they align with the core attributes of the teaching profession. Preservice teachers identify with the profession and culture of teaching as they build relationships and interact with groups of teachers. Even after individually and collectively aligning themselves with the profession of teaching, many preservice educators have yet to connect their core elements of self to their new profession. Animated autoethnography remedies that by requiring the sharing of

personal stories with their preservice peers which can aid in defining individual teacher identity and discovering the life events that ultimately led them to the teaching profession.

I have discovered that autoethnography can be used as a powerful tool in the identity development of preservice teachers and that embedding personal narratives is just as important for the seasoned instructor, as well as, the student. Allison (2008) states that curriculums and practices that enable art educators to model processes of narrative exploration can have a tremendous influence on increasing preservice teachers' propensity for identity development and for developing sensitivity with students and colleagues. The animated autoethnographic method provided the participants and the classroom community a platform to share differences and connections, which organically fostered a classroom community built on empathy, inclusion, and understanding. This type of classroom community is unique and invaluable to an educator like myself that loves to connect big ideas and concepts to individuals that can evoke change and empathy for others. I am confident that all five of this study's participants will become change agents in their future classrooms due to the self-awareness and connection this project inspired in them. Core and long lasting contributions that animated autoethnographies offer to the field art education include the creating and fostering of an empathic classroom environment, identity discovery and construction through catalytic self-narrative research, and the vital concept that art educators must share themselves with their students to build a foundation and to establish that the art classroom at its core exists to connect lives and communities.

The animated autoethnography project reflects emerging trends in digital technologies, qualitative inquiry, art education, filmmaking, and empathy studies. In my opinion, the most exciting implication for this project is the potential transformation of the classroom community into an empathetic community. I have experienced pre-service students simultaneously

researching connections between self and others using original questions and dynamic animation techniques as compelling artistic vehicles to express their discoveries. Animated autoethnography changed the overall disposition and tone of communication in the class from that day forward, from quiet and occasionally apathetic to empathetic, active, and compassionate. Students interacted more, trusted more, and took more risks in class after creating and viewing each other's animations. Students collaborated often and respected each other due to the vulnerabilities they displayed in their animations. Risking vulnerability built trust and I hope that animated autoethnography will become a creative staple in the classrooms of these five participants and all of my former pre-service students.

### Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research

In the introduction to this study, I expressed that most pre-service art educators in the United States are being trained to teach art for a formal normative public school environment shaped by state and national required standardized assessments. This type of school is common and often limited in creative expression and artistic spaces of dialogue (Nieto, 2007; Fehr, Fehr, and Keifer-Boyd, 2000; Sumara et al., 2006; Eisner, 1998a; Olson, 2009; Galbraith, 1995; Crowther, 2003; Kim, 2009). Even though the absence of creative and dialogic environments in K-12 schools is worrisome, it does provide the field of art education with immense purpose. My initial objective in designing the animated autoethnography assignment for my pre-service students was to discover if stop motion animation could be effectively used as a medium for self-research that could push young educators to create works that connected with self and other.

Through this study, I discovered that animation can be used as an enabling constraint (Castro, 2007) that challenges students to create something outside of his or her own

expectations. Stop motion animation forces the artist to disassemble self and other and dissect personal narrative into minute fragments, leading to new knowledges for self and others. Creating animated autoethnographies enabled my students to connect with their personal cultures and socially constructed identities. Like Wells and Hardstaff (2008), I have discovered through research and teaching that animation may be able to occupy places in the mind that words cannot. I am confident that the combination of autoethnography and animation can open new perspectives and conceptions of self in this new generation of digital-native, pre-service art educators.

For the field of art education, I suggest that animation be used in an auteuristic manner, encouraging the creation of introspective works that intend to research self and connection to others (Wells and Hardstaff, 2008). Animation is a direct and accessible form of expression, and the tools needed are readily available in K-12 schools, classrooms, and homes. The creative and proactive nature of animation should be inspiring and challenging to students and teachers. In my experience, the medium of animation has the ability to inspire today's students to create works and express elements of self that may not be easily expressed through other mediums. As evidenced in this study, animation fused with autoethnography excites students and produces relevant research. Taking risks, making mistakes, and learning from experience is an absolute requirement in life, and the same can also be said for animation. Animation is filled with opportunities to reflect and change and take risks. After creating and studying animated autoethnographies, I see clearly that animation is a distinctive language with the capacity to push art educators into new horizons. Animation operates on many creative and technical levels. It is imaginative, relies on problem solving, requires choice and application, and explores the ability to extrapolate concepts into a finished moving form. The lexicon of animation and its

multidisciplinary versatility readily promote and facilitate imagination and creative synthesis.

Writing and animating my personal autoethnographies has given me a new way of knowing self, and a new method of self-inquiry (Richardson, 2000). Writing personal stories, especially the one in the prologue of this study, has been therapeutic and animated autoethnography has helped me to purge my burdens (Atkinson, 2007) by better understanding my relationships (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 2010) with my students and my family. This study has helped to provide my students and myself with a newly found voice and with that voice I have written and expressed many things in this dissertation that I have never stated publicly or even privately. This method of animated inquiry should not only function as expression and investigation of self, but also spark a significant cultural change in our understanding of mental health and other disabilities.

As discovered through this study, arts-based autoethnographic practices can liberate those that suffer and also shine a much-needed light for those that do not yet understand. I agree with art educator John Derby (2012) that the field of Art Education is valuable to the field of Disability Studies and that shared recent advancements, like arts-based autoethnography and visual culture, are creating a space where disabilities can be explored and expressed in new and innovative ways. I have felt isolated and alone as a person diagnosed with bipolar disorder, but through animated autoethnography I empowered myself to reconnect and transform my pain into empathy and connection. Wexler (2012) states that the field of art education can inspire radical acceptance of others when utilizing a disability theory lens and I encourage those who support and explore disability studies to utilize arts-based and animated autoethnography to express voice and experience the culture of self and others.

Through this study, I was able to examine my major suicide attempt through autoethnography and discover my father's unconditional love that supported me the entire time. Autoethnography is criticized for being ego-centric (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 2010), but I am attempting to learn more about self so that I can further connect with others, so diving deep into my personal experiences and ego is required. My goals with utilizing autoethnography are not the same as researchers exploring other methods and theories. I believe that educators benefit greatly from knowing self, which will lead to empathic relationships and connections with their students.

This study has confirmed to me that animation and autoethnography deserves a larger role and presence in art classrooms and in the canon of art education practices, but to achieve this, animation must be thoroughly investigated, researched, and taught in pre-service art education programs. The discoveries made in this study have inspired me to develop future directions and interpretations for animation and the animated autoethnography project. In my future research, I will build on particular findings in this study, address the flaws and limitations of my research, and examine new mediums, theories, and contexts to expand the scope and reach of this study.

To further this study, I would like to invite the same five participants to create new animated autoethnographies once they all have at least a couple years of professional teaching experience. The animations created for this study were all made by pre-service student participants and it would be beneficial to see how their approach to animated autoethnography might change and evolve after becoming full-time teachers. I would also want to know if creating their original animated autoethnographies for this study influenced or enhanced their performance as a first-year teacher by developing self-confidence, raising self-awareness, or



catalyzing self-acceptance. I would also be curious to know if these same participants are implementing any art projects based in self-inquiry, autoethnography, or animation in their art classrooms. The validity of this study could be more effectively measured through continuing and fostering the relationships I have with these five participants. All five participants stated in their phone interviews that they would be interested in developing and implementing autoethnographic projects and stop motion animation projects in their future classrooms. I look forward to staying connected with these participants and hopefully continuing my research through their compelling works.

In the limitations section of this study, I addressed the concerns that animated autoethnography may be viewed as art therapy, a professionally prescribed medical treatment, and not art education in certain contexts. Since the animated autoethnography project and study does tend to blur the lines of art education and art therapy for some readers, I decided I could embrace that limitation and seek a collaboration with a professional art therapist and collaboratively develop a method of animated autoethnography that can be utilized in a professional art therapeutic setting. Participants would be able to explore elements of self through animation in a professionally monitored setting and would hopefully receive therapeutic benefits from creating their animations. I believe autoethnographic research methods could enhance, support, and mirror many practices currently utilized in art therapy programs.

In the prologue of this dissertation, I shared the raw emotional foundations of my adult life. I confessed and described moments that many scholars would never feel comfortable revealing in an academic context. Expressing vulnerable elements of self is uncomfortable, but I believe that my willingness to share and connect with others has pushed me into becoming an innovative educator, an emerging scholar, and a lifelong learner. My main concern about sharing

my experiences with mental illness is that my openness may have a negative effect on my academic career. This is one of the reasons I chose to use Gude's (2007) *Principles of Possibility* as a sounding board for this study. Many of the postmodern practices and concepts she suggests to art educators reflect my want and need to academically and artistically investigate the dark and stigmatized elements of myself. For a future study, I would be interested in collecting specific autoethnographic works and studies that disrupt some of the outdated practices of academia and create new works that help redefine research for future generations of scholars that want to explore the human condition in new and innovative ways.

Lastly, I developed and taught animated autoethnography for the first time in 2012 and continue to teach it in various forms today. Since 2012, I have experimented with and explored several other mediums in which to conduct arts-based autoethnographic research. I have yet to design any exhaustive studies on any other medium for arts-based autoethnography, but I have published a short article on how to investigate self through autoethnographic video game design (Blair, 2015b). In my article (Blair, 2015b) titled, *Grand Theft Autoethnography: Video Game Design for the Art Classroom*, I shared an experimental lesson that I developed for my middle school classroom in 2014 that utilized the same methodologies and practices of the animated autoethnography project, but replaced the medium of animation with basic video game design. Autoethnographic video games were developed by my middle school art students through primary self-research questions and established video game design as an artistic vehicle for autoethnography. Like animated autoethnography, their autoethnographic video games explored fractured relationships with older siblings, their favorite hobbies and activities, and their self-origins and life stories (see Figure 33). I discovered that students enjoyed coding and investigating self through game design, but they loved sharing their games and playing the

games of others leading to similar effects of empathy and community building. In a more comprehensive future study, I would like to investigate the specific complexities and constraints of the medium of video game design and study how those unique qualities can best merge with the qualitative method of autoethnography.

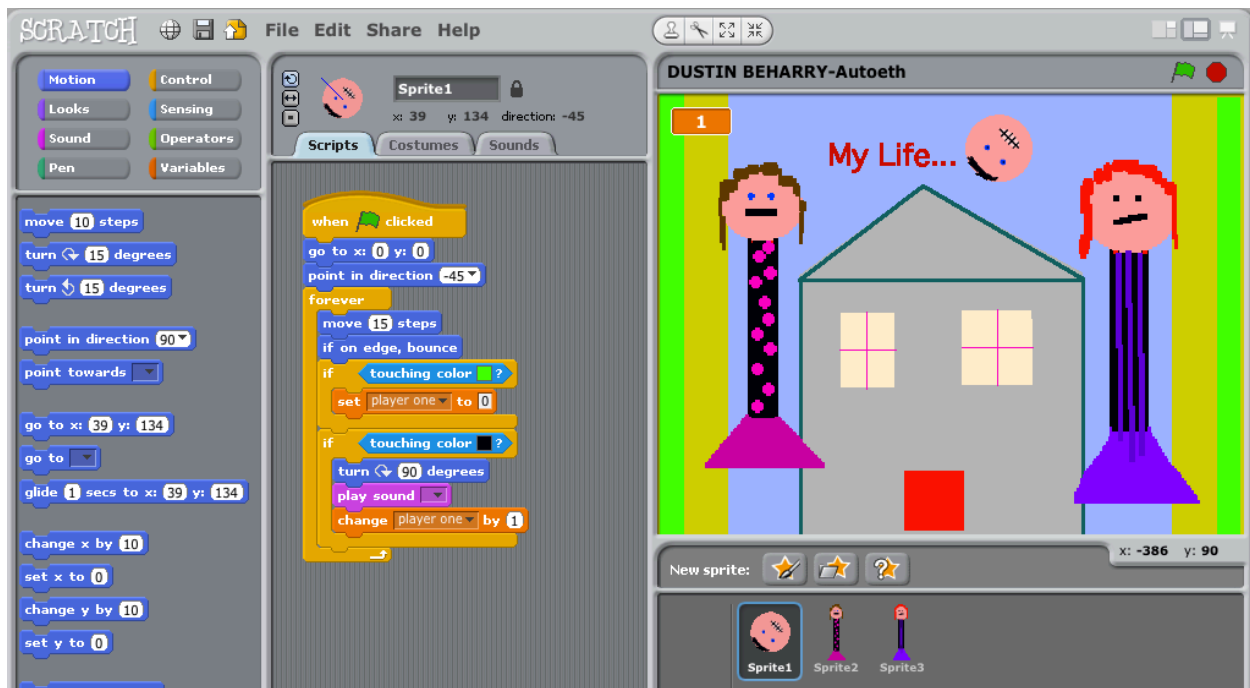
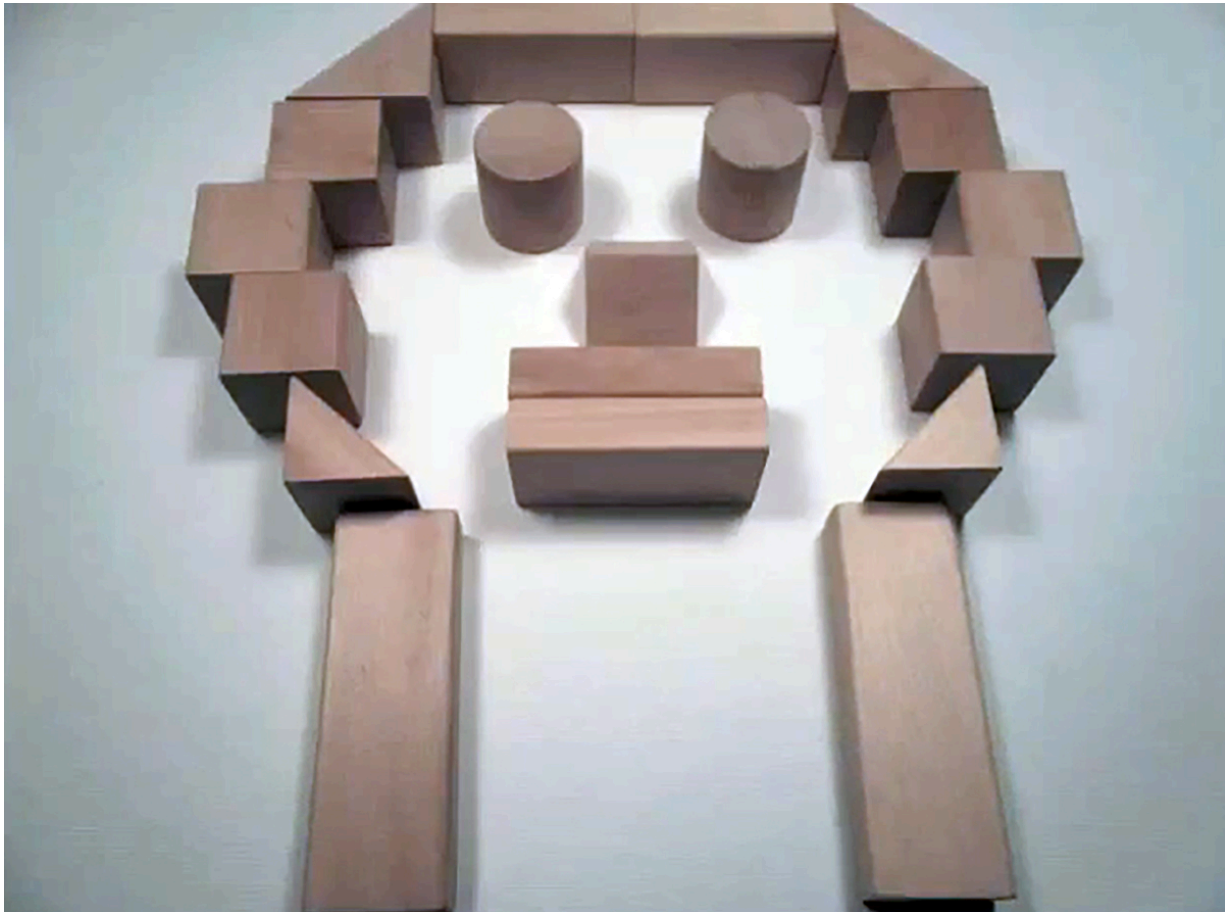


Figure 33. Screen shot of *My Life*, Dustin, Video Game Design. 2015.

In conclusion, by expressing ourselves in works of art that encompass our crystallized feelings and attitudes, we reveal ourselves to our peers in the hope that they will identify with us (see Figure 34). Autoethnography has the capacity to provoke viewers to broaden their horizons, reflect critically on experiences, enter empathetically into the lives of others, and actively participate in dialogue about the social implications of the encountered (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). All of these qualities of autoethnographic research are needed in teacher preparation programs in order for young teachers to connect with self and others in meaningful ways. The field of art education welcomes and encourages autoethnographic research and accepts the flaws

and biases that come with the methodology (Smith-Shank and Keifer-Boyd, 2007). The unique qualities and imperfections of autoethnography help to expose and rediscover the uniqueness of life, as do the arts. Animated autoethnographies are designed to celebrate error, confess incompleteness, express regret, exhibit imperfection, and embrace not-knowing so that pre-service art teachers can be better prepared for the imperfect and humbling profession of teaching.



*Figure 34.* Screen shot of *The Day I Held His Hand*, Jeremy Blair, Stop motion animation. 2012.

APPENDIX

ANIMATED AUTOETHNOGRAPHIES LESSON PLAN

Jeremy Michael Blair

AEAH 3770/5767 Computer Applications for Art Education

University of North Texas

**I. Unit Title:**

Animated Autoethnographies (Pre-Service or Advanced High School)

**II. Unit Structure:**

1. Introduction and History of Stop Motion Animation
2. Autoethnography and Basic Qualitative Research Methods
3. Self-Narrative Writings and Research Proposals
4. Stop Motion Animation Studio Time
5. Presentations and Reflections of Animated Autoethnographies

**III. Key Concepts:**

Autoethnography

Stop Motion Animation

Narrative Inquiry

Forming self

Empowered making

Empathy

**IV. Essential Questions:**

In what ways does animating personal narratives effectively express and research the self?

In what ways does animated autoethnography build upon and/or separate itself from traditionally written self-narratives?

Can conducting self-research through animated autoethnography lead to self-acceptance in students?

#### **V. Lesson Objectives:**

To encourage art educators to use art, animation, and autoethnography to voice, express, and learn from the study of self

To encourage students to share their own lives and to make space for others

To provide opportunities and space for empathic dialog and emotional connections through art

To encourage and prepare young teachers to be able to share their lives with their future students

#### **VI. Specific Art Content & Vocabulary:**

Stop Motion Animation

Frames Per Second (FPS)

Claymation

Puppet Animation

Pixilation

Object Manipulation

#### **VII. National Core Art Standards - Media Arts:**

**High School Media Arts/Creating - Advanced**

MA:Cr1.1.1.HSIII

MA:Cr2.1.1.HSIII

MA:Cr3.1.HSIII

**High School Media Arts/Producing -Advanced**

MA:Pr4.1.HSIII

MA:Pr5.1.HSIII

MA:Pr6.1.HSIII

**High School Media Arts/Responding - Advanced**

MA:Re7.1.HSIII

MA:Re8.1.HSIII

MA:Re9.1.HSIII

**High School Media Arts/Connecting - Advanced**

MA:Cn10.1.HSIII

MA:Cn11.1.HSIII

**VIII. Teaching Resources:**

National Core Art Standards:

<http://nationalartsstandards.org/>

Animated Autoethnography Website:

<http://www.animatedautoethnography.com/>

Autoethnography:

<http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095>

Stop Motion Handbook:



<http://stop-motion-handbook.com/images/NMSLessonPlan.pdf>

Stop Motion Webquest:

[http://www.livebinders.com/play/play\\_or\\_edit?id=228367](http://www.livebinders.com/play/play_or_edit?id=228367)

Animation History:

*Mike Judge and Don Hertzfeldt present: The Animation Show* (Vol.1) [DVD]. Available from [www.mtv.com/shows/the\\_animation\\_show/series.jhtml](http://www.mtv.com/shows/the_animation_show/series.jhtml)

## **IX. Materials & Equipment:**

Digital Camera and/or Tablet

Camera Tripod

iMovie Video and Editing Software or equivalent

Flash Drive or External Hard Drive

Animating Supplies: Modeling clay, action figures, Legos, children's toys, filament

Art Supplies: Scissors, glue, construction paper, glitter, tape, hot glue, markers, cardboard

## **X. Instruction & Sequencing:**

Session 1. History and Introduction to Stop Motion Animation

Session 2. Intro to Autoethnography and Basic Qualitative Research Methods

Session 3. Self-Narrative Writings and Research Proposals

Session 4. Studio Time for Stop Motion Animations

Session 5. Studio Time for Stop Motion Animations

Session 6. Animation Review and Editing Demonstrations

Session 7. Presentations and Reflections of Animated Autoethnographies

Formal requirements for the assignment are for students to draft an autoethnographic research question, write and post a detailed animation proposal to the class blog, create a stop motion animation that addresses and investigates their research question, post a thoughtful reflection blog, and present their finished animated short to the class community.

I started my lesson by presenting the history of animation using a DVD I rented from the university library (Judge and Hertzfeldt, 2004). After establishing a historical foundation, I led students through a stop motion animation workshop where I demonstrated various stop motion animation techniques, introduced new terms, and reviewed basic video editing on iMovie. The animation techniques most popular with students were pixilation and claymation, and I gave students the entire class period to experiment and learn the basics of animation and movie editing.

The next class period was dedicated to introducing the concept of autoethnography. I then introduced the specific criteria for the animated autoethnography project once students shared their animation experiments and proved that they understood the intentions and nuances of autoethnography through our intimate class discussions. The first component was the Animated Autoethnography Proposal Blog. I required students to draft self-research questions and write detailed blog posts so that their peers and I would be able to comment on and support their work. Many students worked collaboratively in and out of class to create their films. Many questions were fielded and resources shared during the animation phase of the project, and I encouraged students to leave the building and explore the UNT campus with their cameras.

After three class sessions of studio time, I led an editing review session and consulted with each student in order to help enhance his or her animations. I gave them the weekend to edit their films, and that next Monday students presented their animations to the class. Students

projected their animated autoethnographies individually on the main screen, and the classroom community asked each student several questions about the work. Presentations took an entire three-hour class period because of the intimate nature of the questions and responses. Students shared their animation files with me by uploading them onto my flash drive.

## REFERENCES

- Albert, R. (2010). Being both: An integrated model of art therapy and alternative art education. *Journal of the American Art Therapy Association, 27*(2), 90–95.
- Alexenberg, M. (2008). Autoethnographic identification of realms of learning for art education in a post-digital age. *International Journal of Education through Art, 4*(3), 231–246.
- Allison, A. (2008). *Critical theory and preservice art education: One art teacher educator's journey of equipping art teachers on inclusion* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of North Texas, Denton, TX.
- Anderson, T., & Milbrandt, M. K. (2004). *Art for life: Authentic instruction in art* (1<sup>st</sup> ed). New York: McGraw-Hill
- Arnold, R. (2005). *Empathic intelligence: Teaching, learning, relating*. Sydney: UNSW Press.
- Atkinson, R. (2007). The life story interview as a bridge in narrative inquiry. In D. Jean Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry* (pp. 224-245). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ault, R. (1974). *Art therapy: A general introduction*. Session presented at the Kingsview Art Therapy Symposium, Reedly, CA.
- Avni, S. (Writer & Director), & Fukushima, M. (Producer). (2009). *Trying our shoes* [DVD]. Available from [http://www.nfb.ca/film/tying\\_your\\_own\\_shoes](http://www.nfb.ca/film/tying_your_own_shoes)
- Azéma, M., & Rivère, F. (2012). Animation in Paleolithic art: A pre-echo of cinema. *Antiquity, 86*(332), 316–324.
- Bach, H. (2007). Composing a visual narrative inquiry. In D. J. Clandinin (ed.). *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*. (pp 280–307). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Bain, C. (2004). Today's student-teachers: Prepared to teach versus suited to teach? *Art Education, 57*(3), 42–47.
- Ballengue-Morris, C., & Stuhr, P. L. (2001). Multicultural art and visual cultural education in a changing world. *Art Education, 54*(4), 6–13.
- Barone, T., & Eisner, E. W. (2012). *Arts based research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Barrett, T. (1997). *Talking about student art*. Worcester, MA: Davis Publications, Inc.
- Barrett, T. (2003). *Interpreting art: Reflecting, wondering, and responding*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Barrett, T. (2004a). Improving student dialogue about art. *Teaching Artist Journal, 2*(2), 87–94.

- Barrett, T. (2004b). Investigating art criticism in education: An autobiographical narrative. In E. W. Eisner & M. D. Day (Eds.), *Handbook of research and policy an art education* (pp. 725–749). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Barrett, T. (2010–2011). The importance of teaching interpretation. *FATE in Review: Foundations in Art: Theory and Education*, 32, 4–11.
- Barrett, T. (2012a). *Criticizing art* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Barrett, T. (2012b). *Criticizing photographs: An introduction to understanding images* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Barrett, T. (2013). Writing towards empathy. In B. White & T. Costantino (Eds.), *Aesthetic, empathy, and education* (pp. 29–40). New York: Peter Lang.
- Barrett, T., & Smith-Shank, D., & Stuhr, P. (2008). Three art educators in cancerworld. *Journal of Cultural Research*, 26, 3–23.
- Bartlett, M. (2012). Toy stories: Stop-motion adventures in the classroom. *Screen Education*, 67, 62–69.
- Beck, J. (2003). *Outlaw animations: Cutting-edge cartoons from the Spike & Mike festivals*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers.
- Berarducci, V. (1971). Animation in the elementary school. *Art Education*, 24(4), 11–15.
- Berger, L. (2001). Inside out: Narrative autoethnography as a path toward rapport. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(4), 504–518.
- Bey, S. (2012a). Story drawings: Revisiting personal struggles, empathizing with “others.” In T. Quinn, & J. Ploof, & L. Hochtritt (Eds.), *Art and social justice education: Culture as commons* (pp. 137–141). New York: Routledge.
- Bickel, B. (2005). From artist to a/r/tographer: An autoethnographic ritual inquiry into writing on the body. *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy*, 2(1) 8–17.
- Bickford, B. (Animator & Producer). (1988). *Prometheus’ garden* [DVD]. Retrieved from [www.brettingram.org/film/PGVids.php](http://www.brettingram.org/film/PGVids.php)
- Bickford, B. (Animator), & Zappa, F. (Producer & Actor). (1979). *Baby snakes: A movie about people that don’t do stuff normal* [DVD]. Retrieved from [www.eaglerock.com/product/EE190289/Baby+Snakes](http://www.eaglerock.com/product/EE190289/Baby+Snakes)
- Bickford, B. (Animator), & Zappa, F. (Producer & Composer). (1987). *The amazing Mr. Bickford* [VHS]. Retrieved from [www.discogs.com/Frank-Zappa-The-Amazing-Mr-Bickford/ release/4025789](http://www.discogs.com/Frank-Zappa-The-Amazing-Mr-Bickford/release/4025789)

- Blair, J. M. (2014). Animated autoethnographies: Stop motion animation as a tool for self-inquiry and personal evolution. *Art Education*, 67(2), 6-13.
- Blair, J. M. (2015a). Animated autoethnographies. [Website.] Available at <http://www.animatedautoethnography.com/>
- Blair, J. M. (2015b). Grand theft autoethnography: Video game design for the art classroom. *NAEA News: Advancing Art Education*, 57(2), 18-19.
- Blanchard, M. A. (1998). *History of the mass media in the United States: An encyclopedia*. New York: Routledge.
- Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. (2003). An introduction to the arts and narrative research: Art as inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(4), 506–514.
- Bolton, G. E. (2010). *Reflective practice: Writing and professional development*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Boudjikianian, A. (2005). Open house: Class is in session, and Armen Boudjikianian asks five questions of five teachers. *Frames Per Second Magazine*, 2(4), 4–8.
- Bresler, L. (2013). The spectrum of distance: Empathic understanding and the pedagogical power of the arts. In B. White & T. Costantino (Eds.), *Aesthetic, empathy, and education* (pp. 9–28). New York: Peter Lang.
- Brown, B. (2010). *The gifts of imperfection: Let go of who you think you're supposed to be and embrace who you are*. Center City, MN: Hazelden Publishing.
- Brown, R. & Fong, J. (Producers). (2003). *The work of director Michel Gondry: A collection of music videos, short films, documentaries and stories* [DVD]. Available from <http://www.juno.co.uk/products/the-work-of-director-michel-gondry-a-collection-of-music-videos-short-films-documentaries-stories/133662-01/>
- Burton, T. (Producer, & Writer, & Director). (1993). *Nightmare before Christmas: Special edition* [DVD]. Available from <http://movies.disney.com/the-nightmare-before-christmas>
- Butler-Kisber, L. (2010). *Qualitative inquiry: Thematic, narrative and arts-informed perspectives*. London: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Cahnmann-Taylor, M., & Siegesmund, R. (Eds.). (2008). *Arts-based research in education: Foundations for practice*. New York: Routledge.
- Castro, J. C. (2007). *Constraints that enable: Creating spaces for artistic inquiry*. Proceedings of the Complexity Science and Educational Research Conference. Vancouver, British Columbia.
- Chang, H. (2008). *Autoethnography as method*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

- Check, E. (2000). Caught between control and creativity: Boredom strikes the art room. In Fehr, D. E., & Fehr, K., & Keifer-Boyd. (2000). *Real-world readings in art education: Things your professors never told you* (pp. 137-145). New York: Falmer Press.
- Clandinin, D. J. (Ed.) (2007). *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Clandinin, D.J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Pushor, D., & Orr, A. M. (2007). Navigating sites for narrative inquiry. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 58(1), 21–35.
- Coia, L., & Taylor, M. (2005). From the inside out, and the outside in: Co/autoethnography as a means of professional renewal. In C. Kosnik, C. Beck, A. Freese, & A. Samaras (Eds.), *Making a difference in teacher education through self-study* (pp. 19–33). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Cole, A., & Knowles, G. (2000). *Researching teaching: Exploring teacher development through reflexive inquiry*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Coleman, D. (2012). *Common core: Guiding principles for the arts: Grades K–12*. Retrieved from <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/docs/guidingprinciples-arts.pdf>.
- Connors, K. E. (2000) Familiar voices and the need for reform. In Fehr, D. E., & Fehr, K., & Keifer-Boyd. (2000). *Real-world readings in art education: Things your professors never told you* (pp. 3-10). New York: Falmer Press.
- Costantino, T. (2013). Cultivating the social imagination of pre-service teachers through aesthetic reflection. In B. White & T. Costantino (Eds.), *Aesthetic, empathy, and education* (pp. 9–28). New York: Peter Lang.
- Crowther, P. (2003). Cultural exclusion, normativity, and the definition of art. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 61(2), 121–131.
- Cunliffe, A. L. (2009). The philosopher leader: On relationalism, ethics and reflexivity: A critical perspective to teaching leadership. *Management Learning*, 40(1), 87–101.
- Custer, D. (2014). Autoethnography as a transformative research method. *The Qualitative Report*, 19(21), 1–13.
- Danielewicz, J. (2001). *Teaching selves: Identity, pedagogy, and teacher education*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Davenport, M., & Gunn, K. (2007). Animation education in an indigenous context. *The Animation Journal*, 15, 44–62.

- Davenport, M., & Gunn, K. (2009) Collaboration in animation: Working together to empower indigenous youth. *Art Education*, 62(5). 6–12.
- Delacruz, E. M. (2000). Making a difference. In Fehr, D. E., & Fehr, K., & Keifer-Boyd. (2000). *Real-world readings in art education: Things your professors never told you* (pp. 11-19). New York: Falmer Press.
- Delacruz, E. M. (2008). From bricks and mortar to the public sphere in cyberspace: Creating a culture of caring on the digital global commons. *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, 10(5). Retrieved from <http://www.ijea.org/v10n5/>.
- Delacruz, E. M. (2009a). Art education aims in the age of new media: Moving toward global civil society. *Art Education*, 62(5), 13–17.
- Delacruz, E. M. (2009b) Old world teaching meets the new digital cultural creatives. *JADE*, 28(3), 261–268.
- Delacruz, E. M. (2011). The teacher as public enemy #1, a response. *Art Education*, 64(6) 5–10.
- deMunck, V. C., & Sobo, E. J. (Eds) (1998). *Using methods in the field: A practical introduction and casebook*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Denzin, N. (1997a). *Ethnographic poetics and narratives of the self: Experiential texts*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Denzin, N. K. (2006). Pedagogy, performance, and autoethnography. *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 26(4), 333–338.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2008). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Derby, J. (2012). Art education and disability studies. *Disabilities Studies Quarterly*, 32(1). Retrieved from <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/3027/3054>
- Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process* (Revised ed.). Boston: D. C. Heath.
- Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience*. New York: Van Rensselaer Press.
- Dicks, B., & Mason, B., & Coffey, A., & Atkinson, P. (2005). *Qualitative research and hypermedia: Ethnography for the digital age*. London: SAGE.
- DiRezze, G. (2000). *Becoming and being a teacher: Arts-based narratives of relational knowing, response-ability and resistance*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/.../1/NQ50047.pdf>



- Dorfman, A. (Producer & Animator). (2010). *Flawed* [DVD]. Available from <http://www.nfb.ca/film/imparfaite>
- Drachnik, C. (1976). A historical relationship between art therapy and art education and the possibilities for future integration. *Art Education*, 29(7), 16–19.
- Duarte, F. (2007). Using autoethnography in the scholarship of teaching and learning: Reflective practice from ‘the other side of the mirror.’ *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 1(2). Retrieved from <http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/ijstol/v1n2/essays/duarte/>
- Duncan, M. (2004). Autoethnography: Critical appreciation of an emerging art. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 3(4) 1–14.
- Dyson, M. (2007). My story in a profession of stories: Autoethnography an empowering methodology for educators. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 32(1), 36-48.
- Eisner, E. W. (1998a). *The kind of schools we need: Personal essays*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Eisner, E. W. (1998b). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Eisner, E. W. (2006). Does arts-based research have a future? *Studies in Art Education*, 48(1), 9–18.
- Eisenhauer, J. (2010). Writing Dora: Creating community through autobiographical zines about mental illness. *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education*, 28, 25–38.
- Elliot, A. (Director & Producer). (2009). *Mary and Max* [DVD]. Available from <http://www.maryandmax.com>
- Ellis, C. (1997). Evocative autoethnography: Writing emotionally about our lives. In W. G. Tierney & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Representation and text: Re-framing the narrative voice* (pp. 116–137). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Ellis, C. (2002). Being real: Moving inward toward social change. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15, 399–404.
- Ellis, C. & Bochner, A. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). (pp. 733–768). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ellis, C., & Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 12(1). Retrieved from <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs1101108>

- Erickson, M. (1999). Building bridges, experiential art understanding: A work of art as a means of understanding and constructing self. *Studies in Art Education*, 40(4), 381–384.
- Evans, L. (2011). *Eating our words: How museum visitors and a sample of women narratively react and interpret Lauren Greenfield's THIN* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <http://etd.ohiolink.edu/send-pdf.cgi/Evans%20Laura%20E.pdf?osu1299860725>.
- Evans, L. (2013). Food for thought: Idiom, empathy, and context in Lauren Greenfield's *THIN*. In B. White & T. Costantino (Eds.), *Aesthetic, empathy, and education* (pp. 7–28). New York: Peter Lang.
- Fehr, D. E., & Fehr, K., & Keifer-Boyd. (2000). *Real-world readings in art education: Things your professors never told you*. New York: Falmer Press.
- Fenwick, T. J. (2010): (Un)doing standards in education with actor-network theory. *Journal of Education Policy*, 25(2), 117–133.
- Fenwick, T., & Edwards, R. (2011). Introduction: Reclaiming and renewing actor network theory for educational research. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 43(S1).
- Fenwick, T., & Edwards, R. (2012). *Researching education through actor-network theory*. Malden, MA: John Wiley and Sons.
- Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2008) The interview: From neutral stance to political involvement. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (pp. 115–159). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Freedman, K. (2003). *Teaching visual culture: Curriculum, aesthetics, and the social life of art*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Freeman, M. (2007). Autobiographical understanding and narrative inquiry. In Clandinin, D. J. (ed.) *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 120–145). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Furniss, M. (2008). *Animation bible*. London: Laurence King.
- Furniss, M. (2007). *Art in motion: Animation aesthetics*. Malaysia: John Libbey Publishing.
- Galbraith, L. (Ed.). (1995). *Preservice art education issues and practice*. Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.
- Gambrell, A. (2011). In visible hands: The work of stop motion. *Animation Practice, Process and Production*, 1(1), 107–130.
- Geahigan, G. (1999a). Description in art criticism and art education. *Studies in Art Education* 40(3), 213.

- Geahigan, G. (1999b). Teaching pre-service art education majors: "The world of the work." *Art Education*, 52(5), 12–17.
- Gondry, M. (Producer). (2010). *The thorn in the heart* [DVD]. Available from <http://www.oscilloscope.net/thorn>.
- Gravel, B. E. (2009). *Science of SAM: Why animation is good for the classroom*. Tufts University Center for Engineering Education and Outreach. Retrieved from <http://icreatetoeducate.com/about/research/>
- Gray, C., & Malins, J. (2004). *Visualizing research: A guide to the research process in art and design*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company.
- Grbich, C. (2007). *Qualitative data analysis: An introduction*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Greene, M. (2001). *Variation on the blue guitar*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Greenberg, R. (2004). Persistence of vision: Animation for primary kids. *Screen Education*, 37, 90–93.
- Greenfield, L. (2006). *THIN*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.
- Griffiths, M. (2011). Research and the self. In Biggs, M., & Karlsson, H. (Eds.). *The Routledge companion to research in the arts*. New York: Routledge.
- Gude, O. (2000). Investigating the culture of curriculum. In Fehr, D. E., & Fehr, K., & Keifer-Boyd. (2000). *Real-world readings in art education: Things your professors never told you* (pp. 75-81). New York: Falmer Press.
- Gude, O. (2007). Principles of possibility: Considerations for a 21<sup>st</sup>-century art and culture curriculum. *Art Education*, 60(1), 6–17.
- Gude, O. (2010). Playing, creativity, possibility. *Art Education*, 63(2), 31–37.
- Gude, O. (2012). Cultural conversations in spiral curriculum. In T. Quinn, & J. Ploof, & L. Hochtritt (Eds.), *Art and social justice education: Culture as commons* (pp. 76–81). New York: Routledge.
- Guyas, A. S. (2006). Writing with photographs, writing self: Using artistic methods in the investigation of identity. *International Journal of Education Through Art* 2(2), 139–156.
- Guyas, A. S. (2007). Reconstructing self within the family: Rebuilding the family album. *Visual Culture and Gender* 2, 16–23.
- Gwyther, G. & Possamai-Inesedy, A. (2009). Methodologies à la carte: An examination of emerging qualitative methodologies in social research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(2), 99–115.

- Hall, T. (2012). Digital renaissance: The creative potential of narrative technology in education. *Creative Education*, 3(1), 96–100.
- Halpern, D. F. (1996). *Thought and knowledge: An introduction to critical thinking* (3rd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates.
- Hamilton, M. L., & Smith, L. S., & Worthington, K. (2008). Fitting the methodology with the research: An exploration of narrative, self-study and auto-ethnography. *Studying Teacher Education*, 4(1), 17–28.
- Hardy, T. (2006). *Art education in a postmodern world*. Portland, OR: Intellect.
- Hardy, T. (Ed.). (2009). *Art education in a postmodern world: Collected essays*. Bristol, UK: Intellect.
- Harris, A. M. (2012). *Ethnocinema: Intercultural arts education*. New York: Springer.
- Harryhausen, R., & Dalton, T. (2008). *A century of stop motion animation: From Melies to Aardman*. London: Watson-Guption Publications.
- Hedican, E. (2008). Empathy. In L. M. Given (Ed.), *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (pp. 252–253). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Hinshaw, C. (1996). Video animation as storytelling. *School Arts*, 95(8), 40–44.
- Hollins, E. R., & Torres Guzman, M. (2005). Research on preparing teachers for diverse populations. In M. Cochran-Smith & K. M. Zeichner (Eds.) *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education* (pp. 477–548). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Humphreys, M. (2005). Getting personal: Reflexivity and autoethnographic vignettes. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(6), 840–860.
- Jeffers, C. S. (1993). Research as art and art as research: A living relationship. *Art Education*, 46(5), 12–17.
- Jeffers, C. S. (2009). Within connections: Empathy, mirror neurons, and art education. *Art Education*, 62(2), 18–23.
- Jittov, M. (Director, & Writer, & Producer). (1988). *The wizard of speed and time* [VHS]. Available from Shapiro-Glickenhau Entertainment.
- Judge, M., & Hertzfeldt, D. (Producers). (2004a). *Mike Judge and Don Hertzfeldt present: The Animation Show* (Vol.1) [DVD]. Available from [www.mtv.com/shows/the\\_animation\\_show/series.jhtml](http://www.mtv.com/shows/the_animation_show/series.jhtml)

- Judge, M., & Hertzfeldt, D. (Producers). (2004b). *Mike Judge and Don Hertzfeldt present: The Animation Show* (Vol. 2) [DVD]. Available from [www.mtv.com/shows/the\\_animation\\_show/series.jhtml](http://www.mtv.com/shows/the_animation_show/series.jhtml)
- Khajavi, J. (2011). Decoding the real: A multimodal social semiotic analysis of reality in animated documentary. *Animation Studies*, 6, 46–51.
- Kim, A. (2009, October 18). *Summary of understanding the normative system: Creating great schools*. [Weblog post] Retrieved from <https://realeducationalleadership.wordpress.com/2009/10/18/summary-of-understanding-the-normative-system-creating-great-schools/>
- Kruger, J. (2012). *Animated realism: A behind-the-scenes look at the animated documentary genre*. Oxford: Focal Press.
- Kunzle, C. (2010). *Skin: An experiment in auto ethnographic video*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Concordia University, Canada.
- La Jevic, L., & Springgay, S. (2008). A/r/tography as an ethics of embodiment : Visual journals in pre-service education. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14, 67–89.
- Lammer, C. (2009). Empathographies: Using body art related video approaches in the environment of an Austrian teaching hospital. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches*, 3, 264–275.
- Larkin, R. (Animator & Producer). (1968). *Walking* [DVD]. Available from <http://www.nfb.ca/film/walking/>
- Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the social: An introduction to actor-network theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Law, J., & Hassard, J. (1999). *Actor network theory and after*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Laybourne, K. (1998). *The animation book: A complete guide to animated filmmaking*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Leavy, P. (2009). *Method meets art: Arts-based research practice*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Lever-Mazzuto, K. (2012). Katz and Aakhus' theory of apparatgeist: Students' perceptions of normative and non-normative behaviors for technology use. *Communication Teacher*, 26(2), 82–86.
- Lord, P., & Sibley, B. (2004). *Creating 3-D animation: The Aardman book of filmmaking*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishing.
- Lord, P., & Sibley, B. (2010). *Cracking animation: The Aardman book of 3-D animation* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: Thames and Hudson.

- Lowenfeld, V., & Brittain, W. L. (1987). *Creative and mental growth* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Madrid, M. (2012). Paradox in a/r/tography: Collective short animated filmmaking for social inclusion. *Visual Arts Research*, 38(2) 58–68.
- Mankovsky, T. (Writer & Director). Studholme, J. (Producer). (2009). *Sorry I'm late*. [Video File]. Retrieved from <http://www.sorry-im-late.com/index.html>
- Mantas, K. & Di Rezze, G. (2011). On becoming 'wide-awake': Artful re-search and co-creative process as teacher development. *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, 12(SI 1.4).
- Michael, J. A. (1982). *The Lowenfeld lectures*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Miller, W., & Williams, R. M. (2013). Preservice teachers and blogs: An invitation to extended reflection and conversation. *Art Education*, 66(3), 47–52.
- Minge, J. M. (2006). Painting a landscape of abortion: The fusion of embodied art. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12, 118–145.
- Morawski, C., & Irwin, S. (2008). The art of embodiment: Auto-ethnographic portraits of two women's surgical traumas. *International Journal of Education Through Art*, 4(3), 315–323.
- Murthy, D. (2008). Digital ethnography: An examination of the use of new technologies for social research. *Sociology*, 42, 837–855.
- Nieto, S. (2007). Public education in the twentieth century and beyond: High hopes, broken promises, and an uncertain future. *Harvard Educational Review*, 75, 43–64.
- Noddings, N. (2005). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Norman, F. (2013) *Animated Life: A Lifetime of tips, tricks, techniques and stories from an animation Legend* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Oxford: Focal Press.
- Olson, K. (2009). *Wounded by school: Recapturing the joy in learning and standing up to old school culture*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Overby, A. (2009). The new conversation: Using weblogs for reflective practice in the studio art classroom. *Art Education*, 62(4), 18–24.
- Ownby, T. (2013). Critical visual methodology: Photographs and narrative text as a visual autoethnography. *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*. (SI). [http://www.academia.edu/2540978/Critical\\_Visual\\_Methodology\\_Photos\\_and\\_Narrative\\_Text\\_as\\_a\\_Visual\\_Autoethnography](http://www.academia.edu/2540978/Critical_Visual_Methodology_Photos_and_Narrative_Text_as_a_Visual_Autoethnography)

- Pawlivsky-Love, L. Y. (2005). *Animation in art education: The animated classroom* (Unpublished masters thesis). University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.
- Phillips, L., & Siegesmund, R. (2013). Teaching what we value: Care as an outcome of aesthetic education. In B. White & T. Costantino (Eds.), *Aesthetic, Empathy, and Education* (pp. 221–234). New York: Peter Lang.
- Pio, F. (2000) Tough school teaching: Myths of creation and destruction. In Fehr, D. E., & Fehr, K., & Keifer-Boyd. (2000). *Real-world readings in art education: Things your professors never told you* (pp. 91-97). New York: Falmer Press.
- Powell, K. (2010). Viewing places: Students as visual ethnographers. *Art Education*, 63(6), 44–53.
- Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants. *On The Horizon*, 9(5), 1–6.
- Purves, B. (2008), *Stop motion: Passion, process, and performance*. Oxford: Focal Press.
- Purves, B. (2010). *Basics animation 04: Stop-motion* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). London: AVA Publishing.
- Quigley, M. (2007). Poultry in stop-motion: The challenge of technology in *Chicken Run*. *Screen Education*, 48, 116–123.
- Quigley, M. (2009). Animated outsiders: Harvie Krumpet and Mary and Max, *Screen Education*, 55, 82–89.
- Raimi, S. (Writer & Producer). (1998). *Army of Darkness* [DVD]. Available from <http://www.universalstudios.com/>
- Reed-Danahay, D. (1997). *Auto/ethnography: Rewriting the self and the social* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). New York: Berg.
- Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 923-948). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Robinson, C. (2010). *Animators unearthed: A guide to the best of contemporary animation*. London: Continuum.
- Robinson-Cseke, M. (2007). The negotiated identity of the artist/teacher: Research as video art. *Canadian Review of Art Education: Research and Issues*, 34, 101–108.
- Robson, C., Sumara, D., & Luce-Kapler, R. (2011). Performing an archive of resistance: Challenging normative life narratives through literary reading and memoir writing research. *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, 12(SI 1.9).

- Rohloff, R. P. (2008). *Life excavation through the imaginarium: An emancipatory model of arts-based inquiry* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois.
- Ross, M. (1996). Video animation: It's elementary. *School Arts*, 95(5), 29–33.
- Ruble, J., & Lysne, K. (2010) The animated classroom: Using Japanese anime to engage and motivate students. *English Journal*, 100(1), 37–46.
- Russell, C. (1999). *Experimental ethnography: The work of film in the age of video*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Santucci, W. (2009). *The guerrilla guide to animation: Making animated films outside the mainstream*. Continuum.
- Sawicki, M. (2011). *Filming the fantastic: A guide to visual effects cinematography* (2<sup>nd</sup>). Watham, MA: Focal Press.
- Schantz, T. (1998). Animation in the classroom. *School Arts*, 98(2), 55–59.
- Schmuck, R. (1997). *Practical action research for change*. Arlington Heights, IL: IRI/Skylight Training and Publishing.
- Selby, A. (2009). *Animation in process*. London: Laurence King Publishers.
- Shin, R. (2010). Taking digital creativity to the art classroom: Mystery box swap. *Art Education*, 63(2), 38–42.
- Silvio, T. (2010). Animation: The New Performance? *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 20(2), 422–438.
- Shuman, A. (2005). *Other people's stories: Entitlement claims and the critique of empathy*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Smith-Shank, D. & Keifer-Boyd, K. (2007). Editorial: Autoethnography and arts-based research. *Visual Culture and Gender*, 2, 1–5.
- Springgay, S. (2002). Arts-based research as an uncertain text. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 48(3), 1–30.
- Spry, T. (2001). Performing autoethnography: An embodied methodological praxis. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(6), 706–732.
- Stokrocki, M. (1983). Interpretation theory: Its meaning and application to art education. *Canadian Review of Art Education Research*, 10, 13–25.
- Stokrocki, M. (1995a). Creative tension: Problems in teaching art education to pre-service classroom teachers. In L. Galbraith (Ed.), *Preservice art education: Issues and practice* (pp. 45–55). Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.



- Stokrocki, M. (1995b). An exploratory microethnographic study of art teaching in one Navajo public school system: The Anglo view of Running Water. In H. Kauppinen & R. Diket (Eds.). *Trends in art education from diverse cultures* (pp. 181–191). Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.
- Stokrocki, M. (1997). Qualitative forms of research methods. In S. D. La Pierre, & E. Zimmerman (Eds.). *Research methods and methodologies for art education* (pp. 33–56). Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.
- Stout, C. J. (1999). The art of empathy: Teaching students to care. *Art Education*, 52(2), 21–34.
- Struthers, J. (2012). *Analytic autoethnography: A tool to inform the lecturer's use of self when teaching mental health nursing?* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Lancaster University, United Kingdom.
- Stuart, G. W., & Laraia, M. T. (1998). *Principles and practice of psychiatric nursing*. St. Louis, MO: Mosby, Inc.
- Sullivan, G. (2005). *Art practice as research: Inquiry in the visual arts*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Sumara, D., & Davis, B., & Filax., & Walsh, S. J. (2006). Performing an archive of feeling: Experiences of normalizing structures in teaching and teacher education. *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy*, 2(2), 173–214.
- Susi, F. D. (1995). Developing reflective teaching techniques with pre-service art teachers. In L. Galbraith (Ed.), *Preservice art education: Issues and practice* (pp. 107–119). Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.
- Svankmajer, J. (Director). (2007). *Jan Svankmajer: The Complete Short Films 1964–1992* [DVD]. Available from <http://www.moviemail.com/film/dvd/Jan-Svankmajer-The-Complete-Short-Films-19641992/>
- Sweeny, R. W. (Ed.). (2010). *Inter/Actions/Inter/Sections: Art education in a digital visual culture*. Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.
- Sweeny, R. W. (2013a). Ten ways of making. *Art Education*, 66(2), 4–5.
- Sweeny, R. W. (2013b). Teaching art, teaching artists, teaching art teachers. *Art Education*, 66(3), 6–7.
- Tashakkori, A., & Creswell, J. W. (2007). Exploring the nature of research questions in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(3), 207–211.
- Taylor, R. (1996). *Encyclopedia of animation techniques* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Running Press.

- TenNapel, D., & SouthPeak Interactive. (Producers). (1996). *The neverhood* [PC CD-ROM]. Available from Dreamworks Studios.
- Thornton, A. (2005). The artist teacher as reflective practitioner. *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, 24(2), 166–174.
- Tillander, M. (2008). *Cultural interface as an approach to new media art education* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304494588>
- Tillander, M. (2011). Creativity, technology, art, and pedagogical practices. *Art Education*, 64(1), 40–46.
- Watson, C. (2009). Picturing validity: Autoethnography and the representation of self. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15(3), 526–544.
- Weitz, G. M., & Suggs, M. S. (2000). A field guide for art educators: Guerrilla tactics for change. In Fehr, D. E., & Fehr, K., & Keifer-Boyd. (2000). *Real-world readings in art education: Things your professors never told you* (pp. 127-136). New York: Falmer Press.
- Wells, B. (2011). Frame of reference: Toward a definition of animation. *Animation Practice, Process and Production*, 1(1), 11–32.
- Wells, P. (1998). *Understanding animation*. New York: Routledge.
- Wells, P. (2006). *Fundamentals of animation*. London: AVA Publishing.
- Wells, P. (2011). Picture by picture, movement by movement: Melbourne-Cooper, Shiryaev, and the symbolic body. *Animation*, 6(2), 149–162.
- Wells, P., & Hardstaff, J. (2008). *Re-imagining animation: The changing face of the moving image*. New York: Watson-Guption Publications.
- Wexler, A. J. (2009). *Art and disability: The social and political struggles facing education*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Wexler, A. J. (2012). *Art education beyond the classroom: Pondering the outsider and other sites of learning*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- White, B., & Constantino, T. (Eds.). (2013). *Aesthetics, empathy, and education*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Zander, M. J. (2003). Talking, thinking, responding and creating: A survey of literature on talk in art education. *Studies in Art Education*, 44(2), 117–134.
- Zhao, W. (2012). *A study of the analogue of stop-motion animation and its links with film*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Plymouth School Art and Media, United Kingdom.