

THREE GRACES OF PRACTICE: RENDERING THE RECIPROCAL INTERACTIONS OF ARTISTRY AND TEACHING

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Abstract

Enacting reciprocity between art making and teaching practice constitutes a critical and ongoing challenge for artists who teach. While the difficulties inherent to enacting successful artist and teaching interaction are well documented, the challenge remains for researchers to identify specific strategies that can better assist art teachers to negotiate the complex relationship between artistry and teaching. This paper identifies and then extrapolates specific ways in which artist and teacher practices can enable teachers to realise more authentic, transferable and reciprocal exchanges between practices. To facilitate this, a hybridised methodology is adopted where methods integral to narrative inquiry and a/r/tography are drawn together to generate a flowing metanarrative of participants' intricately layered stories, or 'pictures' of the enacted interplay between artistry and teaching. The insights reported upon in this paper allow for some of the existing beliefs and understandings around what constitutes a challenge and a benefit in the interaction of artistry and teaching to be contested. In exploring the storied experiences of three artists and teachers, this paper highlights concrete and discrete ways that artist and teaching practices can interact, and the specific implications this interaction can have for successful enactment of artist and teaching practices.

Keywords: Art teaching, a/r/tography, artistry

The frame – An introduction

When artists become teachers in education contexts, there is a period of time where existing practices and expectations shift and readjust to accommodate the work inherent to both teaching and art making. The complimentary practices inherent to art making and art teaching have been extensively articulated (see Booth, 2010; Ewing, 2011; Graham & Zwirn, 2010; Hansel, 2005; Oreck, 2009). While much of this literature indicates that teachers' capacity to engage in art practice is integral to quality art teaching, research that illustrates what can happen in this transitory space is lacking. In order to enact reciprocity between practices, a recalibration of expectations and existing approaches must occur (MacDonald, 2012; MacDonald, 2014), within which approaches to and investment in art making and art teaching are reimagined. This recalibration has implications for quality and achievement in both practices, and the subsequent reimagining of art making and art teaching provide the impetus for this investigation.

Historical and contemporary research has demonstrated that while important to the quality of art teaching, the ability to re-negotiate balance between art making with art teaching can be difficult to achieve (see Graham & Zwirn, 2010; Hall, Thomson & Russell, 2007; Kind, de Cossen, Irwin, & Grauer, 2007). Whilst the existing body of research has extrapolated some of the identified challenges, this investigation interrogates and illustrates three teachers' capacities to teach art and make art from the perspectives of early career, established, and master artist/teacher. Through these three lenses, openings within which we can glean deeper understanding of how to resolve challenges encountered in the process of becoming an artist and a teacher are articulated. This paper illustrates perceived and experienced challenges inherent to becoming a teacher and an artist, and in doing so elucidates complexities and contentions inherent to existing conceptualisations of artist teachers (Booth, 2010; Daichendt, 2009) and teaching as artistry (Eisner, 2002; Ewing, 2011).

The impetus for this paper derives from preliminary research which indicated that time an art teacher spends away from practice can have positive implications for quality art making and art teaching upon revisiting (MacDonald, 2014; MacDonald & Moss, 2014). A development for this paper was to explore the motivation and intention behind time spent in and out of practices, and how prioritisation of practices can implicate upon the artistry of teaching. In doing so, the art teacher making a conscious decision to ‘rest’ a practice to allow for dedicated focus on another has different quality outcomes than a teacher who attempts to maintain equal attention to both, but fails to do so (MacDonald, 2014). This paper contests some of the previously reported benefits and challenges inherent to how artistry and teaching are drawn together. In doing so, the criticality of prioritising practices, and how this is integral to helping beginning teachers set realistic expectations for themselves during and after their initial teacher education is elucidated.

A primed canvas – The context

This paper examines storied insights from three teachers’ experiences of maintaining arts practice whilst teaching, from the perspectives of early career (myself), established (Angus) and master artist and teacher (Jane). My perspective encapsulates the early career teacher journey to becoming an artist and teacher, including my pre-service teacher training and the first two years of my professional practice as an art teacher. Within this article, Kitching, Morgan and O’Leary’s (2009) definition of an early career teacher is adopted, which describes early career teachers as working within their first five years of professional teaching practice. The other two participants’ narratives encapsulate perspectives of established (Angus with 15 years experience teaching) and proficient (Jane with 40 years experience teaching) practices of becoming and being artists and teachers. Within this paper, an established teacher is delineated as someone having an excess of five years teaching experience, which aligns with Feiman-Nemser’s suggestion that beginning teachers “need three or four years to achieve competence and several more to reach proficiency” (2001, p. 3).

For this investigation, descriptions of any particular artist or teacher identity and practice were shaped by the view that we are always in a state of evolving, changing, or becoming other (Deleuze, 1995). As such, becoming was realised as the movement evident in changes or transitions between particular events and experiences, such as the interactivity between artist and teacher practices. In this way, becoming removed emphasis from any one particular definition, label or end product, whether it be interim or final. Becoming, as it is embraced within this paper, reflects a “dynamism of change, tending towards no particular goal or end-state” (Stagoll, 2005, p. 26).

An existing picture – Theoretical background

The importance of existing skills and practices in art making that an art teacher brings to their teaching has been comprehensively explored (Booth, 2010; Ewing, 2011; Graham & Zwirn, 2010; Hall, Thomson & Russell, 2007). Becoming an artist and teacher is a complex process informed by myriad variables. It is evident that defining who artists are and what they do poses a complex challenge for researchers. Saarnivaara (2003) defines the artist as being instinctive, intuitive and “a person who confronts their experiential world by means of a craft without exerting any conscious conceptual influence and who draws on it to create something new” (p. 582). Carroll (2006) also suggests that, similar to the construction of teacher identity, “artist identity is constructed in and through the discipline of art making itself” (p. 4). As such, these definitions “provide a repertoire of attributes that artists can relate to and can selectively draw upon” (Bennet, Wright & Blom, 2009, p. 30) to challenge or confirm their perceptions of professional self. Burgoyne (1990) describes an artist as:

Any person who creates, or gives creative expression to, or re-creates works of art; who considers his/her artistic creation to be an essential part of his/her life; who contributes to the development of art culture; and who asks to be recognised as an artist, whether he/she is bound by any relations of employment or association. (p. 29)

Each of these definitions of artist allow for recognition to be given by self and other, and enable us to consider and reflect upon who an artist is by considering the activities they engage in. According to Hall (2010), becoming an art teacher requires the entangling of “personal and professional identities as a teacher and an artist; personal and pedagogic philosophy and approach, the ethos and character of their school and the stage of their career” (p. 109). Part of the challenge for ongoing research in this space is articulating the process of this entangling of professional identities, and better elucidating the implications of the inherent challenges and benefits.

There are commonalities between the practices of artists and teachers work. Knowles and Cole (2008) describe artists as embracing means of investigation and expression that allow us to follow the “natural internal flow of individual inquiry” (p. 66). The things that artists do all the time are things that teachers need to be able to do, such as collaboratively forming alternative solutions to problems, being persistent and prepared to make adjustments after making a choice, taking responsibility for decisions and considering all options, expression of feelings and ideas (Sinclair, Jeanneret, & O’Toole, 2011; Rabkin & Redmund, 2004). There are synergies between an artist’s practice and a teacher’s practice, particularly in relation to identity formation. Both artists’ and teachers’ perspectives, experiences and processes are informed by personal experience but are also given professional status through successful immersion within their practices (Stewart, 2003). For artists, this immersion might be demonstrated via public exhibition of and critical engagement with art work and for teachers, it may be demonstrated through the honing of their art of teaching (artistry) and implementing their practice in front of a class (Ewing, 2011; MacDonald, 2014; Stewart, 2003).

Artists who enter into teaching bring with them a suite of skills inherent to their respective art practices. Whilst these skills contribute to art teachers’ content knowledge, they do not automatically translate to effective pedagogical knowledge. Graham and Zwirn (2010) iterate this in describing how “being an artist does not mean that great [art teaching] pedagogy will follow” (p. 8). Artists who enter into teaching can grapple with a number of challenges in developing the essential pedagogical knowledge to help them translate and contextualize their art making skills and processes into meaningful learning experiences. A particular challenge art teachers can encounter is to understand the various and complex ways their practice as artists can and should inform their practice as teachers (Hatfield, Montana & Deffenbaugh, 2006). The role of arts knowledge and practice in regard to art teacher quality has been noted by other researchers, such as Wright (2003), who determined the benefits of a teacher’s art knowledge and skill base as being far reaching in its’ influence, positively impacting upon both person and place, and the inherent reciprocal relationship between the two. It is evident that an art teacher’s experiences in art making is regarded as having the capacity to positively contribute to the quality of arts learning they can deliver, and contributing to what has been described as the ‘artistry’ of teaching.

Teaching as artistry is a concept that has been conceptualised by a number of researchers (Booth, 2010; Eisner, 2002; Ewing, 2011; Ewing & Hughes, 2008; Schön, 1987; Stanley, 2008). Research has been undertaken to conceptualise the artistry of teaching; that is the art inherent to teaching, or perceiving teaching practice as an artform in and of itself. According to Eisner (2002), the concept of artistry in relation to teaching and pedagogy is not limited to the fine arts, but to everything made well, with due consideration given to “the aesthetic, imagination, technique, and the ability to make judgments about the feel and significance of the particular” (p.382). What this suggests is that the

skills, practices, propensities and approaches adopted by artists are well suited to approaches we align with quality pedagogical practice. Quality teaching is contingent upon an approach grounded in artistry and aesthetic consideration, where a teacher continually develops a repertoire of practice to recognise “when to come in and take the lead, when to bow out and when to improvise are all aspects of teaching that follow no rule, they need to be felt” (Eisner, 2002, p. 382). Teaching artistry offers an appealing pedagogical perspective for art teachers, however, there are some contentions inherent to its conceptualisation. Booth (2010) infers that “the field of teaching artistry does not speak in a unified voice – never has and possibly never will” (p. 1). In this way, definitions of an art teacher, artist teacher, teaching artist and teaching artistry are at times used interchangeably, which may contribute to perceptions of inconsistency or conflict across definitions.

The notion of the teaching artist, or artist teacher as something distinct to artistry in teaching appears to be intimately connected to the notion of artistry. There is a still-expanding body of literature evolving from the notion of art teachers who maintain dual practices as both teacher and artist who could be regarded as teaching artists. Interest from researchers in the concept of “teaching artists” or “artist teachers” has been widely conceptualised (see Booth, 2010; Campbell, 2003; Daichendt, 2009; Dohm, 2000; Hansel, 2005; Graham & Zwirn, 2010). Booth (2010) proposes an evolving definition of artist teacher as “a practicing professional artist with the complementary skills, curiosities and sensibilities of an educator, who can effectively engage a wide range of people in learning experiences in, through, and about the arts” (p. 2). Whilst some artists who transition into teaching find the focus of their creative practice to shift into the artistry of teaching (Ewing, 2011; Stanley, 2008), others are more concerned with maintaining their artist practice as distinct, but concurrent to teaching (Orek, 2009; MacDonald, 2014). It is evident that some teachers have found teaching artistry to successfully fulfil their creative and artistic needs whilst concurrently contributing to quality pedagogy. However, a space exists to explore the degree to which embracing teaching artistry as a replacement for engagement in actual artist practice impacts upon art making and teaching.

The literature shaping this existing picture of interests, concerns, and conceptualisations in relation to the art making and teaching nexus demonstrates the synergy inherent to artistry in arts practice and teaching practice. However, in order to genuinely realise this synergy in authentic and meaningful ways, it is evident that the art teacher must first be able to effectively facilitate reciprocity of certain aspects between their artist and teacher practices.

Methods and mediums – A triptych of becoming

The framework for this paper embraces a constructivist paradigm, aligning with naturalistic qualitative method approaches (Hatch, 2002), for which autoethnography, narrative inquiry and a/r/tography are well suited. Through exploration of participant data generated from journals, semi-structured interviews and creative artistic practice, critical event analysis (Reissman, 2001; Webster & Mertova, 2007; Woods, 1993) was used to unfold participant experiences of becoming artists and teachers. In working as a Levi-Straussian (1962) bricoleur, and in consultation with Angus and Jane, I interwove diverse aspects of the research, drawing from existing literature and our individual narratives, to assemble a collage of rhizomatic complexity. This allowed for the moving of our stories into and around each other, and to explore in creating new meanings. This creative approach has been validated in the context of teacher education, as it has been claimed that “there is no better way to study the artistry of teaching than through creative and artistic modes of knowing” (Cole & Knowles, 2000, p. 80). The discussion unfolds to reflect critical exploration of an artwork, speculating and then articulating meaning. In imagining the research as an creative and collaborative act, I was able to better elicit and explore the places where participant sense of self and subject was constructed. When

art processes and products are entwined with investigative research, the ensuing products should be “approached and appreciated as a piece of research rather than works of art” (Cutcher, 2004, p. 47). In appealing to the creative artistic inclinations and sensibilities of artists and art teachers, the processes and communication of research within this paper sought to enhance accessibility and transferability, to inform and in turn potentially transform perspectives and understandings of artistry.

In considering our entwined story - or metanarrative - as an artwork, researcher and participant were able to become with our stories, and be drawn into their compound (Deleuze & Guattari 1994). As such, the discussion unfolds as a blending of data and reflection, substance, interpretation and message. The panels of this analytic-artistic research triptych have therefore been constructed in exploration of Sandro Botticelli’s three graces from *La Primavera* (1482) as an allegorical interpretative device to frame the three emergent themes discussed.

La Primavera, and specifically the three graces therein, were focussed upon due to the interaction of the three figures reflecting the three emergent and interrelated themes being explored within this paper. Also, the arrangement (and subsequent rearrangement) of the three graces reiterate both an intricacy and clarity of different voices emerging within the counterpoint of Botticelli’s pictorial chords (Barolsky, 2000), or the bigger picture of artist and teacher interactivity. The choice of *La Primavera* was made by the researcher in the understanding that while meaning has been extensively and conventionally discussed, possibilities in relation to Botticelli’s pictorial imagination within this work have been inadequately appreciated (Barolsky, 2000). This idea to utilise allegory as a lens to reimagine research insights and interpretations of *La Primavera* created scope for diverse interpretations of becoming artist and teacher as well as dynamic reinterpretations inherent to *La Primavera* to emerge.

Within this analysis, allegory performs as a useful interpretive device in its capacity to allow research renderings to illustrate the ways “characters” can introduce distinct qualities into the experience of becoming (Grubbs, 2001). Within a/r/tography methodology, this allegorical exploration can be applied as a powerful device to elicit transformation of experience into concept, and then concept into rendered image (Goethe, 1998). Botticelli’s three graces depict an eloquent confrontation between Voluptas (left), Chastity (centre), and Beauty (right), as entwined in a dance laden with rich symbolism for a contest. Excerpts of Botticelli’s three graces as depicted in *La Primavera* (1482) are juxtaposed with interpretive prose, and re-contextualised in alignment with the participants’ metanarrative. The crafting of creative prose unfolded as process and product within my enactment of the research underpinning this paper, and is included throughout as a means of punctuating and guiding the discussion. This approach reflects what Leggo describes as “engaging in an ongoing performance in writing, a performance that informs on the one hand, and then transforms on the other” (2008, p. 9). My creative analytic prose is offered in accompaniment to my appropriation of the three graces (below), and is interwoven into the warp and weft of analysis as a means of eliciting powerful connection-making and communication of ideas.



Figure 1: Appropriated excerpt from *La Primavera*, The three graces, Botticelli (1482).

Retrieved from: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/25/Sandro_Botticelli_-_La_Primavera_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

In collaboration with Angus and Jane, the critical events shaping the complex challenges we experienced in beginning teaching, in particular the factors we identified as contributing to how we tended to our art and teaching practices, were identified and then examined. Within the context of narrative investigation, Woods describes a critical event as having the “right mix of ingredients at the right time and in the right context” (1993, p.102) to profoundly impact upon the person behind the story. Critical event analysis enabled retrospective identification and elucidation of significant moments and incidents that occurred as we, the participants, sought to concurrently evolve our professional practices as artists and teachers. The ensuing experiential insights detailed in this paper are not offered as indicative of all artists and teachers; rather, they exemplify how individual experiences can be collectively drawn together to raise and contextualise important issues regarding processes integral to maintaining art and teaching practices. In this way, the methodological processes adopted align with what Reissman (2001) describes as narratives not being able to “speak for themselves or have unanalysed merit; rather they require interpretation when used as data in social research” (p. 401).

Three graces: An unfolding illustration

Within this discussion, an illustration of the factors that we determined as impacting the most upon how we realised and developed reciprocity between art making and art teaching is offered. Through this process, the creation of a triptych as a multimodal rendering (MacDonald & Moss, 2015) of the collective explorations of interactivity inherent to artist and teacher practices is articulated. The triptych depicts our constructed metanarrative in relation to three emergent themes, which are presented as three distinct yet interconnected triptych panels, or graces. These panels are arranged in an entwining of data, prose and analysis to illustrate the aligning and contrasting ways we as

participants encountered moving in and out of our practices as artists and teachers. In what follows, a process of artistic and analytic exploration depicts how we encountered, perceived and negotiated expectations and interactions between our artist and teaching practices. Through generation and exploration of critical events and creative prose, the emergent themes are presented as three graces of **dilemma**, **resilience** and **prioritisation** of practices.

Panel 1 – Dilemma (Beauty).

*A show of solidarity Two
against one
Resolute and defiant
They seek out dilemmas
To tackle and become within*



Figure 2: Appropriated excerpt from La Primavera, Chastity and Beauty, Botticelli (1482).

Retrieved from: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/25/Sandro_Botticelli_-_La_Primavera__Google_Art_Project.jpg

Chastity and Beauty oppose Voluptas. Their body language is turned away from the lustful god Zephyrus (to the far right of the original image). They lean in, united to confront Voluptas and the temptation she presents. Beauty is open faced and bold in her challenge of Voluptas; unperturbed and daring. Richly embellished, Beauty reflects a heightened morality and position of power.

In our teaching, when presented with an option to circumvent a challenge, or take an easier route, we agreed that the easiest option rarely resulted in the best possible outcomes for learning, nor would it manifest in conceptually sound art work. This challenge of navigating when to resist and relent is reiterated in the struggle between the three graces as they fight to resolve the position of power. We agreed that embracing dilemmas, and problem solving our way through to resolutions were an important aspect of developing our practices as teachers and artists. Our experiences reflected a shared perception that our practices and experiences as artists enhanced creative problem solving skills, and the significance of negotiating dilemmas in both teaching and art making was critical to our development in this regard. Dilemmas were imperative to furthering our creativity, inside and outside of our classrooms. We each looked to the problem solving approaches we would use within our respective arts practices and would apply these skills, wherever and whenever appropriate, to serve our

art teaching. Our approaches reiterated how the expressive tools and concepts of art processes can be used to realise new ways of thinking, imagining, communicating and making meaning (Wright, 2003). To elaborate upon what specific processes can be adopted within the context of encountering dilemmas in teaching, Angus described how his artist self was always searching and looking for interesting and challenging problems to solve. He described how as an artist he would experience a range of struggles, but these struggles provided him with important insight into how to work through difficulties or failure. We agreed that working through ongoing challenges in art practice was a powerful incentive from which we could evolve our teaching and art making. Jane similarly suggested that her most satisfying creative works often resulting from failures, or attempts that had not initially worked well, and that these were critical to informing how she tackled the challenges encountered in the classroom. In this way, our experiences as artists were useful in helping us to be persistent and patient in our approaches to overcoming obstacles, such as students' reluctance to engage, and allowed us to better recognise when something was not working and devise ways to approach the challenge from alternative angles. Our experiences of working as artists provided us with an eclectic and unexpected range of tools and strategies for navigating dilemmas, and an important part of our capacity to do this relied upon dedicated focus upon the practice presenting the greatest challenge, and also adopting an attitude of resolution as opposed to defeat.

*What becomes more problematic;
Turning away from the dilemma
Or impressing upon its messiness
With our intent*

Part of being able to recognise the applicability of our artist problem solving skills to situations in teaching relied on our tenacity to overcome challenges, rather than perceiving and reacting to them as a threat. We recognised that the things we did as part and parcel of our artist practice were things that were beneficial to student learning, such as collaboratively forming alternative solutions to problems, being persistent, adjusting something after making a choice and taking responsibility for decisions (Rabkin & Redmund, 2006; Sinclair, Jeanneret & O'Toole, 2011). In discussing the implications of our attitudes, it was evident we shared the perception that a negative or oppositional attitude could quickly permeate everything we did. We described this as being entirely counterproductive to solving problems but also how, during times when we felt especially overwhelmed by the pressures of our practices, a positive attitude became increasingly difficult to maintain. This attitude of positivity and embracing dilemmas as opportunities was particularly difficult to maintain during our first years of teaching. We determined this as being critical for beginning teaching, where we found ourselves having to navigate decisions such as taking a purposeful break from art making to invest energy and effort into familiarising ourselves with the realities of classroom management and school expectations for how we would perform in our role as teachers. We agreed that provided we made decisions with an attitude of intention and ownership, as opposed to feeling we had no choice, we were able to better navigate dilemmas. Importantly, this enabled us to attend to the demands of working through dilemmas and consolidating a sense of confidence in our teaching practice. Angus and Jane indicated that their ability to maintain a positive outlook and tackle challenges was reflective of their galvanised resilience from years of experience, and as beginning teachers they were subsequently at higher risk of negatively reacting to dilemmas in art making and teaching. The beauty that could ensue from the dilemmas we encountered in becoming teachers was contingent upon our ability and preparedness to maintain a sense of positivity and composure in the face of difficulties encountered. We agreed that a teachers' capacity to maintain a positive outlook was most challenging in beginning teaching, and self-efficacy and confidence were imperative to maintaining levels of resilience to best support a positive outlook.

Panel 2 – Resilience (Chastity)

*Borrowing from one To
serve another
An approach in paint
Applied with care
To a pedagogical portrait
We are comforted by our tried and true*



Figure 3: Appropriated excerpt from La Primavera, Chastity shielding Beauty, Botticelli (1482).

Retrieved from: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/25/Sandro_Botticelli_-_La_Primavera__Google_Art_Project.jpg

Chastity is notably less adorned than Beauty and Voluptas. She is stripped back, her bare shoulder exposed to show her strength and constitution. She holds Beauty's hand protectively in hers, and keeps her shielded behind her back.

The grace of Chastity resonates with attributes of resilience and integrity, and reflects our embodiment these attributes in order to achieve a sense of reciprocity between our approaches to art and teaching practice. Despite the differences evident in our teacher training backgrounds and our years of experience in teaching, commonalities were evident in how we enacted problem solving strategies inherent to artist practice in our classrooms. We agreed that our evolving resilience was contingent upon our approaches and attitudes towards resolving dilemmas in practice. Of particular note was the manner in which we could embrace and rise to criticism, and we attributed our ability to do this to critical experiences encountered whilst engaged in formal tertiary arts learning at art school. A commonality we shared was the way in which we spoke of managing criticism, where we each indicated a predisposition to subsequently respond thoughtfully rather than react impulsively. We agreed that this predisposition was derivative of our personal experiences in arts learning, and this predisposition was beneficial to how we conducted ourselves pedagogically. What this denotes is how our experiences of receiving and responding to criticism in the context of our own art school education positively shaped our preparedness to respond constructively in our management of criticism encountered in learning to teach. Whilst this was an art school experience we collectively determined to be confronting, we determined these experiences as contributing powerfully to our professional resilience. Working through individual and group critiques at art school prepared us to navigate challenges we encountered in our classrooms, be they in relation to navigating relationships, managing behaviour, or institutional expectations. This is a valuable insight into the specific benefits such experiences in art making can provide teachers. A teacher's capacity to use criticism constructively is reported as being "critical to teacher resilience, where teachers need to be able to elicit constructive

learning from situations that have the potential to be challenging” (Masten, Best & Garmezy, 1990, p. 425). In this respect, our articulated experiences identify and expand upon specific identified benefits inherent to art making had in regard to how we conducted ourselves in teaching.

Whilst we each experienced discomfort in learning how to interpret and respond to criticism within the context of our own arts learning, we were able to see how this experience ultimately benefited us positively, as artists and in turn teachers. We agreed that there were fewer experiences more deflating than someone’s scathing response to a piece of artwork or project in which we had vested much care and effort. While there were other factors contingent to cultivating a sense of resilience in teaching and art making, we agreed that it was this exposure to and preparedness to embrace criticism that most powerfully contributed to our professional resilience. What our experiences and renderings exemplify are the outcomes of embracing criticism as opportunities to “adapt to new situations and look for possibilities, not problems” (Carrillo & Baguley, 2011, p. 61). Being prepared to engage in and learn from criticism emerged as significant to our perceived ability to interpret and use criticism to the betterment of both our teaching and art making. We perceived this ability as significant to how our artist and teaching practices could impact upon each other, and our resilience as professional teachers and artists was bolstered by our ability to assimilate criticism.

Panel 3 - Prioritisation (Voluptas)

*Locked in a dance of defiance
Art making and art teaching
Momentarily move in dynamic momentum
Whilst tacitly duelling
For primacy over concurrence*



Figure 4: Appropriated excerpt from La Primavera, Chastity confronting Voluptas, Botticelli (1482).

Retrieved from: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/25/Sandro_Botticelli_-_La_Primavera__Google_Art_Project.jpg

Voluptas’ determined gaze is unyielding. She resists Chastity with one hand and pushes against Beauty with the other. Her dipped chin places her face in a position of strength and domination. Positioned above Chastity, she is compelling in her insistence for primacy and priority.

We described at length our desire to adopt and embody artistry as inherent to our teaching, and how over time we were able to build upon transferability of skills and approaches between art making and

art teaching. What we noted as a critical challenge in achieving this was that both our art making and teaching practices were implicitly demanding, and had potential to be all consuming. Critical to how we prioritised practices was the nature of our desires as teachers and artists, and how these desires would shape our prioritisations in teaching or art making. Interestingly, our experiences implied a need for artist and teacher to cultivate reciprocal yet distinctive resilience in relation to the demands integral to art making and art teaching. We described a danger of being overwhelmed by the demands of both practices during times that we sought to entwine them too closely, or attempted to maintain a tenuous balance of focus to both practices, irrespective of the pressures and expectations inherent to each practice that warranted prioritisation at different times. Some situational examples that reflected critical decisions in relation to our prioritisation of practices included marking and report time (teaching), and producing and preparing work for public exhibition (art making).

We described situations where the impact of our art and teaching practices focussed primarily upon the identification of skills and activities within each practice that we deemed to be reciprocal or transferable. It is evident that we perceived the enactment of transferability between our art making and teaching as having the capacity to positively impact upon both practices. Jane described how, in doing her own printmaking work, she would often find herself thinking about how her particular ways of working could be taught, or would be of interest for her students. This suggests that Jane would often think of her art teaching whilst engaging in art making, indicating an intrinsic connectivity between her teaching and art making practices. In doing so, Jane was engaging in the meta-cognitive processes that heightened her attention to the detail of practice, and ultimately contributed to helping her foster reciprocity between her art making and art teaching. What this exemplifies is how teachers can look to their artistic pursuits and activities in order to find ways of enriching their pedagogical approaches to art teaching (Graham & Zwirn, 2010), or what has otherwise been described as the artistry of teaching (Booth, 2010; Ewing, 2011). In order to create opportunities for ongoing growth and reciprocal revitalisation, it is important that some degree of engagement in arts practice is maintained.

*Art making and art teaching
Each brimming with all importance
Respect for dedicated space
And;
Acknowledgment of each practice As
distinctive and valuable
Is critical to achieving reciprocity*

A valuable insight emerging from our storied experiences is that for beginning teachers, enacting connectivity between art making and teaching can be difficult to achieve. Both Jane and Angus indicated that their capacity to enact this transferability and benefit from a genuine understanding of the artistry of their teaching was something that became increasingly instinctive as they settled into their teaching practices. We each acknowledged how a teaching as artistry approach had the capacity to positively impact upon the quality of arts learning we could offer whilst simultaneously appealing to our sensibilities as creative practitioners. However, we agreed that this had the potential to be an unrealistic and problematic aspiration in beginning teaching. We talked about frustration that came with being unable to successfully discern how and where our approaches to art making could best serve our pedagogical approaches, reflecting a beginning teacher's propensity for expectations of competence which often exceed their capabilities (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). In this way, our experiences affirm the difficulty a beginning teacher can experience in regard to how they transfer skills and understanding between artistry and pedagogy in their first years of professional practice (MacDonald & Moss, 2014; MacDonald, 2014). It is evident that the skills of negotiation we used to articulate and "continuously reappraise art practice and, at an appropriate stage, use that practice to

inform teaching” (Hall, 2010, p. 103) depended largely upon our capacity to make meaningful and concrete connections between the two. Part of this was respecting the importance of both practices as distinct, and where achievable, investing into individual creative pursuits pertinent to each practice. We agreed that our first three years of beginning art teaching practice was a time during which reciprocity was incredibly difficult to achieve, and prioritisation of the least established practice, which in our cases was teaching, needed to be given opportunity to meet the competence of our established art practices.

Openings

*Our dancers bring together
The analogous and competing
Mixing and blending
A harmonious dance of respect and acknowledgement
Embracing reciprocity and autonomy As
critical to artistry*

This rendered triptych has sought to elucidate the reciprocal impacts teaching and art practices can have in relation to enacting teaching artistry, whilst also illustrating critical challenges integral to satisfying expectations of and for art making and art teaching. The three critical themes as interpreted and rendered through the allegorical lens of Botticelli’s three graces creates openings within which the difficulties beginning teachers may encounter in cultivating reciprocity between artistry and pedagogy are revealed. Transcending the number of years of working as artists and teachers, it is evident that the participants’ capacity to enact meaningful reciprocity between art and teaching practices was contingent upon dedicated investment in both art making and teaching.

The insights articulated in this paper suggest that artistry in teaching should not replace art teacher’s investment in art making. Rather; this paper attests that dedicated space should be given to both practices in order to achieve meaningful reciprocity between art making and art teaching, although this does not need to occur concurrently. It is proposed that time spent away from art making is not to the detriment of an art teachers’ existing professional art practice, provided the decision to invest in one practice over the other is in acknowledgement and understanding that both practices are inherently valuable and contingent to quality art teaching and learning outcomes. Whilst a view of teaching as artistry provides a rich lens for teachers to make meaningful connections between art making and art teaching, this is not to be at the expense of artistic practice. In saying this, it is unrealistic for art teachers to expect to maintain the same levels of artistic practice/output they may have achieved prior to beginning teaching. Rather, it is proposed that there is benefit to resting a practice whilst investing in another. When the rested practice is revisited, there is potential for substantive developments to have manifested as a result of simmering in the liminal meta-thinking relative to both practices.

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