Participatory Artistic Quiltmaking for Peacebuilding and Peace Education: Reflections on a Workshop in the International Institute for Peace Education 2010 and on a Research Study

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Introduction

As a participant in the 2010 International Institute on Peace Education (IIPE) which was held in Cartagena, Colombia, I had the opportunity to facilitate a workshop relevant to the field of peace education. When the time came to propose a workshop, I had no difficulty deciding what I wanted to share with other educators, peace activists, individuals from non-profit and non-governmental organization, and academics. At the IIPE I facilitated a workshop on participatory artistic quiltmaking for peacebuilding and peace education that was based on my Master of Arts research conducted in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, on the role of participatory artistic quiltmaking for peacebuilding and peace education among youth aged 8 to 12. This paper presents a narrative of what occurred in the IIPE workshop as well as explains participatory artistic quiltmaking in the context of peacebuilding. The paper also highlights some initial findings from my Master of Arts research and describes the use of participatory artistic quiltmaking in research.

Personal Background and Research Motivation

As an educated Caucasian woman with European and Indonesian heritage who was raised in a middle class Canadian family, I have grown up privileged. This privilege

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has allowed me to receive formal training as an elementary school educator and work experience in formal and informal education both in Canada and internationally. My experience has heightened my awareness of the need for peacebuilding approaches that welcome diverse ways of understanding relationships in cross-cultural educational settings, and the social contexts in which these relationships arise. My teaching and research as an elementary educator in New Delhi, where I explored the role of participatory art as a vehicle for promoting global citizenship for youth in a cross-cultural classroom, led me to my Master of Arts research on the role of participatory artistic quiltmaking in support of peacebuilding among youth. Furthermore, my teaching experience has helped me identify the lack of understanding amongst educators and researchers about the relationship between participatory arts-based social responsibility programs in cross-cultural educational settings and the promotion of conflict resolution and community development.

Having volunteered for various "social responsibility" programs offered in primarily what have been labeled as "inner-city" schools in the British Columbia (BC) public school system, I have also observed the plethora of structured social responsibility programs that are available to teachers and students to address topics like social engagement, personal development, and conflict resolution. Many of these programs seem to re-enforce liberal ideologies about education and a liberal notion of social responsibility, which continues to privilege the privileged, by failing to address systemic oppression and inequality. They also seem to lack the use of the arts as a vehicle for promoting cross-cultural relationship building and as a tool for contributing to peacebuilding efforts and towards peace education. Having had many powerful experiences with the arts, I believe that participatory quiltmaking in place of a social responsibility-based program, can be used for supporting peacebuilding and efforts towards peace education.

Theoretical Frame

The theoretical framework for my research on the role of participatory artistic quiltmaking in supporting peacebuilding among youth, utilized Kathy Bickmore's three types of conflict management activity as identified from conflict and conflict theory and originally applied to international conflicts. These types of conflict management include peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding, and they have been applied to interpersonal and inter-group levels in the context of education, to highlight how interpersonal and social conflict is handled in schools [1]. They also reflect varying political ideologies.

Peacekeeping

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[1] Kathy Bickmore, "Discipline for Democracy? School Districts' Management of Conflict and Social Exclusion," *Theory and Research in Social Education* 32(1) (2004): 77.

Peacekeeping reflects containment or security approaches, and relies on the "narrowest repertoire of strategies for controlling behaviour" [2]. Politically, it represents a conservative ideology, in that it attempts to establish security through control. In school systems, peacekeeping is reflected in "burgeoning emphases on violence prevention and zero tolerance strict discipline policies including mandated codes of conduct" [3]. The limitations of peacekeeping are that it often emphasizes short-term control of violence and disruption by punishing or excluding individual students, rather than resolving underlying conflicts or strengthening social relationships [4]. According to Bickmore, these punitive methods are increasing as "a widening variety of youth behaviour is being criminalized and managed with standardized punishments" [5]. A significant restriction with this approach, besides it being authoritative in the hands of the teacher, is that restrictions and punishments are disproportionately imposed upon certain populations of students, based on racial, social class and other biases [6].

Furthermore, peacekeeping approaches often emphasize obedience, blaming, and exclusion of those citizens who do not comply with authority [7]. Because of power imbalances and often embedded social biases that define this kind of conflict and violence, peacekeeping alone does not address or alleviate harassment and bullying, nor the deeper issues of social status competition and bias that underlie bullying and harassment [8]. Despite its limitations, it is important to acknowledge that peacekeeping is essential to protecting vulnerable students from victimization, and is an important catalyst for the development of peacemaking skills among students [9].

Peacemaking

Peacemaking represents dispute resolution, negotiation, and dialogue approaches[10]. It includes some peacekeeping as well as conflict resolution, and attempts to facilitate conflict management and resolution through dialogue and problem solving rather than blame or punishment [11]. Examples of peacemaking include democratic processes like legislative governance, class meetings, and student councils, as they facilitate collective deliberation and decision making in the face of citizens' conflicting wants and needs [12]. Politically, peacemaking represents a liberal or "middle of the road" ideology.

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[2] *Ibid*., 77.
[3] *Ibid*., 78.
[4] *Ibid*., 78.
[5] *Ibid*., 78.
[6] *Ibid*., 78.
[7] *Ibid*., 78.
[8] *Ibid*., 80.
[9] *Ibid*., 80.
[10] *Ibid*., 77.
[11] *Ibid*., 79.
[12] *Ibid*., 79.

The limitations of peacemaking include that it encourages a sense of agency and the practice of democratic participation capabilities, such as dialogue and negotiation; however, it does so without always emphasizing dispute settlement[13]. Although it encourages individual skill development and helps to foster nonviolent management of disputes between children of similar social status through the development of direct communication or mediation skills and procedures, it neglects to consider issues of class difference. Class difference impacts children's participation in both democratic processes and in the facilitation of disputes [14]. Furthermore, some peacemaking initiatives emphasize conflict avoidance, control of anger, and narrow cultural formulas for appropriate social behaviour, all of which exclude marginalized students. Other peacemaking initiatives including peer mediation, delegate tangible responsibility to "good" students, which emphasizes dominant cultural manners and control [15]. It is important to acknowledge that some peacemaking activities do generate more democratic space for diverse students to autonomously manage conflict, but I believe that the creation or lack thereof, of democratic space, is dependant upon the social, political, and educational ideology that is employed by the educator and the broader ideology of the school.

Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding supports the redress of underlying inequities and social conflicts in order to restore healthy relationships or to prevent future escalation of conflicts [16]. It is the most comprehensive and inclusive form of conflict management, because it includes both peacekeeping and peacemaking and adds long-range harm reduction through social reconstruction [17]. Politically, is represents radical ideology, as it is linked to structural equity issues and institutional forms of oppression. As Bickmore stated, "if social exclusion and inequity cause frustrations, social fractures and disengagement that may lead to violence, then equity efforts likely contribute to peacebuilding" [18]. Therefore, because violence is caused by social exclusion and inequity, we need to focus on dealing with issues of equity, which are included in peacebuilding efforts.

Peacebuilding originated with repairing relationships after incidents of violence, and it has been applied to rebuilding equitable and resilient relationships at points in the conflict cycle, through anti-discriminatory problem solving, restorative justice, and inclusive critical citizenship education [19]. It facilitates the deepening and broadening of democratic space by redressing injustice, rights violations, and participation barriers[20]. It is based on restoration beyond simple dispute settlement and instead of retribution. Peacebuilding is accurately represented in "democratic education that helps students to

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[13] *Ibid*., 79.
[14] *Ibid*., 79.
[15] *Ibid*., 79.
[16] *Ibid*., 77.
[17] *Ibid*., 77.
[18] *Ibid*., 80.
[19] *Ibid*., 80.
[20] *Ibid.,* 80.

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develop accepting attitudes and a sense of personal responsibility toward unfamiliar or subordinate national or social groups" [21]. Implicit learning of peacebuilding is shaped through structural mechanisms for equity and human rights protection, and explicit learning of peacebuilding is reflected in bias awareness, gender equity, anti-racism, global and international development, Holocaust education, and peace education curricula [22].

Peacebuilding emphasizes the development and autonomous implementation of individual and institutional capacities over time; therefore, it can take a long time to see the effects of peacebuilding, and it can be difficult to assess reliably [23]. Some peacebuilding initiatives are "conflict avoidant or assimilationist," whereas others "openly confront controversial justice issues that underlie intractable conflicts and violence" [24]. Although both approaches reflect political and social biases, the difference between conflict avoidant and assimilationist initiatives and others that confront controversial justice issues, is that the initiatives that confront justice have highly visible biases, as opposed to hidden or covert biases which are present in assimilationist initiatives [25].

As Bickmore stated, "democratic citizenship education needs to focus on initiatives that attend to critical agency and conflict communication across cultural, gender, language, ideological, or power differences, as these created opportunities for democratic citizen engagement" [26]. These initiatives need to include guided opportunities for active conflict deliberation, peacemaking, and peacebuilding, which are essential to the development of citizenship capabilities, and for actually resolving conflicts that underlie violence. The simple fact is that schools need to embrace conflict and difference as normal aspects of their daily operations and as learning opportunities for educators, students, and administrators. Furthermore, once educators are able to embrace these ideas of democratic citizenship, particularly as they relate to peacebuilding, their own citizenship actions make a difference in shaping the political will and understanding that in turn shapes school policy. This has been demonstrated in numerous examples in schools in British Columbia, where teachers have become allies for the promotion of issues around diversity and inclusion in schools. Failing to address issues of bias that underlie issues of conflict, as well as violence and bullying, fails to address the challenges of the contemporary world. As Bickmore stated, "some citizens' concerns are encoded in policy much more readily than others, based on their identity, visibility, political participation, and socio-economic clout" [27].

My ideological stance regarding both citizenship and social education, which is reflected in my beliefs about conflict management, is that educators should be focusing

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[21] *Ibid*., 80.

[22] *Ibid*., 80.

[23] *Ibid*., 80.

[24] *Ibid*., 81.

[25] *Ibid*., 81.

[26] *Ibid*., 80.

[27] *Ibid*., 80.

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their efforts on activities that promote peacebuilding. I also acknowledge that all schools, classrooms, and educators, many not necessarily be of the same mindset that peacebuilding is an important and necessary part of the curriculum, and thus one may see schools embracing various forms of peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding, within the same school environment, depending on individual beliefs about teaching, and conflict resolution in the education system.

Why Quiltmaking?

Quilts as end products and quiltmaking as a process serve a variety of needs including satisfying physical needs of warmth, protection, and packaging, as well as documenting rites of passage, stating political allegiance, and representing avenues for religious and aesthetic expression[28]. Today quilts are valued and categorized in diverse ways. For example, political activists have seen the collaborative nature of quiltmaking as a way to publicize their concerns in such projects as the Peace Ribbon, the Names Project, and the Boise Peace Quilt Awards [29]. These projects all used the collaborative aspects of quiltmaking as a mechanism to present social commentary. For example, the Ribbon was sewn together by people protesting nuclear war and tied around the Pentagon in a public demonstration in August, 1985; the Names Project was a collective response to HIV/AIDS wherein each segment of a quilt top was sewn in commemoration of the death of a loved one; the Boise Peace Quiltmakers of Idaho promote "people-to-people" peacemaking and award quilts as prizes to people who work towards world peace.

To date, there have been several research projects that have examined group dynamics and relationship building through the use of participatory quiltmaking; these have highlighted the role of quiltmaking in relationship development among people of diverse backgrounds and interests. For example, Ettinger & Hoffman researched the use of quiltmaking in an academic course with twenty-seven female university students, and found that participatory quiltmaking was a way to "initiate strong kinship bonds, develop intricate networks of friendship, and support personal growth" [30]. Despite students' initial hesitation and differences of opinion around the logistics of engaging in the quilt project, researchers found that as the school term progressed, the group became "more cohesive" with several students even volunteering to help others sew [31]. The researchers noted that "these activities of helping and sharing became important aspects of teaching and learning in the course" and found that by the final class, "students appeared to be generally more involved, confident, and supportive as evidenced in the easier flow of dialogue of all types and the increase in sharing among participants" [32]. Furthermore, the researchers found that the quiltmaking process seemed to affect the viewpoints of individuals in the class and concluded that "many behaviours frequently noted appeared

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[28] Pat Ferrero, *Hearts and Hands: The Influence of Women & Quilts on American Society* (San Francisco: The Quilt Digest Press, 1987).

[29] Linda F. Ettinger and Elizabeth Hoffman, "Quilt Making in Art Education: Toward a Participatory Curriculum Metaphor," *Art Education* 43(4) (1990): 43.

[30] Ettinger and Hoffman, "Quilt Making in Art Education," 45.

[31] *Ibid*., 46.

[32] *Ibid*., 46.

to reflect the kinds of interactions that reportedly happen during traditional quiltmaking including sharing ideas, making group decision, developing social ties, and producing something meaningful" [33].

Quilts produced through quiltmaking also have the ability to serve as vehicles for social and political action, as Stalp found through an analysis of quilting as a meaning-making process [34] She stated that "with political voice, private and public memory, and commemoration, quilts can travel through time in both public and private ways that other cultural objects cannot" [35]. She also noted that with respect to women's identity, "quilting is one of many ways in which women can connect with other women on personal and societal levels, develop a creative self in which women find themselves not just as family caretakers but as subjects of their own lives" [36]. Elsley, in the context of researching about reading quilts as textile texts, found that "quilts constitute a way for marginalized groups to find center stage" and concluded that "quilts constitute a system of language where voices are heard in the context of community" and that "quilts speak to their society about controversial issues"[37].

Holland, in a discussion about the use of quilts to celebrate diversity with young children, noted that "quilts reflect the expertise, values, and culture of the hands that stitched them and are appropriate for discussions about uniqueness, differences, and relationships" [38]. Helm, Huebner and Long further support Holland's claim by noting that "quilts create connections within families, throughout cultures, and across cultures" as well as "celebrate the similarities and differences in people and their heritage" [39]. Because quilts are functional and familiar objects to children, and because "children learn best when they start with what they already know and then expand on their ideas and experiences"[40], the use of quilts and quiltmaking therefore, "gives children a chance to build on their understanding of differences through the use of a familiar object" [41]. Furthermore, the meaning making process behind quilts and quiltmaking has been explored by DeVaul, who examined the communicative aspects of quilts and the communal process of quilting. She concluded that "quiltmakers encode cultural differences and similarities in the process of construction**" of a quilt, which in turn express fundamental beliefs [42]

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[33] *Ibid*., 46.

[34] Marybeth Stalp, "Women, Quilting, and Cultural Production: The Preservation of Self in Everyday Life" (PhD diss., University of Georgia, 2001), 153.

[35] *Ibid*., 154.

[36] *Ibid*., 154.

[37] Judy Elsley, *Quilts as Text(iles): The Semiotics of Quilting* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1996), 10.

[38] Marna M. Holland, "Using Quilts and Quilt Picture Books to Celebrate Diversity with Young Children," *Early Childhood Education Journal* 32(4) (2005): 243.

[39] Jeanne Helm, Alice Huebner, and Becky Long, "Quiltmaking: A Perfect Project for Preschool and Primary," *Young Children* 55(3) (2000): 47.

[40] Janet B. McCraken, *Valuing diversity: The Primary Years* (Washington, DC: NAEYC, 1993), 14.

[41] Holland, "Using Quilts and Quilt Picture Books," 244.

[42] Diane DeVaul, "Mother Work – Quilts and Art: A Material Culture Study" (PhD diss., University of Maryland, 1998), 15.

One aspect and important tension that is raised in scholarly literature and that needs to be considered in the context of discussions about quiltmaking for peacebuilding (which includes discussions about culture, race, and ethnicity) is how the word "culture" is being used. Another tension in different educational discourses including peace education, global citizenship education, diversity education, and others is how to treat the word "culture." Davies notes that "in discussions of cultural integration there is often the language of "one's own culture" and "others' culture" but that this notion of "us" and "them" may become more complex in a world of migration and of dual or hybrid identities" [43]. Furthermore she states that "culture is not just about origin but about current linkages, trading, and economies" where the emphasis on culture and identity is "not just a better understanding of the multicultural society we live in, but the fact that this hybrid society is itself engaged in various economic and cultural linkages outside" [44]. Furthermore, Klein (as cited in Davies) argues that learning from other cultures means "embracing an internationalist perspective on citizenship by taking an interest in world cultures and an curiosity to find out more; learning respect for cultures different from one's own; regarding cultures as living and changing, affected by external circumstances such as invasion, colonization, globalization" [45]

Arts-Based Research and A/r/t/ography

Arts-Based Research

Arts-based research has many labels and terms some of which include arts-informed research or inquiry, arts-based inquiry, lyric inquiry, image-based research, performative inquiry, storywork methodology, and installation art-as-research. Furthermore, there are many different types of arts some of which include photography, cartoons, video, graffiti, sculpting, theatre, maps, murals, collage, mosaic, metaphors, dance, writing, drawing, and fabric crafts. Irregardless of the art form, the arts have the ability to be used as tools for generating counter-narratives (stories we have been told to believe); link feelings to cognitive understandings; promote social change; encourage collective creation; encourage the aesthetic as a way of entering into an issue or genre; and generate knowledge through symbols, images, etc.

A/r/tography as a Form of Arts-Based Research

The arts-based research methodology that I used in my research was A/r/t/ography as it focuses on individuals being artists, researchers, and teachers, and

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[43] Lynn Davies, "Global Citizenship Education," in *Encyclopedia of Peace Education*, ed. Monisha Bajaj (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2008), 111.

[44] Davies, "Global Citizenship Education," 112.

[45] Reva Klein, *Citizens by Right: Citizenship Education in Primary Schools* (Great Britain, UK: Trentham Books and Save the Children, 2001) as cited in Lynn Davies**, "**Global Citizenship Education: Abstraction or Framework for Action?" *Educational Review* 58(1) (2006): 9.

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engaging in and making a commitment to living inquiry [46]. Engaging in living inquiry involves the practice of continuously asking oneself questions and inquiring into those questions, and then asking new questions. A/r/tographical research focuses on "living and inquiry in the in-between, of constantly questing, and complicating that which has yet to be named" [47]. In practice, as a researcher this involves constantly questioning our experiences and findings, as we engage in research. A/r/tography defines research as an "evocation, a provocation, calling us to transformation"[48]. For researchers, this involves learning about oneself, in the process of conducting research. It also involves seeing the practices inherent in the work of artists and educators are forms of research, because they are grounded in ongoing forms of recursive and reflexive inquiry engaged in theorizing for understanding.

A/r/tography could be termed as practitioner-based research, because a/r/tography perceives research as a disposition for knowledge creation and understanding through acts of theorizing as complication [49]. There is attention paid to the aesthetic, and a commitment to how the aesthetic elements of an art form can inform research. Furthermore, a/r/t/ography can aid in the construction and generation of counter-narratives and stories through an aesthetic medium because as individuals engage in research studies and create and analyze their artwork they draw on their own lives, knowledge, and experiences, which in turn become counter-narratives.

A/r/tography allows research to transgress the "…limitations and oppressive features of traditional scientific research, opening spaces for experimentation of alternative approaches that weave in aesthetic sensibilities and post-positivistic forms of expression" [50]. It is "about writing outside of the lines, transgressing the rules, while staying within the lines of dominant discursive practices...[and is one of the] few ways we have left to disrupt the dominant discourses in society that silence and marginalize" [51]. It is "a mode and form of qualitative research…that is influenced by, but not based in, the arts broadly conceived," and whose central purposes are to "enhance understanding of the human condition through alternative (to conventional) process and representational forms of inquiry, and to reach multiple audiences by making research more accessible" [52]. As Finley states, "at the heart of arts-based inquiry is a radical, politically grounded

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[46] Rita Irwin, "Communities of A/r/tographic Practice," in *Being with A/r/tography*, ed. Stephanie Springgay et al. (Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers, 2008).

[47] Rita Irwin and Stephanie Springgay, "A/r/tography as Practice-Based Research," in *Being with A/r/tography*, ed. Stephanie Springgay et al. (Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers, 2008), xxxi.

[48] Irwin and Springgay, "A/r/tography," p. xxx.

[49] *Ibid*., p. xxiii.

[50] Shauna Butterwick and Jane Dawson, "Adult Education and the Arts," in *Context of Adult Education: Canadian Perspectives*, ed. Tara Fenwick et al. (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, 2006), 243.

[51] Helen K. Ball, "Subversive Materials: Quilts as Social Text," *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research* 60(3) (2002): 2.

[52] J. Gary Knowles and Ardra L. Cole, "Arts-Informed Research," in *Handbook of the Arts and Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues*, by J. Gary Knowles and Ardra L. Cole (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 2008), 59.

statement about social justice and control over the production and dissemination of knowledge. By calling upon artful ways of knowing and being in the world, arts-based researchers…bring both arts and social inquiry out of the elitist institutions of academe and art museums and relocate them within the realm of the local, personal, everyday places and events" [53].

A/r/tography emphasizes the emotive and affective domain of understanding, which fits beautifully when engaging with an emotive topic such as peacebuilding. Furthermore, it fosters inclusion and empowerment through an aesthetic voice that creatively show-cases both individual and collective community knowledge. It encourages imagination and creativity; focuses on creative representation and interpretation; and is at once rigorous but dynamic and innovative [54]. In arts-based research, attention is paid to the aesthetic and there is a commitment to how the aesthetic elements of an art form can inform research. Arts-based educational research can construct and generate counter-narratives and stories through an aesthetic medium because as the people engaged in the study create and analyze their artwork they draw on their own lives, knowledge, and experiences. Also, these counter narratives can be used to address inequalities and "to advance a subversive political agenda that addresses issues of social inequality" [55]. Furthermore arts-based educational research can be participatory, critical, practical and transformative, and support the empowerment of participants, collaboration through participation, acquisition of knowledge, and social change.

Sharing of Research Findings

During the IIPE workshop, I shared some findings from my Master of Art research on the role of participatory artistic quiltmaking in supporting peacebuilding among grade 4-7 youth[56]. One of the findings was that participants developed different understandings of each other which supported the development of new and deeper friendships. For example, when speaking about a classmate, *Colin an eleven year old male participant said "when I saw the quilt I'm like oh wow….he's a human being like us" (Colin, Lines 318-320). Participants also developed individual understandings of the concepts of inclusion and exclusion and what they look like in practice (based on gender, age, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation). For example, Kristina a ten year old female participant said "I learned about exclusion because sometimes….people doesn't include other people and I see a person getting left out and inclusion is like you get that

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[53] Susan Finley, "Arts-Based Research," in *Handbook of the Arts and Qualitative Research: Perspectives Methodologies, Examples, and Issues*, by J. Gary Knowles and Ardra L. Cole (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Inc., 2008), 71.

[54] Sharon Deacon, "Creativity Within Qualitative Research on Families: New Ideas for Old Methods," *The Qualitative Report* 4(3 & 4) (2000): accessed November 10, 2010, http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR4-3/deacon.html

[55] Finley, "Arts-Based Research," 71.

[56] Roselynn Verwoord, "'Building Peace' Through Quiltmaking: The Role of Participatory Artistic Quiltmaking in Supporting Peacebuilding Among Grade 4-7 Youth," (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 2011).

one person that's not allowed to play with one group and ask them if they want to play with this group" (Kristina, Lines 113-117). Furthermore, both the art teacher and classroom teacher experienced the value of fabric arts and will be integrating them into the regular classroom curriculum in September 2010.

Participants also developed pride and attachment to the quilt and to their artistic creations and were able to articulate similar understandings of the concept of peace, despite not being "taught" what peace was. For example, Henry, a ten year old male participant mentioned that peace meant "No war, stuff like that, everybody's happy" (Henry, Line 47) and David a twelve year old participant said peace meant "everyone's happy" (David, Line 115). These research findings support the idea that the arts, particularly participatory artistic quiltmaking, can influence children's behaviour in a way that is not influenced by a classroom teacher or formal teaching. Furthermore they support the finding that participatory quiltmaking is a way to "initiate strong kinship bonds, develop intricate networks of friendship, and support personal growth" [57].
*Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of all research participants.

Modelling the Participatory Artistic Quiltmaking Process at IIPE

In order to allow IIPE participants to experience the participatory artistic quiltmaking process, I led participants through a condensed version of the process. The instructions they received were to individually make a quilt block (some examples shown in figures 1 and 3) depicting what peace education means to them. They were to work individually but they could chat and engage with others. Participants were given approximately twenty minutes to make a quilt block. We then stood in a circle with a blanket on the floor (to represent a quilt), and shared our quilt blocks, as shown in figure 2. We collectively decided how to bring our blocks together to make a quilt. Participants one by one spoke about their quilt blocks and placed them on a blanket, to simulate a quilt. Next we engaged in a discussion about their experience. Questions included "What was your experience making the quilt block like? What surprised you about yourself and the process? How might arts-based research inform the work that you do? What might some of the possible benefits and challenges be?" The workshop concluded with a summarizing of the power of participatory artistic quiltmaking as a tool for peace education.

At the end of the workshop, participants eagerly asked "What is going to happen to the quilt?" As a facilitator of the participatory artistic quiltmaking process, I posed the question back to the participants and said "What would you like to do with it?" There was some discussion about keeping it together as a quilt, and even some suggestions that I should take it back to Canada and sew it together. The participants decided that they would like to share it at the IIPE culture night celebration and that I should keep it until then. At IIPE culture night, the quilt was presented by two participants (one Spanish speaking and one English speaking) from the workshop, who had agreed to speak about

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[57] Ettinger and Hoffman, "Quilt Making in Art Education," 45.

the experience of making the quilt blocks. They asked participants from the workshop to each briefly speak about what their block was about, in order to allow each person to feel that they were being represented. At the end of IIPE culture night, I packed up the quilt and it was eventually brought to Canada.

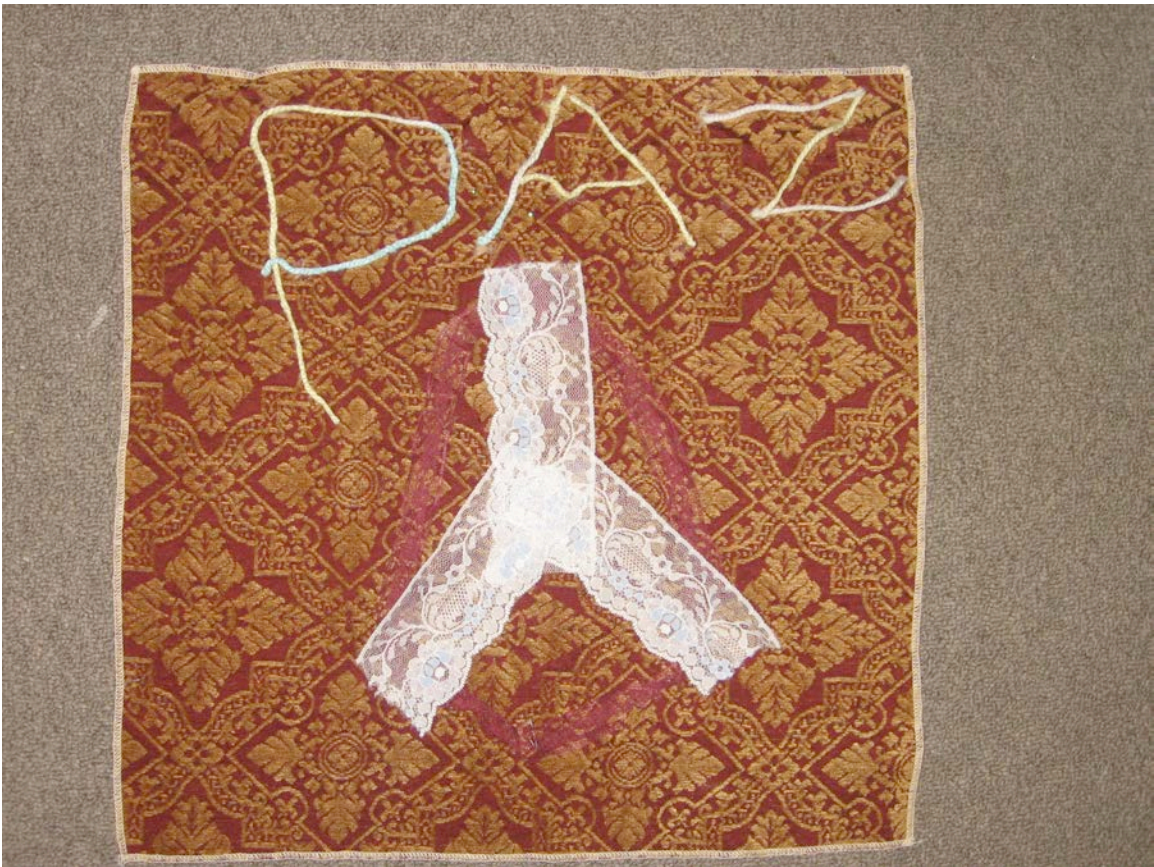Figure 1: A Quilt Block Made During the IIPE Workshop

Figure 2: Placing the Quilt Blocks on the "Quilt" During the IIPE Workshop

Figure 3: A Quilt Block Made During the IIPE Workshop

The Power of Participatory Artistic Quiltmaking in the Context of Research

The participatory artistic quiltmaking process begins with a research question as identified by the researcher. Participants are asked to engage in a participatory artistic quiltmaking process by individually making a quilt block representative of their response

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to the research question. Although this process is done individually, it is also done collectively as participants work in a shared or collective space where conversations, sharing, and assisting each other naturally occur. During the quiltmaking process, the researcher draws out themes related to the research question. Depending on the qualitative research methods and methodology being employed, the researcher may engage in formal and informal observations of participants, group and individual interviews, an analysis of the quilt, etc.

In order to focus on the participatory aspect of the process, it is important to ensure that participants make decisions from the start of the project. These decisions can include what to include in the quilt, what materials to use, how they want to work together as a collective group (i.e. establishing group guidelines or agreements), when their work is "done", how the quilt should be put together, and who owns the quilt. As a researcher, it can be challenging to both facilitate these processes (be a teacher), engage in the collective project (be an artist), and conduct research simultaneously (be a researcher). Participants can become quite attached to their creative work and may decide that they want to keep their quilt block. As a researcher, one needs to be prepared to deal with these kinds of situations throughout the participatory process and to be ready to support the collective process. The collective process helps foster group decision making skills, participant ownership, and helps participants develop an awareness of the "other" (i.e. other participants) through the attainment of new perspectives.

Privileging the artistic aspect of the process is also important. Many individuals, particularly those from the western formal education system have had their artwork assessed and thus have particular perceptions of what "good" and "bad" artwork looks like. By privileging the artistic process and staying away from traditional notions and dichotomies of "good" and "bad" art we can help to re-shape peoples' experiences with art and support creativity. Lastly, the artistic process in the context of quiltmaking can help participants and society in general challenge conceptions about who quiltmaking is for and why quiltmaking is done (i.e. for middle-aged Caucasian women who want to pass down family traditions). The aesthetic element that is generated through the artistic process can help disrupt common conceptions of quilts (i.e. that they are soft, warm, comfortable) as the messages, particularly if they are focused on issues of social justice, that can be portrayed through quilts can be disturbing and shock-inducing.

Conclusion

My research and my work with participatory artistic quiltmaking within the context of peacebuilding, is situated in theories of transformative learning, which are based on the assumption that education for personal change and growth is critical to social transformation. Theories based on the relationship between the arts and transformative learning, are centrally located in hooks' work, who espoused that "the arts remain one of the powerful, if not the most powerful, realms of cultural resistance, a space for awakening folks to critical consciousness and new vision" [58]. In support of art

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[58] bell hooks, "Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics," (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1990), 39.

as a vehicle for promoting understanding among individuals, Greene stated that "to perceive, to imagine new possibilities of being and action is to enlarge the scope of freedom for the individual; and, when people work to open new perspectives together, they may even discover ways of transforming their lived worlds" [59]. Miller suggests that "an education that is relevant to our time cannot simply aim for transmission, but must support cultural reconstruction or transformation" [60]. Therefore, if we choose not to involve youth in "reconstructing our societies, in building a culture of peace, justice, compassion, their future looks bleak indeed, no matter what marketable skill their school provides them" [61].

Like Freire, I believe in education that supports youth to critically examine their personal and social reality through interactions with others. For example, Freire (as cited in Cruikshanks) stated that "every human being no matter how submerged in the 'culture of silence' he or she may be, is capable of looking critically at the world in a diagnostic encounter with others[62]. Participatory artistic quiltmaking creates a space for this individual yet shared encounter with others. Furthermore, participatory artistic quiltmaking can act as a tool or vehicle for exploring individuals' lived realities which is supported by Cruikshanks' belief that when individuals are given the "proper tools and environment, [they] can become conscious and aware of personal and social realities as well as the contradictions within it, and ultimately play a part in the radical reconstruction of oppressive structures and situations"[63].

The importance of the arts in fostering youth understanding of community and global citizenship has not only been articulated by educational theorists, but is also currently expressed by the British Columbia Ministry of Education, which supports Fine Arts as an essential element for social responsibility and democracy. As indicated by the rationale outlined in the K-12 Fine Arts curriculum: "The fine arts are important to our understanding of society, culture, and history, and are essential to the development of individual potential, social responsibility, and cultural awareness…. an understanding of the fine arts fosters respect for and appreciation of the diverse cultural heritages and values found within Canada and around the world" [64]. I do not believe that the arts are merely ornamental aspects of human production and experience but believe that they have a more significant role to play in enlarging human understanding. Similarly, according to Bohm, "to awaken to the creative state of mind…is for each of us

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[59] Maxine Greene, "Aesthetic Literacy," in *Aesthetics and Arts Education*, ed. Ralph A. Smith et al. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 158.

[60] Ron Miller, "Educating a Culture of Peace," in *Child Honouring: How to Turn this World Around*, ed. Raffi Cavoukian et al., (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2006), 63.

[61] Miller, "Educating a Culture," 64.

[62] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, 2002), as cited in Nadine Cruikshanks, **"**Tales of Transformation Through Children's Global Arts" (PhD diss., University of Victoria, 2007), 33.

[63] Nadine Cruikshanks, "Tales of Transformation Through Children's Global Arts" (PhD diss., University of Victoria, 2007), 33.

[64] British Columbia Ministry of Education, *Ministry of Education Service Plan 2008/09 2010/11* (Victoria: Queen's Printer, 2008), 9.

individually and society as a whole the most important thing to be done in the circumstances in which humanity now finds itself" [65]. I believe that art is the vehicle that youth need to be able to engage in meaningful conversations about cross-cultural relationship building, and "the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world" [66].

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[65] David Bohm, *On Creativity,* ed. Lee Nichol (New York: Routledge, 1998), 24.

[66] hooks, *Yearning,* 34.

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