The Shock of the New

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Abstract

Since 2017 I have examined the impact of shifting professional practices demonstrated by students of an Artist Teacher MA programme at an English university. Students repeatedly discuss the transformative nature of the course, and through an impact case study I have interrogated the conditions which enable profound changes to occur. Emerging findings indicate that pedagogies of uncertainty enacted within an inclusive community foster students' experiences of visibility, being heard and valued professionally. This resulting pedagogic context encourages students to take risks in a safe environment and supports them to build sustainable practices applicable to educational and artistic communities alike. In this article I argue that pedagogic conditions which enable these ways of being are just as crucial now, as we live through an extraordinary global crisis. I engaged in an autoethnographic analysis of how findings from the artist teacher impact case study can inform my current working conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through reflexive journaling and art practice I documented my experiences of transferring face-to-face content to remote learning platforms. In the process I consider what can be learnt from established artist teacher practices, communities and the values that underpin them whilst I support an online teaching and learning community. Crucially I am concerned with how the opportunities and challenges afforded through remote learning shape my professional practices, and the extent to which pedagogies of uncertainty evident in the artist teacher impact case study are borne out through remote working.

Usually we have time to transition between beginnings and endings in our lives, occurrences that involve a time to grieve over what has been lost and time to prepare for what is to come (Salzberger-Wittenberg 2013). However, the global disruption caused by COVID-19 prevented a gradual adjustment to a new way of life. People around the world have rapidly found themselves living under lockdown, experiencing pandemic shockwaves which will influence nations and their policies

and practices for years to come. Education is at the heart of these disruptions. In March 2020, universities across the West closed their campuses and the OECD reported that nearly one billion children were affected by the closure or partial closure of schools across a 102 countries. With a rapidly changing global picture many education policy makers shared effective practices, determined to support learners and mitigate inequity for those most at risk (OECD 2020). By contrast, the four British nations have supported schools, colleges and universities in varied, and sometimes confusing and unhelpful ways (for example, Sharp et al. 2020). Whilst the pandemic has revealed clear fault lines in Western societies – inequalities, marginalisation and recriminations – it has also provided opportunities and innovations (Teti et al. 2020). An increased contribution in community activity during lockdown (Marshall Payne 2020) brings hope through participation (Shor 1992) and when hope is invested in new experiences it can help us move forwards (Salzberger-Wittenberg 2013). As an educator, I believe there has never been a better time to re-examine our practices, and like Reville (cited in Mineo 2020) I am keen to explore better ways of being and doing education in this new normal.

Unsurprisingly, the pandemic turned my existence upside down. As a senior lecturer in an English university my domestic space suddenly became an office and I found myself welcoming higher education students, alumni, colleagues and strangers into my home via video conferencing calls. The sudden shift of personal space was unsettling, as was my lack of power over the abrupt endings of my old life and the emergence of a new one. Managing screen time fatigue, negotiating altered assessment outcomes for students, embracing online pedagogies and digesting extensive emails all contributed to exhaustion and grief during the early chaos of lockdown (Payne 2020). It was important for me to acknowledge that adjusting to new practices is often difficult and can cause anxiety (Salzberger-Wittenberg 2013) as I worried that I lacked the necessary resolve to deal with the situation effectively.

Holding on to the desire to *do education better* I realised that my domestic/ working environment become an unexpected site for learning (Illeris 2017). As the academic course leader for a Masters in Education: Artist Teacher Practice I was studying alongside my students, unlearning old ways and relearning new ones. 'We learn by doing and by thinking about our experiences' (Shor 1992, 17), and so if I was to elucidate relationships between a changed working environment and subsequent learning (Daniels 2004) then first I needed to describe and reflect on experiences of my everyday practices. How these intersect with the artist teacher community was vital as I navigated a fresh working narrative:

> *Today I decided that I would begin an autoethnographic examination of my experience of delivering the artist teacher programme remotely. I'm interested in exploring whether I actually transfer / translate the characteristics that the students and alumni identify as key in the MA programme (see impact case study findings) through online platforms. I'm also interested in my own wellbeing and professional development. What do I learn about myself and my working environment in the process? How does the construction of the artist teacher community online inform my professional practice and/or identities? [reflective journal, 20 April]*

Around this time I received an unexpected invitation to submit an abstract to this special *Discomfort Zones* edition, which initially caused panic. In a reflective journal entry on 22 April I wrote:

I was on annual leave and I glanced at my emails. This was partly because I was expecting something from an NSEAD [National Society for Education in Art and Design] colleague, and partly because I was finding it hard to switch off. Usually I can achieve this, but with the pandemic it is proving trickier. I saw the email invitation, which I read. I was a bit freaked by it and felt pressure to create something from scratch; working under the current context it just seemed like one too many things.

Retrospectively it provided the impetus that I needed to embrace change. By focusing on an autoethnographic account of working with the professional community I am immersed in, and providing clarity about the role the community plays in the research (reflections about artist teachers are only included with individuals' written consent), I was able to gain ethical approval quickly from my university. I was excited and nervous about the opportunity for discoveries. The more participatory the experience, the greater potential to unearth alternative meanings and purpose in my working life, and by disseminating new understandings through a journal article I hoped to exercise a critical voice too. One thing was clear; the artist teacher community would be at the heart of the study.

Artist teacher practice

The Artist Teacher Practice Masters programme has its origins in British continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities clustered together under the banner: The Artist Teacher Scheme (ATS). Developed in 1999 through the National Society for Education in Art and Design and part funded by Arts Council England, the scheme was specifically designed for art and design educators. There were ten courses operating in England and Scotland (Page et al. 2011), but the removal of national funding in 2010 ultimately led to the demise of over half the ATS programmes in England.

Situated in the south of England, my programme is a partnership between a high-profile museum and a university department of education. The MA runs on a three year part-time basis and I recruit teachers working in primary (ages 5–11), secondary (11–18) and further education (16 +); teaching assistants (professionals who support teachers and learners in the classroom), and artists who work in educational settings. Recruitment practices are intentionally inclusive; art portfolios are not scrutinised nor does the university require applicants to be qualified teachers. Instead, learning within and contributing to the artist teacher community is perceived as a fundamental part of our offer as I engender students to become independent makers during and after the course. In this way I foster opportunities for current students and alumni to participate actively in the community. Explicitly aligning with ATS aims (Page et al. 2011), I provide opportunities for students to develop artistic practices in the context of the contemporary arts. In response, they contribute to ongoing enquiry into their artist teacher identities as they examine tensions when juggling teaching and making art (Hall 2010).

At the centre of the taught content is recognition of the unique way in which artist teachers engage in teaching and learning, and the belief that making art generates new knowledge, meanings and understandings (Payne 2018). The curriculum is delivered through on-campus live sessions in either an art studio or at the museum, but as a result of COVID-19 teaching is now delivered asynchronously

and through live virtual taught sessions. The timing of lockdown minimised some interruption to studies as second year students finalised an assignment for submission and third year students continued with dissertation research. However, alternative approaches to structuring practical activities had to be negotiated urgently as myself and an associate lecturer considered how to reconstruct a virtual studio for students and alumni. My underlying concern was how to foster the artist teacher community virtually, especially considering emerging impact case study data about the value of community cohesion at the core of the programme.

Sociality

An examination of sociocultural learning environments involves interpreting social groupings, processes and pedagogies, and how values, traditions and rituals underpin community practices at work (Illeris 2017). I had been concerned with the social situation of the Masters programme since 2017, and one advantage of the lockdown was finding time to return to an ethnographic impact case study examining why artist teachers assert the transformative nature of the programme. Collaborating with two alumni research associates, we collected data with students and alumni in the form of 16 semi-structured questionnaires and eight semi-structured interviews. Over the last 18 months we have been coding interview data using grounded theory and mapping transformations against pedagogic and curricular structures. In our endeavour to unpick how transformations occur, we examined artist teacher lived experiences with a focus on three criteria: the community; how pedagogy is structured; and how values embodied within the programme influence professional status. Findings so far indicate a symbiosis between values, status, empowering pedagogies, agency and confidence developed through community participation.

Students' motivations for joining the MA are illuminating as they cite a lack of access to subject specific CPD in their settings, feelings of professional isolation and a deep desire for change. Interview data reveal that this is born out of educational structures which have inflicted a decade of systemic marginalisation on art and design educators (Payne & Hall 2018). The English education system is experienced as something that is done to them, not something they are invited to shape (Ball & Olmedo 2012; Shor 1992). The rigidness of a data-driven culture creates a risk-adverse climate in the classroom where transactions become a means to an end. Auge (1995) and Thomson et al. (2012) call this a *non-space* which stifles exploration, curiosity, imagination and risk, and results in a reductive understanding of pedagogy. It is de-humanising. In contrast, by the end of the MA programme students talk about themselves as artist teacher activists: empowered, vocal and participating in authentic professional practices. Applying for the MA becomes an act of resistance against performativity; it takes courage because it is an opportunity to 'take responsibility for the care of their selves' (Ball & Olmedo 2012, 85).

To counter MA students' unsatisfactory experiences of working in educational non-spaces, I adopt pedagogies that embrace sociality, or ways of working with others, as well as ways of doing, thinking and being an artist teacher. Projects developed through this pedagogy embrace the heart (the act of being and being together), the head (the ways we think in and through the subject) and the hand (doing and making) (Thomson et al. 2012). This is an extension of art pedagogic knowledge which focuses on 'knowing how' and 'knowing that' (Pringle 2009, 175)

by embracing students' lived experiences and their relationships with others, because 'what you know and do is constitutive of who you are and how you live' (Thomson et al. 2012, 11). Participation and collaboration are core practices in empowering and ambiguous pedagogies (Land et al. 2008; Shor 1992; Shulman 2005), placing humanity at its centre and directly challenging experiences of non-spaces. The importance of sociality is corroborated by data findings which indicate that the artist teacher community is one of the most salient factors in facilitating professional transformations: 'A strong sense of belonging develops from an initial cohort community; confidence emerges from the group which eases the pressure to perform. Authentic and meaningful practices then emerge. I think community is the key' [reflective journal, 11 May].

Community is constituted through imagination 'because the feelings of commonality which can sustain networks' (Marshall Payne 2020) require each individual to hold an image of that community. Feelings of belonging are crucial (Block 2008); to belong to a community implies that each member acts as agent, participant and collaborator. When MA students are engaged in the community they are highly motivated because they feel visible; they are seen, listened to and their contributions valued (Shor 1992). They are co-creators, actively working together to generate something new (Marshall Payne 2020).

However, visibility is risky and comes at a price as it can make MA students feel anxious and vulnerable. Pedagogies of uncertainty (Shulman 2005) underpin the nurturing of the artist teacher community. These pedagogies situate fragile spaces which embrace risk because they are uncomfortable, disruptive and challenging. They can be found in the spaces in-between where troublesome knowledge lives, and operate with the understanding that for learning to occur there has to be something at stake (Land et al. 2008). Perkins (1999) refers to the need for troublesome knowledge if the learning experience is to be transformative, what he describes as knowledge that is counter-intuitive, absurd, ritualised or alien. Students need to be unsettled if they are going to make a transition in their learning where new or overlooked knowledge becomes troublesome because it challenges old learnings, beliefs and values. 'Refusing the mundane' (Ball & Olmedo 2012, 94) takes courage. On the second year of the MA, artist teachers exhibit art publicly and this project more than any other is cited as stimulating the transformative experience. Students commonly view their artist self as other, which makes performing as artists in public challenging. To overcome anxiety they often choose to curate group exhibitions which facilitate constructive working relationships, addressing risk and uncertainty head-on, but not in isolation. This represents a space where students find and belong to a community by being visible as artists with others who matter to them (Thomson et al. 2012). Both Shor (1992) and Giroux (1988) emphasise the need for students to participate in a public arena if learning is to be empowering and democratic, as this is a space where meaning and purpose is socially constructed. Providing opportunity for students to independently curate their art exhibitions and then critically examine its implications provides 'the starting point for a critical study of themselves, their society, and their academic subjects' (Shor 1992, 22).

Troublesome communities support students to explore and shape their identities (Perkins 1999). MA students play a genuine part in determining creative practices through self-generated curricular content. They listen, negotiate and take responsibility for the learning that occurs, which is authentic as a result (Lombardi 2007). This act of self-care (Ball & Olmedo 2012) places students in a much

stronger position to address ambiguity, using risk as a way to inform judgements and opinions, and provoke their agency (Lombardi 2007; Shor 1992). I have found over 14 years of running the MA course that whilst this approach is challenging, it is hugely rewarding. Artist teachers leave determined to find new solutions to uncertain situations. By creating a respectful and dynamic learning environment I harness uncertainty to help generate something positive with and for others.

Reflexive connections

Considering the central role that sociality plays in the MA programme, it is of little surprise that I was drawn to the artist teacher community as a focus for this study. Conclusively, I reflect on my experience of community focusing on that which I know, that which I know works, and that which I am part of. To achieve this I have kept a reflective journal since April 2020 documenting how I adjust to new work-ing conditions, including reflections on planning and delivering online sessions, gathering student feedback and documenting interactions with the community. This includes 12 artist teacher students studying across years two and three of the programme, eight alumni, two research associates and one associate lecturer. All were informed of the study in advance but none were invited to participate to facilitate a speedy navigation of my university's ethics board. Whilst the community is a co-construction, this research draws only on a reflexive account of my experi-ence of the community; conclusively, data cited is generated by me alone. Humans are often unaware of the learning that underpins their actions, what Schön (1983 / 1991) calls *knowing in action*, and by keeping purposeful reflections professionals can reveal tacit understandings that underpin those actions. *Reflection on action* (Schön 1983 / 1991) can facilitate an interrogation during times of ambiguity or stress, helping to reveal new perceptions. This reiterates Teti et al. (2020), who indicate that qualitative studies are 'our best method for capturing social responses to this pandemic'. What do my daily actions reveal about how I facilitate a profes-sional community remotely and what do I learn, unlearn and relearn in the pro-cess?

But beginnings are never easy (Salzberger-Wittenberg 2013). Initially not knowing how to move forwards, I chose to suspend the starting point and allow ideas to gestate. As noted in a reflective journal entry [22 April]: 'I decided to leave the "blank canvas" a blank canvas out of sheer mental will.' In retrospect, I can only explain this as an act of self-trust. I was interested to read that Ecker (1966) describes the first of five phases of problem solving through arts produc-tion as an approximate starting point where the focus lacks definition. In a moment of synergy I discovered that Barone & Eisner (2012, 49) also call this the 'blank canvas' stage. Engaging in wider reading which I utilised to plan an artist teacher online discussion and writing about my experience helped, and from a frustrated beginning emerged a rough shape of the phenomenon. It was at this point I rea-lised the potential for arts-based research. The idea to use art production emerged from professional discussions with colleagues about the structure of the abstract submitted for this journal edition. Additionally, reading Barone & Eisner (2012) facilitated my students' learning *and* was pivotal in my own:

> *It was writing about constructing the online discussion for my second year stu-dents that helped me realise that much of what I had written and read was*

relevant here. There is symbiosis between my inquiry, organising online pedagogy, the content of that pedagogy, and my students' learning. It's impossible to separate them, us; if I needed it, here is proof that I am not just an integral part of the community, but that my learning is supported by and supports my students' [reflective journal, 22 April].

Writing this article I can see how everything is connected. A reflexive dialogue between myself and my professional environment using art practice as a conduit enables me to facilitate new understandings (Schön 1983 / 1991). The resultant discourse focuses on my imaginings of the effective practices that enable participatory pedagogies and a consideration of how to enact these through remote learning. What surprised me was that art production became the dominant factor in enabling these conversations to occur.

Imagining community

The first piece of artwork I produced was a fabric square (Figure 1) created for a village quilt capturing a small community's experiences of lockdown. I embroidered a motif of the COVID-19 virus over the top of flowers printed onto the fabric, but

Figure 1
COVID-19 Flowers.

creating something aesthetically pleasing out of a deadly virus was disconcerting. However, considering the context, it felt appropriate that this piece should be troublesome (Perkins 1999). The fabric was all I had available at home. I had bought it several months before to replace a worn out pocket in a winter coat, which resulted in me connecting the piece to the domestic sphere. The imposition of the virus over the top of the printed flowers and its uncomfortableness became a metaphor for being forced to work from home. Work is imposed onto the domestic space as a result of the pandemic.

This piece provided the impetus for my next artwork (Figure 2), which also emerged from reflecting on a remote taught session that I facilitated on 9 May involving a critique of students' artworks (commonly called a 'crit'). Two days later I discussed the outcomes of the crit with my two research associates. MA student feedback indicated that the act of participation was more important than how useful the crit was to their studies; they liked that crits were standalone events not linked to formal assessment. Impact case study data reveals that 'self-acceptance [and confidence] comes also from the easing of pressure to perform' [reflective journal, 11 May], opening up possibilities to think about the self and artist teacher practices differently (Ball & Olmedo 2012). Perhaps students wanted to feel a sense of belonging, to enact being together and care for the self without additional expectations. The event also provided opportunity for reflection on the implications of remote learning environments. For example, lockdown was changing students' art practices. Just like me, they adapted art production according to their contexts, whether that was influenced by the availability of media, space to work or the subject matter. This is no surprise; we are shaped by that which we shape (Daniels 2004). Yet there were ambiguities I was yet to reconcile. Like many, technological access (OECD 2020) inhibited how students could upload and present artworks, and owing to the stilted nature of discussions through the virtual platform, opportunity for real-time debate was limited. Whilst I had few answers to dilemmas at this stage, I recognised that 'whatever I do in relation to online pedagogy must place community at the centre. It also potentially provides a starting point for making art; these are threads that keep us together' [reflective journal, 11 May].

Gradually I became conscious that I perceived beginnings as troublesome as I worried that I would make a contrived artwork as a result of initial panic. Repeating the act of self-care I returned to my internal blank canvas; shortly afterwards I had a flash of inspiration during a sleepless night and an aesthetic concept emerged. Reference to threads in relation to community had resonated, and allowing gestation time resulted in a clear mental imagining of a box constructed from fabric (Figure 2). I took a deep breath and trusted that the process and meaning would materialise with time, as noted in a reflective journal entry [11 May]:

"The constant response to and with artist teacher cohorts, the nurturing of community, feels like the intertwining of threads, delicate but strong too.

COMMUNITY

This says to me:

- a precious box made from fabric, with added COVID-19 embroidered 'flowers'
- golden threads holding it together
- layers representing categories of data
- internal treasures"

Figure 2
Threads that Bind Us.

This immediately spurred an experimentation into how to make the 'precious box'. For each square I experimented with layering the flower fabric as I wanted the sides to be stiff enough that the box held its shape independently. In the process I discovered which stitch to use: 'blanket stitch or a stitch I didn't know the name of (that one won)' [reflective journal, 16 May]. I chose a pale gold thread and applied it by hand, replicating the care and time that it takes to maintain both the artist teacher community and my own stability during lockdown. It is these delicate threads that hold us together and are intentionally visible, metaphors for acts of vulnerability and risk, of sharing, negotiating and empathy. They are a reminder of sociality at work (Thomson et al. 2012).

Mimicking the pedagogic strategy of problem posing (Shor 1992) facilitated through artist teacher course content, I set myself a series of practical issues to address. How could I create embroidered motifs on both the inside and outside of the box in a way which would create a conversation between the squares? How could I join the box lid so that it worked, or did I want to sew it shut? If I kept it open, what kind of fastening could I use that would not be too incongruent and was accessible at home? The resultant experience was a series of difficulties and breakthroughs, and in retrospect, exposes learning in action (Schön 1983 / 1991). As I note in a reflective journal entry on 16 May:

I've realised that as I create artwork the dialogue emerges alongside – it really is a back and forth conversation. I make something. It doesn't work but it eliminates one way forward and presents another. And another. And another. And slowly it takes shape. It's a process of listening to the inner voice and being prepared to follow.

Learning is an emotional experience; it involves the integration of affective and cognitive domains where an empowering experience of learning supports inquisitiveness, openness, concentration and honesty (Shor 1992). In an art context, this involves a curiosity for and experimentation with media properties and the meanings they embody (Pringle 2009). It is troublesome and liminal (Land et al. 2008). This intertextual dialogue focuses on creation through reflection and formulating imaginative and inventive responses (Payne 2018). In this sense, I use art to construct an image of my community (Marshall Payne 2020).

At the time I created the box I simultaneously presented remote resources designed for a CPD workshop at a virtual academic research conference. Working with primary teachers in their first year of teaching (in England they are called Newly Qualified Teachers or NQTs), I created a series of short films dissecting practical art tasks that in a pre-COVID world I had planned to deliver face to face. The films were supported by a series of questions and online discussion forums designed to promote NQT interaction, all of which I made available to conference participants. Conference conveners designed a series of real time discussions between presenters and audience members facilitated through a question-and-answer Google document. Participants were encouraged to type questions concerning my remote resource into the document, and I responded in kind: 'Being asked to justify particular decisions really helped me to reflect on comparisons between creating a remote resource for a group of learners I had never met [the NQTs], and my artist teacher community' [reflective journal, 21 May].

This was enlightening. Dialogue inside and outside the artist teacher community provides opportunities to generate new meanings and understandings, demonstrating a public and social construction of knowledge at work (Giroux 1988; Shor 1992). For example, the limitations of transitioning pedagogy to online platforms included my frustration at not being able to talk with NQTs in real time. As content was asynchronous, 'reflection on the learning process through questioning had not taken place' [reflective journal, 21 May]. In comparison, operating within a pre-existing learning community facilitates a personalised pedagogy shaped to suit artist teachers' needs; I start with a loose outline of an event then ask the students which strategies would work depending on their home situation. Working online forces the lecturer to think about the student and their needs first, placing intended learning outcomes second. The importance of active listening and ongoing dialogue in this process takes on an ethical imperative: 'In the lockdown I am constantly concerned about overloading my students. They are dealing with much more than the MA programme and I am mindful of the complexities they are juggling professionally and personally. This feels like an ethical position, not just a pedagogical one' [reflective journal, 5 June].

This can be a troublesome position for the lecturer (Land et al. 2008; Perkins 1999; Shor 1992) who has to step back and relinquish a certain amount of control. Digital platforms utilised during lockdown enable new knowledge to coalesce as they promote different kinds of dialogues from which meanings emerge. By cross-

referencing reflections about conversations, a richness of ideas is generated that is greater than the MA community alone. At this point, I decided to keep the *Threads that Bind Us* (Figure 2) box lid open as being able to look inside became a metaphor for enacting this autoethnographic study. But what would it reveal?

The 28 and 29 May were very busy days in the artist teacher calendar. A colleague and I facilitated 'making days', what in pre-COVID times had been an opportunity for students and alumni to share skills informally, make art and socialise. The transition to distance learning involved artist teachers collaborating across numerous digital platforms including social media, Google suite and our virtual learning platform. Concurrently we delivered two virtual sessions for prospective artist teachers. These events provided excellent opportunity to trial new ways of working remotely. The artist teachers reported that they were 'exhilarated but exhausted' [reflective journal, 5 June] afterwards, an assessment I shared with them. By the end of the week I had little inclination to reflect through writing so instead turned to art, and for the first time had no hesitation when beginning a new piece of work. On 31 May I purposefully deconstructed a square of fabric (Figures 3 and 4) left over from making *Threads that Bind Us* (Figure 2). The process of unpicking the square was filmed, partly to bear witness to the action and partly to aid reflection on the process.
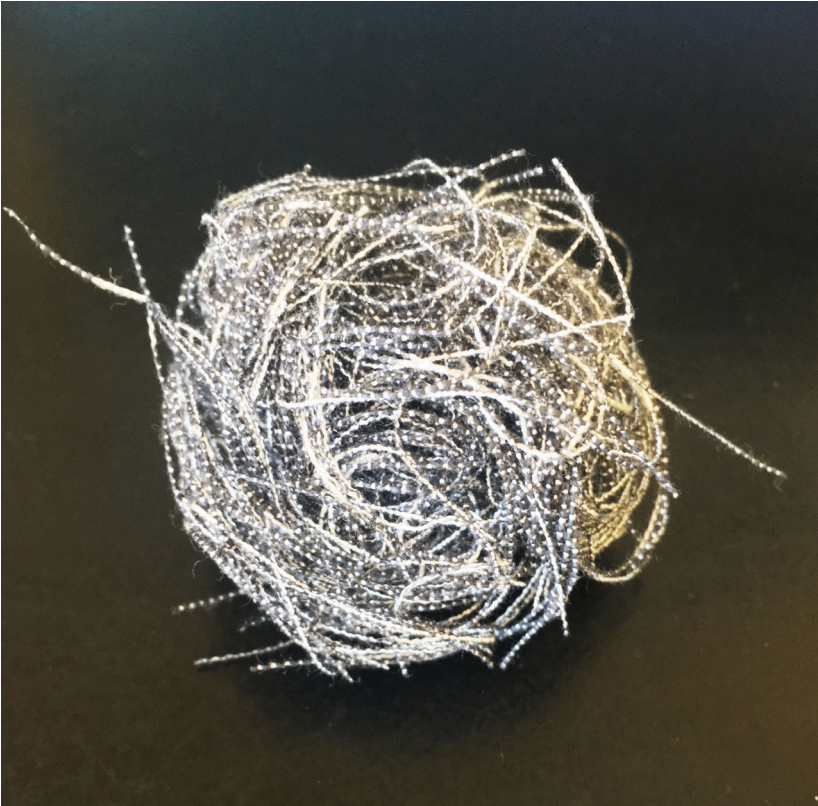

Figure 3
Learn.

Figure 4
Unlearn.

In my reflective journal [31 May] I noted: '1) Learn = start with what you know about artist teacher pedagogy. 2) Unlearn = deconstruct pedagogical knowledge in response to a change in environment. 3) Relearn = reconstitute pedagogical knowledge as a result of interactions and reflections on interactions in the new environment.'

Deconstructing the fabric serves as a metaphor for critiquing my experience of working with the artist teacher community during lockdown. It also serves as a dismantling of self (Ball & Olmedo 2012). By transforming a square of fabric back to its constituent parts (Figure 4), I was mimicking my experience of unlearning. What I chose to do with the threads became a resurrection, a relearning (Figure. 5). It took twenty minutes to deconstruct a 6cm square of fabric and I noted the attention given to this destructive act: 'It takes time. It's fiddly' [reflective journal, 31 May]. It felt apt that the revealed threads are black and white, comparably different to how they appear as a weave. Whilst teaching and learning under lockdown resembles that which I know, it differs drastically, and whilst some factors still apply the experience is transformed. By reconstituting threads into a ball I

Figure 5
Relearn.

definitively changed its identity, something I apply to myself: 'I am changed forever by COVID, so are my professional practices, and mine and my students' lives' [reflective journal, 5 June]. On reflection it felt appropriate for *Relearn* (Figure 5) to reside inside *Threads that Bind Us* (Figure 2), a symbol for the relearning that occurs within and has been shaped by teaching in lockdown.

A continual becoming

This small-scale study has revealed an imaginative re-examination of the artist teacher community, pedagogies that shape it and my experience of working with artist teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Community has always been important as reiterated in artist teacher impact data, but for the first time I articulate tentative discoveries about how sociality functions when maintaining artist teacher practices under stressful conditions. Art as research is the perfect vehicle for unearthing these encounters by making visible new meanings. My artist self has unearthed a deeper understanding of my teacher self. Importantly this is not an end of the research; as I prepare to deliver a combination of asynchronous, live virtual and face-to-face input from September the potential for continual arts based research is rich.

Initially I perceived lockdown as a new beginning forced on my world, but I end the article understanding the process more as a continual becoming of self

and community: 'There is no subject that is already formed. In this sense, the self is not only a constant *beginning* but also a constant *end*' (Ball & Olmedo 2012, 87; italics authors' own emphasis). In this new normal I am unlearning value systems underpinning transformative pedagogies and am relearning self-care within my professional community by recognising the urgency with which I place empathy and active listening at the heart of my practice (Shor 1992). Conclusively, relationships with the artist teacher community have taken on a new dimension. For example, after circulating a draft of the article I received feedback from students and alumni expressing an even deeper sense of belonging. By designing and disseminating the research as autoethnographic, do my MA students perceive me as relinquishing my lecturer authority and revealing my learner-self? It appears that by taking risks and exposing vulnerability to my students I generated greater community cohesion. Ultimately I have learnt that we must be courageous, expose ourselves and jump together if these experiences are going be authentic. In response, as this research continues I will take more risks, professionally exposing my vulnerability with my students to build an honest dialogue about self-care and empathetic pedagogy. It is this which will nurture the community as we recover from COVID-19.

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