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### Abstract

The author of this article, an art teacher, arts education advocate, teaching artist, pre-service art teacher supervisor and instructor confronts “either/or” professional identities in arts education. Multi-faceted artist/scholar/educator/learner/advocate/personas are “unfenced” in order to navigate spaces of artistic, educational, and cultural production without having to pause for identification at borders. In this form, pedagogies for inventive social change emerge. Dialogue among fields of artists and educators links either/or, artist/teacher qualities in holistic and interdisciplinary descriptions such as artist-teacher, teaching-artist, etc. The hyphenated association has become postmodern shorthand for inclusive “both/and” professional identities that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century may be limiting or exclusive. I argue that nimble, socio-critical professional identity can be realized when “hyphenated” artists are prepared to embody pedagogy of intersubjectivity in third space practices.

### A Body of Potential

The streets were not plowed. It was one of those lake effect blizzards that frightened school administrators enough to announce cancellations of afterschool activities before the school day was half over. Eighteen third grade bilingual (Spanish language) students and teachers climbed over snowdrifts and inched single-file through deep and narrow paths for a twenty-minute journey to the art gallery. They were in the middle of exciting research and solidarity as they confronted the storm that transformed the group into a lumpy-but-sinuuous body of possibilities (See Figure 1). Their study involved an exhibit by contemporary artist Rigo 23, whose unique alpha-numeric name they might not remember, but whose work was all about the controversial life and imprisonment of American Indian Movement activist Leonard Peltier. They were working closely with community teaching artists to better understand how an artist was able to tell a life story and formulate a portrait without making traditional art objects like paintings or sculptures of his own. Rigo 23 organized information about Leonard: photos, newspaper clippings, some of Leonard's own paintings, and he synthesized the information over the framework of a timeline. He invited people to come into the gallery space and create their own artifacts, messages, and conclusions about American history and social justice.



Figure 1. Body of possibilities.

This project began as a simple examination of a timeline as a device for conveying narratives and for using historic information to understand cultural events that happen in our own lives. It evolved into teachers, learners, and artists spending weeks gathering and organizing data from the installation by Rigo 23 and from paintings in the installation created by Leonard Peltier. Because the exhibit was intentionally designed to feel like the interior of a prison, the timeline became a small part of the study and the provocative positioning of gallery visitors as temporary inmates became the real object of interest. Some confusion arose about whether we were studying the art or advocacy of Rigo 23 or the art and advocacy of Leonard Peltier because Leonard was intentionally portrayed as both a prisoner and as an artist. Additional confusions emerged about similarities and differences between learner and teacher identities. Assigned roles of child and adult, Latino and North

American, teaching-artists from visual and performing arts disciplines, and arts/humanities teachers from the school were examined in classroom, community, studio, exhibit, and performance sites. The blurred boundaries and interconnected roles were mostly reassuring and logical, but there were times when definition and categorization helped to reinforce confidence and responsibility in our roles.

Artists, learners, teachers, researchers, and advocates in this situation were “hyphenated” (Cohen-Cruz, 2010; Lopez, 2009) in changing combinations each day. No one was required to wear a visible label, but the ambiguity of the roles made it important in many of the activities to sort and identify differences between the labor, work, and action<sup>1</sup> (Arendt, 1958) performed through personal histories, meaningful materials, and collaborative actions. There were many more combinations: Haudenosaunee-warrior-dancers, a music-teacher/jazz-artist, a retired kindergarten teacher hired as a teaching-artist/historian; the combinations were endless, but the two terms that seemed to require frequent distinction were *artist* and *teacher*. A Haudenosaunee dancer explained that there was no equivalent in his native language for the word *artist* because there was no real need to distinguish between form and function or between spiritual or social activities and objects (D. Schenendoah, personal communication, January 14, 2011). Similarly the role of teacher was questioned often as adults and children took turns leading inquiries and learning from each other. The dancer explained that warriors in his clan held a distinct responsibility for teaching and nurturing, but they were not especially named *teacher*, because a warrior was understood to have fluid dimensions and responsibilities.

Over time, we noticed that calling each person by his or her name was more productive than the status or limitations that came with the titles. We paused from time to time to acknowledge the moments when we felt more or less like artistic, educational, historical, cultural, or personal thinkers as a way to check in with the distinctions that vexed us. A hybrid grammar and way of engaging was formed by our shared learning in a third space (Gutierrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995; Gutierrez, 2009; Stevensen & Deasy, 2005) that allowed adults and children to contest and transform the status and meaning of work. It was certainly artistic-educational, but it was realized through something uniquely social. The progress and challenges in this situation were not attributable to any one artist, learner, teacher, researcher, or human identity. The professional qualities of artist and teacher were frequently referenced, not because they were most important, but because they were frequently contested.

### **Agency and Border Work**

In the gallery, adults and children examined paintings by Leonard Peltier and referred to him as an artist. When they traced the timeline of his life and the impact of his

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<sup>1</sup> According to Hannah Arendt (1958), labor is judged by its ability to sustain human life, to cater to our biological needs of consumption and reproduction, work is judged by its ability to build and maintain a world fit for human use, and action is judged by its ability to disclose the identity of the agent, to affirm the reality of the world, and to actualize our capacity for freedom.

imprisonment on people in other nations, they decided that he was a teacher at the same time. When it was time to tell his story to their friends and family, they simply called him Leonard. Descriptions of a prisoner, artist, teacher, American Indian, hero, or elder entered into their messages. They found that a category of identity was infinitely less valuable than the interchangeable bundle of actions and artifacts that surrounded his life.

Meaningful learning and cultural concerns came together as factors in what Boykin and Noguera (2011) call asset-focused intersubjectivity. Characteristics that informed the work of artists, learners, teachers, and researchers were exchanged and attached to individual and collective bodies in what Gutierrez refers to as “sociocritical literacy” (2009).

I am conscious of my own intersubjective and sociocritical roles in a world of “certified” teachers when I am in a school between the hours of 8:00 to 3:00. With earned credentials in hand, and history as an art teacher in public schools, I contribute to the construction of a “collective self” (Freedman, Stuhr, & Weinberg, 1989, p. 53) with teachers and their definitions of “other” non-teachers in society: administrators, students, parents, and more. With the subtle shift of a metaphorical fencepost, I become a teaching-artist because I am not on the district payroll anymore. I come and go during the day, affiliated with a cultural organization that resists the institutional constraints of school systems. I now have “other” membership, and there is a tangible distance between teaching-artist and art teacher defined by perceived or practiced agency. On the teaching-artist side of this fence, I am either/or, either special guest or interrupting visitor. On the art teacher side, I am either accommodating professional or constrained institutional worker.

When I perform as an artist, parent, out-of-school-time cultural partner, or as a representative of higher-education culture, just outside of “the room”<sup>2</sup> of instruction and interaction (Seidel, Tishman, Winner, Hetland, & Palmer, 2009), my responsibility to a larger “arts learning ecosystem” (Booth, 2009) is evident. It is necessary to straddle status as artist-student/instructor/employee of a research university in a city where top-down “ivory tower” practices as either/or, inclusive or selective have been distrusted and hotly debated. As an artist-teacher I am an economic entity with valuable creative capital (Florida, 2002) or a burden of costly extras to taxpayers. When I am an artist-teacher on campus, the hyphenated space between art and education sometimes creates a dubious distinction as less rigorous in either world, less artist in schools of art, less teacher in schools of education (Cohen-Cruz, 2011; Lackey 2009).

As a policy-maker in the hyphenated or slashed worlds of public education, campus/community relations, and socio-economic development, I am positioned at a great distance

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<sup>2</sup> “The room” as described in the *Qualities of Quality* report by Seidel, Tishman, Winner, Hetland, & Palmer, is at the center of concentric circles of influence. The influences that immediately surround “the room” come from parents, school personnel, peers, and others who are not immediately engaged in a learning experience. The next circle of influences include local, district, and legislative policymakers who might never have personal interaction with those “in the room.” They operate mostly from a situation of perceived objectivity.

from “the room” of interpersonal learning. In this space, it has been necessary to move in a quirky, fast-stepping dance to maintain the integrity of my history as either artist or teacher. Yet, when I assimilate and accept a less subjective membership in this space, I can be more efficient. I also appear to be more objective, and I can’t help but wonder what happens to the quality of learning way back “in the room” when decision makers choose to leave social and critical concerns at the door.

James Rolling (2010) suggests that the worlds of art education are at the “Turn of the Tide” and that when we engage in “both/and” actions, we can renew social potential endlessly. I agree that “both/and” engagement is proliferative and that the time for “either/or” categories is past. I argue that “hyphenated” or “slashed” identification such as artist-teacher, or artist-researcher in arts education worlds may also be fencing in and dividing the potential of a person to expand socio-critical repertoire beyond an expected role of artist, educator, learner, advocate, or researcher. The questions that I seek to understand include: What are the advantages or disadvantages in adopting hyphenated descriptors in a time of social, educational, and artistic paradigm changes? What can be gained by compounding an identity with social and critical information in educational sites? Where are the spaces of greatest potential for engaging hybrid identities and maximizing their qualities? Why does this matter to our learners?

### **ALTR Ego**

Learners in this situation were beginning to interrogate the identities that they were given by institutions of school and society. They were also beginning to see how artists exercised unique license by questioning institutions and identities with clever and perspective-changing tactics. Artists were less important because they were “famous” and more important because they provided helpful approaches to dealing with challenges. The Rigo-Peltier project was completed by third grade students and teachers in early 2011. In the fall of 2011, when those same students were in fourth grade, they went on a study trip to a history museum. When the docent began to explain what an artifact is, one of the students said, “Oh, we already know what those are. You see, if we did not have art, then no one would ever understand facts about things that happened before us” (R. Jackson, personal communication, 2011). Seeing art or artists in more mundane moments and spaces in the everyday world allowed our learners to appreciate their own contribution to history and the future. De-emphasizing the “art-star” status of artistic work allowed it to be meaningful, but not privileged.

By naming and affixing finite qualities to my life work, making sense of the world through drawing, painting, sculpting, installation, photography, and assemblage, eventually after thirty-some years, I chose to call myself artist. But the distinction as visual-artist limited my navigation to worlds of people who required my work to be exhibit-able or sell-able or folk-, or function-aligned. While I earned money and made people happy when I sold illustrations for publication or crafted works in galleries, the dialogue of ideas often ended at the moment of consumption. Where did I belong if I was an artist who used visual work more to

think and less to express a fixed notion? Hiroshi Sugimoto tried to summarize this conundrum when he semi-seriously called himself, “postmodern-experienced pre-postmodern modernist” (2005), but even as a jest, the hyphenated nature of the label implied even more meaning than could possibly be expressed in words alone.

By attaining certificates and tenure in public art education, I have been able to expand the packaged “work” of art into action and interaction with young people and adults as we grapple with pedagogical systems. But the confined space of an educational system assigns visual art to a category of “school art” (Efland, 1988, p. 518) as “an institutional art style in its own right” (p. 519). There was a time when I was questioned by my school principal because I wanted to bring a Ghanian drummer to school to study polyrhythm and pattern dynamics. He reminded me that I was the “art” teacher and this potentially trespassed onto the turf of colleague artists who taught music classes (F. Misurelly, personal communication, 1996). The music teachers shared my excitement about bringing the drummer into our school, and they too, had to redefine their roles in relationship to the guest artist. He was performing (on stage), and they were not. Amazing and potential-filled learning happened regardless of the identities we applied to our professional roles. We were conscious of boundaries that defined our collective culture “in the room” where the intersubjective labors of learning were inevitable. We wrestled with our identities “just outside of the room” where our work was understood within categories of production. We alternately conformed to and resisted the actions “at a distance from the room” (Seidel et al., 2009) where worlds were defined by our own labor and work or by strangers who crafted policy. Gates were unlocked, and more often locks were picked in order to unfence the potential there.

By entering into the school curriculum either as an independent teaching-artist or artist-teacher with a community/cultural institution, I have interrupted classroom culture with professional peers and students for better or for worse. With these hyphenated and slashed professional identities, we stretched boundaries as teachers, learners, artists, administrators, parents, and social activists. We fused and extended at the same time. The two spaces of artist and/or teacher insufficiently allowed for a third space of ambiguity and contest between those titles. The dimensions of the space between may be understood through the utility of Garoian’s (2010) “prosthetic extension” metaphor. He argues that “slippages of perception in these spaces enable insightful and multivalent ways of seeing and understanding the complexities of alterity” (p. 179). The hyphen becomes much more than a flexible footbridge between artist and teacher. As a prosthetic device, the hyphen or slash extends into many dimensions, providing portals, ladders, telescopes, and many more points of contact for identity.

What once felt to me like cross-dressing and code-switching dispositions of teaching artistry, I understood to be prosthetic assets that have liberated children to be scientists, historians, and artists when I taught at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston as a museum-educator. The code switching also helped teacher-learner-poets to become dancers when I trained artists and teachers for an afterschool program in the Adirondacks. Additionally, teachers became specialized consultants when we conducted teaching-artist/art teacher

research in an urban high school in Niagara Falls. An elementary teacher in Syracuse told me that the “extra-artsy stuff” we were doing with arts integration “made up for things the kids and school didn’t have.” During a video installation exploration at a contemporary gallery with his students, he was shocked to discover that he felt like an artist or scientist himself. He said that “It felt like opening a window into a totally new world that was always there.” (R. Stanton, personal communication, 2010)

I have also been in the room when art teachers have voiced fear that teaching-artists and artist/researcher/teachers (Irwin, 2004) will displace them in school culture. Research proving that there is no such threat (Rabkin, 2011) still lacks the power to reassure many school art professionals. The persistently reductive problem of learning standards assessed for efficacy and required by distant decision-makers is, “establishing boundaries that limit the possibilities of student imagination.” (Freedman, 2008, p.40)

In a fit of desperation and/or rebellion against these limitations, I founded and directed a non-profit organization that offered resources and support to artists and teachers in all areas of the arts learning ecosystem. There was real power in the ambiguous situation of the organization as neither a state nor local agency, neither an arts nor education service organization. By remaining unaligned in our definition as *Partners for Arts Education*, personnel, supporters, and clients were able to scan the fields of overlap and separation between art/arts and/or public/community/higher education. We were able to animate spaces of need and distance with resources from many sources. We were able to understand and participate in the worlds of artistry and education in the broad context of economic, academic, social, political systems. By adopting the language of partnerships, we legitimized a contractual model that requested give and take from parties in shared action. This ambiguous membership was also a weakness, as it resisted confining alliances with powerful institutions such as a research university, a state arts council, and a traditional community of arts presenters. This decision to not explicitly “cite” our social justice intentions as recommended by Therese Quinn (2006) ultimately led to weakened leadership and resources. One of our most nimble funding partners was able to advance the social precedent of our work because he or she had visionary representatives who understood relevant and local identities. Yet, the identity of that partner institution, a multinational bank, is defined in empirical and economic terms far away from the visionary individuals entrusted with locally relevant decision-making.

By participating as a national/international arts education decision-maker with Americans for the Arts, the *Teaching Artist Journal*, and policy projects with the U.S. Department of Education, and public/private foundations, I have been able to understand the limitless dimensions of the fields, worlds, ecosystems, and spaces that I used to want to name, organize, and control with simplest terms and bulleted lists. I understand the qualities of relationships and believe each and every transaction to be essential in the making of new meaning. I understand a “third-eye” (Jordan-Irvine, 2003) pedagogy that could enlighten and transform cultural constraints in education. Unfortunately, this personal and Zen-like perspective is unhelpful to emerging artists who want to belong to a collegial community or

to parents who want their children to perform within systems that will allow them passage to the next level of achievement.

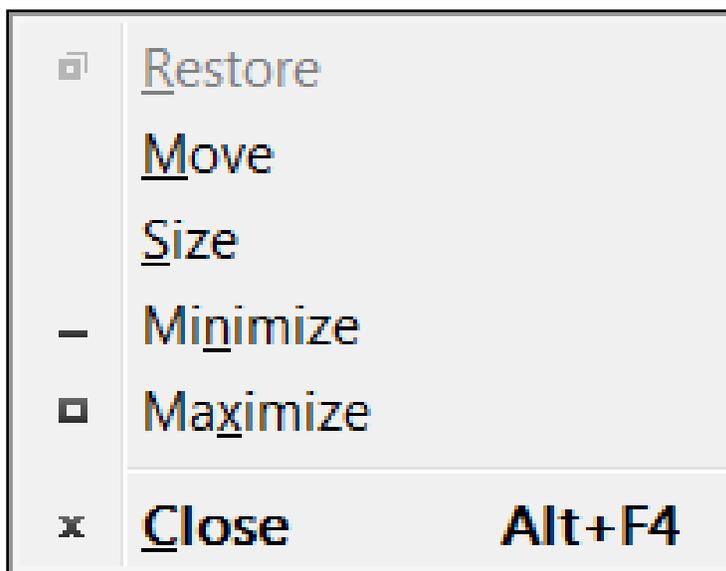


Figure 2. ALTspace Options.

With the new responsibilities of an emerging researcher at Syracuse University, I synthesized my professional identity as an *ALTR ego*. This came from what I considered a clever fusing of Artist, Learner, Teacher, Researcher into an unhyphenated or slashed professional category. I thought that it allowed for unlimited access to all of the bordered institutions of my work. In my policy-making world, the efficacy of the acronym *ALT* provided what I considered to be a contemporary solution to

the artist-teacher conundrum and included a metaphorical homage to the technological world that has hastened our development<sup>3</sup> (See Figure 2).

As I expanded my responsibilities to training a new generation of artists and teachers in varying combinations and institutions, I became conscious of my role as researcher and of the exclusivity of yet another vague textual title. It may be popular and rebellious as an artist to position myself in *ALTERNative* or *ALTR'd* spaces, but it reinforces the fencing of inside and outside status. The self-consciousness of border crossing and the respect that I have for inhabitants in each space push me to find a more meaningful set of actions that may not be scripted in words and letters, but in action and imagination. That question “Why does this matter to our learners?” comes back as a challenge. Who are the learners? Are they third graders or are they thirty-something adults? Are they prisoners of institutions or are they unbounded artists?

### A Body of Lived Data

How are systems reformed when we require learning to happen in predictable analog terms? Another student in the Rigo-Peltier project described how much she loved receiving letters every day from her own “prisoner-mom,” who was “going to be in jail for a long time” (P. Carter, personal communication, 2011). The adults in our project responded to the prisoner identity by saying how hard that it must be to have a mom in prison, ignoring her expression of pleasure at receiving so many letters of love. Her

<sup>3</sup> When you strike the *ALT* key on a computer while holding down the *SPACE* key you have the choice to “restore, move, size, minimize, maximize, or close” your position on the screen.

classmates responded to her by proposing that we make postcards and letters for Leonard and for other people who were in and outside of prisons so that they could help people to understand what it was like. They imagined avalanches of letters and a world of understanding.

If we remove the hyphenated links that bind artist-teacher-other in limited potential, then we confront risks that may emerge from “imaginative possibility” (Gutierrez, 2009) that can happen in third spaces and beyond traditional expectations. The terms artist-educator, teaching-artist, teacher-educator, student-teacher, and so on, have become badges of postmodern workers liberated from the rigid silos of art (as a noun) or teacher (as an authority) or student (as a subordinate). These identities have been fenced into economic spaces defined by: before-, after-, in-, or out-, of school; by artist- or teacher- first; by certified/credentialed or experienced/ practiced as professional and institutional commodities; and by campus/community/creative/ cultural alignment as social status. The -/ symbolism has new assumptions and values to be unpacked. What is the affective prosthetic difference between a hyphen as a joining device versus a hyphen as an extending device? What happens to professional bodies in the binary space that is represented with a slash?

These tiny lines of good intention have formed a new generation of meaning for arts education participants and a new generation of challenges for artist and teacher preparation programs. The hyphenated artist-teacher in-and-out of schools may have been trained as either an artist with a heavy tool-belt of educational instruments or a teacher with cultural citizenship in art worlds (Rabkin, 2011). The slashed artist/researcher/ teacher in campus/community situations may have been trained in art and design school, at the center or in the margins, as neither artist nor researcher. Jan Cohen-Cruz (2010) wrote that such hybrid artist-scholars challenge “a deeply-entrenched myth about artists: that thinking gets in the way of creating” (p. 169). These postmodern hybrids have been climbing through the fence rails of traditional quantitative and/or qualitative research debates as evidenced in the growing literature on arts-based research. By understanding that such discursive -/ spaces are inhabited by infinite combinations of cultural meaning, it may be possible to unfence greater potential by delimiting their use to a few selected words.

### **Third Space**

As I write this article, a new body of third grade students is studying the six blocks that divide or connect their school to a Latino community center. Walking, documenting, and creatively interpreting the physical and social distance from one space to another have revealed a third space that is contested and cherished in so many ways as educational/ cultural, community-school, mine/yours.

In order to make sense of the challenges of -/ identities, I examined the embodied

pedagogies<sup>4</sup> (Wacquant, 2011) of artists, teachers, learners, and researchers through the mediation and contestation of third space as it has been defined by Gutierrez (2009). Third space has been explored by many thinkers as a post structural space (Bhabha, 1994) of language and cultural literacy (Gutierrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995). It is now layered by education and arts education researchers (Stevensen & Deasy, 2005; Gutierrez, 2009) and understood through contexts that are ever-changing with individual histories and shared experiences in a newly formed third space. In spaces that resist written -/ identification of people, the dispositions and imagination inherent to learning and creativity can move with greater fluidity.

Why does it matter if we call ourselves artist/researcher/teacher in a/r/tography (Irwin, 2004) or artist-teacher (Daichent, 2010) in art education, or teaching artist/TA (Booth, 2009) in arts education worlds? In her research in the field of art education, Lara Lackey (2003/2009) combined the “communities of practice” of Bourdieu (1993) and Wenger (1998) with the arts education “network” of June McFee (1986) and emerged with a stance that would help art educators move through their “multifaceted and sometimes unruly and fractious landscape” (p. 201). She proposed that we stretch ourselves to do more than notice the complexities of diverse and relational contexts and that we “challenge each provider” to ask “What are all the things that this setting teaches” (p. 213)? Howard Becker (1982) suggested that we orient the telescoping fluidity of such networks as “worlds” by saying,

The basic unit of analysis, then is an art world. Both the “artness” and the “worldness” are problematic, because the work that furnishes the starting point for the investigation may be produced in a variety of cooperating networks and under a variety of definitions. (pp. 36-37)

Ultimately, Becker still settled on a range of terms for the characters that populated those worlds. His terms were un-hyphenated and did not require either/or distinctions. He called them “modes of being oriented to an art world as integrated professional, maverick, folk artist, or naïve artist” (p. 371). While it might be amusing in this political era to replace our hyphenated identities and consider ourselves all to be mavericks, it would likely reinforce the unreliable profile that is often attributed to artistic thinking.

Eric Booth (2009) and G. James Daichent (2010) have mirrored *artist-teacher* and *teaching artist* identities as taking up spaces that are fenced and fluid at the same time by drawing lines between the terms in two ways. *Artist-teacher*, hyphenated and proposed as a historically complex concept by Daichent is “an adaptation of two fields: artistic ingenuity uniquely applied to the puzzle of teaching” (p. 65). He placed the limitation of his definition within the world of art education and scaffolded it through a history of visual art education

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<sup>4</sup> Embodied pedagogy as presented by Loic Wacquant (2004/2011) defines a bodily or sensual learning experience that defies written description and can only be understood in fleeting and momentary precision. This definition resonates with arts learning where subtle ways of knowing can only be described by aesthetic understanding. Words frequently fail to convey these understandings.

scholars and practitioners who operated primarily in school systems. *Teaching artist*, unhyphenated or slashed, but acronymed as the fused “TA” by Eric Booth (2009), is “a model of the twenty-first-century artist and, simultaneously, a model for high engagement learning in education” (p. 4). He drew on the origin of the term for artists of all disciplines (visual, performing, literary) who would teach as a resident in a school or cultural organization. In the early 1970s, June Dunbar said:

I guess I was the originator of the term “teaching artist”. I came up with the words as a reaction to the dreadful one used by my predecessors at what was then known as the Education Department at Lincoln Center. The words they used to describe the activities of artists in schools sounded to me like a description for a typewriter repairman, plumber, or an irritating educationese term: “resource professional” (As cited in Booth, p. 8).

### **An Ecosystem of Possibility**

When we questioned the “artist or teacher” work of Rigo 23, we found that he was really an activist and trickster who transformed art galleries into prison-like spaces with grey walls, bars on the windows, and limited choices. Visitors could take on multiple identities in the gallery-prison. They could be prison inmate-artists who drew on walls, or they could be learner-witnesses who followed the timeline of Leonard Peltier’s life and drew conclusions about justice. Both *artist-teacher* and *TA* are described by researchers as bound terms that are inclusive of ingenuity, puzzlement, and high engagement activities that belong to neither artistic nor educational worlds alone. Nick Rabkin, in an *Artsjournal* blog exchange with Lara Zakarias (2008), proposed that we drop any either/or distinction and like Rolling (2010) move toward a both/and attitude. Booth (2009) moved to explode the binary of these worlds as being part of what he called an “arts learning ecosystem” where “TAs increasingly work in a variety of settings – from arts institutions to nursing homes to hospitals to corporate boardrooms” (p. 19).

While a more dimensional ecosystem for artists and teachers has been co-constructed by these contemporary thinkers, the learners in our ecosystems have also been confined as similarly hyphenated passengers or inhabitants in the spaces that we research and define. In her 2009 article titled “The Hyphen Goes Where?” Vanessa Lopez confronts the multiplicity of learner identities. We have positioned learners as students or as young people who move through our researched spaces on vertical paths as primary/elementary/secondary or pre/post-service education students or on horizontal paths as at-risk, African-Native-Hispanic-American, special-needs, high/low-achieving, and more. This positioning is problematic as it removes the influence of the learner from the development of the artist, teacher, or researcher. While I do not propose that we ignore the history and cultural capital of adults or young people in our ecosystem, I do propose that we explore the possibilities that are available when we plan for the ambiguity and conflict that are central to artistry and human progress in their lives.

The growing body of third space research argues that there is an increasing need to understand the ecological intersubjectivity of people in time, space, and history. Loic Wacquant (2004/2009) and Michael Cole (1985) argue that embodied pedagogical dynamics increase the need for aesthetic negotiations that may not be available in literary descriptions of experience. I argue that as artists in a world of learning and living, we are positioned to imagine and realize positive systems that will be indefensible as artistic alone.

It might be risky business to remove the hyphen, the slash, and other conceptual or literal apparatus from professional identities in artist and teacher education. An unmanageable lack of definition and loss of identity and motivation could result. Defending the boundaries of what is artistic and what is educational presents a risk of homogeneous and unsupportable cultural identity. The vocabulary of historic inclusion that names the layers of identity information allows us to form or reform new worlds. What would happen if we took on professional identities that were expected to grow new parts with each new context?

In Booth's (2009) definition of an "arts learning ecosystem," his intention was to describe an embracing scope of arts learning as "larger than the school connotations of the word education" (p. 19). I examine dimensions of the term *arts learning* beyond scope, and I find that qualities of intersubjectivity dance into action, and words become insubstantial descriptors. The qualities of social context, the difficult distinctions of critical thinking, the aesthetic moments of praxis, all extend meaning into prosthetic and proliferative form. Walls of distinction that bind or divide artists and teachers are difficult to retain.

Within this ecosystem I hope to identify the artistic and educational qualities of third space where individuality, difference, and shared meaning are contested and collectively formed in creative action. Making up the energy and matter of the entire arts learning ecosystem is the habitus, the embodied habits and ways of learning, of artists, learners, teachers, and researchers (among others) who meet and develop third spaces that often defy definition but form bodies of learning and potential. Navigating this ecosystem, I imagine a hybrid character that can teach outside of a classroom, learn inside of a studio, make art in a laboratory, and research the world through a nimble and embodied pedagogy. Perhaps preparation of the next generation of arts learning ecosystem navigators will include less identity work and more identity action.

### Unfenced Potential



*Figure 3. Sociocritical body.*

Back at the gallery with the work of Rigo 23 and Leonard Peltier, everyone learned, not by performing as learners or artists, teachers or researchers alone, but by bringing shared and solo histories into the tiny and cramped space of an artistically reproduced prison cell (See Figure 3). They gathered visual, emotional, historical, and personal data in the traditionally privileged space of an art gallery. They walked together and constructed a relational timeline of events. The adults and children alike developed their own images of injustice and perseverance while they posed problems about fairness, race, poverty, and difference. Together they hatched theories about how someone can change the world from behind bars. Some students expressed concern and love for people who were unable to travel freely. Some adults confessed ignorance and fears about foreign places and practices. The roles of artist, learner, teacher, and researcher were juxtaposed and swapped, and an ecosystem of understanding was formed and unbound at the same time.

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