Thinking Differently about Teaching and Learning: Using the Arts as a Mode of Inquiry

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Abstract

The purpose of this essay is to explore how engagement with artistic encounters embedded within an integrated arts course designed for pre-service teachers provides students with opportunities to think differently about teaching and learning. The pedagogical choices made in this integrated arts class are driven by Deleuze’s (1994) philosophical work on thinking and the nomadic theory of Braidotti (2011). Both scholars reject the idea that thinking is a voluntary, systematic, and linear process that ends with the representation of a pre-existing idea. Rather than recognize something that is already there, Deleuze and Braidotti assert that thinking is an ongoing process of becoming that is continuously moving towards difference. Thinking occurs through unpredictable encounters that forces thought. To think differently means experimenting with encounters in ways that move “beyond existing frameworks and connections” towards newly invented ones (Atkinson, 2018, p. 120). This essay discusses how a course grounded in a pedagogy of immanence helped pre-service teachers understand learning from the perspective of what “matters for a learner in a learning encounter” (Atkinson, 2018, p. 126).

Keywords: Teacher thinking, dogmatic image of thought, nomadic thinking

Introduction

Integrating Art and Creativity into Teaching is an undergraduate course that I originally designed for pre-service teachers who attend a small Catholic college located in New England. Its stated purpose is to support elementary education majors as they cultivate the technical vocabulary and skills needed to read various pieces of art. At the same time as they are developing this new vocabulary, they are also introduced to the methodological implications associated with teaching and learning with, through, and about the arts (Goldberg, 2015). As the instructor, the pedagogical choices that I make throughout the course drive the assumption that artistic and creative processes embody ways of thinking that are neither linear, systematic, or voluntary (Manning & Masumi, 2013). In this context, the goal of thinking is not to recognize something that is already there, but to engage in an ongoing process of becoming that is continuously moving towards difference. Students are invited to engage in a variety of open-ended, collaborative, artistic encounters that require the use of their voices and bodies, as well as class materials in ways that allow thinking, teaching, and learning to merge. Encounters with these artistic investigations provide pre-service teachers with the opportunity to experiment and possibility develop new theories about teaching and learning that potentially move them “beyond existing frameworks and connections” (Atkinson, 2018, p. 120) towards something new.
Hence, the purpose of this essay is to explore how the use of the arts as a mode of inquiry has the potential of providing pre-service teachers with opportunities to think differently about teaching and learning. Specifically, I am interested in how the “force of art” (Atkinson, 2018, p. 60) can help pre-service teachers “interrupt the linear, status quo thinking” that serves as a foundation for the current “global education neoliberal movement” (Strom, 2018, p. 104); a movement that valorizes positivist research that provides fixed, predictable outcomes over other forms of inquiry (St. Pierre, 2011).

To frame this exploration, I draw on Deleuze’s (1994) treatise on thinking, as well as Braidotti’s (2011) conception of nomadic thought. I begin with a discussion that juxtaposes Deleuze and Braidotti’s theoretical work with the kind of thinking that pre-service teachers are often encouraged to employ. I then explore how the artistic encounters embedded in this class open new possibilities for pre-service teachers to think differently about teaching and learning. I conclude with a discussion of how this course emerges from a pedagogy of immanence that asks the teacher to “try to understand how something matters for a learner in a particular learning encounter” (Atkinson, 2018, p. 128).

**Teacher Education: What Does it Mean to Think?**

Since the early 1980s, teacher thinking has been viewed as a foundational skill that pre-service teachers must acquire before they enter the classroom as professional educators (Clark & Lambert, 1986). As a result, teacher education programs across the globe have implemented various thinking and/or reflective protocols designed to explicitly “teach” pre-service teachers habits of thinking and/or reflection (Korthagen, 1985; Willis, 2021). Historically, many of these reflective protocols saw reflective thinking as a cyclical process that “challenged the positivist technicist approach to teaching and learning” that dominated the field during the 1960s and 1970s (Galea, 2012, p. 245). These protocols were driven by the assumption that, by “thinking about their own practice,” teachers would be able to transform their teaching in ways that did not “adhere to some linear predetermined scheme” (p. 245). However, with the advent of market-based education reforms that have been implemented over the past two decades, teacher education programs must provide quantitative evidence that the teachers they produce are effective (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018). This evidence is expected to come from objective assessments that allegedly offer definitive proof that program graduates have attained the knowledge and skills needed to prepare their future students to compete in a knowledge-based, global economy. In this context, the role of thinking in teacher education is no longer one of transformation and discovery. It is now a “linear, product-oriented process” informed by psychology and cognitive science and designed to measure a set of competencies based upon “professional teaching standards” (Lambert, 2021, p. 423). Teacher thinking is now just one data point within a larger data set used to justify the work, and, in some cases, the existence of university-based teacher preparation. This means that, rather than encourage future teachers to experiment and/or take risks, teacher education programs are now required to cultivate teachers who use thinking as a means of meeting a pre-existing set of criteria. Thus, thinking is reduced to a process of recognition rather than one that seeks out difference (Chatzantonis, 2021, p. 10).

**Dogmatic Image of Thought**

Rather than align with the dominant form of thought found within the current state of teacher education, the pedagogical approach that I use in my Integrating Art and Creativity into Cultural and Pedagogical Inquiry, Summer 2022, 14(1), pp. 75-87

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Teaching class rejects the idea that teacher thinking should only result in the reproduction of pre-existing facts. Here, I take up Deleuze’s (1994) critique of this type of thinking—a stable set of circumstances waiting to be discovered by the thinker—which he calls representation. According to Deleuze, representation is the dominant image of thought on which we rely, for example, to make decisions about learning and teaching in the classroom, or about the structure of the school curriculum, or about national education policy. This image fixes our objectives when we attempt to think (Deleuze, 1994).

In contrast, my pedagogic approach and conception of thinking is informed by Deleuze’s (1994) assertion that representational thinking towards differential thinking requires experimentation. This experimentation occurs as the result of an involuntary, unpredictable encounter with the world that forces us to think. For Deleuze, this force is both violent and invasive:

There is only involuntary thought, aroused but constrained within thought, and all the more absolutely necessary for being born, illegitimately, of fortuitousness in the world. Thought is primarily trespass and violence, the enemy. (Deleuze, 1994, p. 139)

Thinking means that we must be comfortable with “the violence of the encounter [where] everything is transformed so that the images we rely on to ‘make sense’ are destroyed to make ways for the new” (Jackson, 2017, p. 23). While the encounter may be violent and destructive, it affords us the opportunity to engage in an act of creation that would not have been possible without it. This act of creation—or thought—occurs when we engage with an encounter that takes us to a place where our “disjointed faculties [have been taken] to their limits,” and where we sense not what can be recognized, but something that is imperceptible (p. 670).

Becoming Imperceptible

What does Deleuze mean by the term imperceptible? As noted by Colebrook (2002a), Deleuze argues that becoming imperceptible requires that we abandon the idea that any image—thought or otherwise—represents an accurate and transcendent replica of the world. Becoming imperceptible offers us the opportunity to move beyond the narrow constraints of an actual world ordered by a detached human subject. It encourages us to use our human imaginations to consider how non-human bodies—organic and inorganic—might perceive being in the world differently (p. 129). By doing this, the human is no longer outside of world, but rather, “becoming one with the flow of images that is life” (p. 127). We are “no longer disengaged from life and difference” (p. 127), but fully immersed within them. Becoming imperceptible means that we can view all images as existing on an immanent plane where the actual world is “expanded by a virtual plane of potential” (p. 126). This immersion within “the flow of life’s perceptions” (p. 128) affords us with a new level of freedom not available to us when we build our world solely upon human-centered perceptions. As a professionally trained vocalist, I have had multiple occasions in which I have been in a state of becoming imperceptible within a performance. For example, in collaborating with multiple musicians, each of us are in a process of becoming in relation to one another’s creative flow, opening to the unknown and unpredictable, rather than recreating fixed, acceptable interpretations.
The Problem

Citing Deleuze, Jackson (2017), suggests that when we sense the imperceptible, our affective response allows us to “turn the encounter into a problem” (p. 670). It is important to note that when Deleuze (1994) defines the term problem he is not talking about providing a “ready-made” (p. 158) answer to a stated question. The answer is neither separate from the problem, nor does it disappear once a solution is applied. Instead, problems create an “inexhaustible” space where numerous unpredictable potentialities are possible (Todd, 2005, p. 85). These potentialities can “disrupt life and thinking, producing movements and responses” (Colebrook, 2002b, p. xxxiv) that shift our focus away from the idea that being and/or thinking can be represented through a set of stable categories. Thus, the focus of attention must be on the problem rather than the solution. This is because an emphasis on the problem allows us to “go beyond the seeming order and sameness of thinking to the chaotic and active becoming which is the very pulse of life”—a pulse that exists on an immanent rather than transcendent plane of existence (Colebrook, 2002b, pp. xxxiv-xxxv). When problems are located on a plane of immanence, they do not disappear. Instead, they persist through multiple and unpredictable possibilities (Deleuze, 1994). This persistence of a problem allows us to engage in a creative process of ongoing experimentation that continually leads us to difference.

Nomadic Thinking

My pedagogical approach is also shaped by Braidotti’s (2011) conception of nomadic thought. Nomadic thought emphasizes “the embodied and embedded material structure of what we commonly call thinking” (p. 2). In other words, nomadic thinking rejects the Cartesian separation of the mind from the body. Instead, it situates thought in the fleshy contours and movement of an entire body—be it a human, non-human, or non-organic body. For Braidotti, to think means being aligned with Spinoza’s “notion of desire as an ontological force of becoming” (p. 2). Consequently, “it makes all thinking into an affirmative activity that aims at the production of concepts, precepts, and affects in the relational motion of approaching multiple others” (p. 2) in ways that are connective and empowering. Thus, for Braidotti, nomadic thinking is “about tracing lines of flight and zigzagging patterns that undo dominant representations” and extend the “power of consciousness” to all forms of matter (p. 2).

Both Deleuze’s (1994) and Braidotti’s (2011) conceptions of thought disrupt positivist views of thinking that privilege linearity, objectivity, universality, and the rational search for essential truths. Rather than view the world through an “either/or” binary lens, both scholars describe thinking as an ongoing exploration of multiple, possible connections. Within these two interrelated conceptions of thought is an ontological shift where, rather than see reality as a fixed state of being, what is or isn’t, reality is in a constant state of flux. Thus, being is difference and thinking is a continuous process of becoming.

Thinking, Teaching, and Learner

What does this view of thinking mean in terms of teaching and learning? Bogue (2004) notes that for Deleuze, teaching and learning are “simply names for genuine thought” and that the primary “[g]oal of teaching and learning is to think otherwise, to engage the force of that which is other, different and new” (p. 341). In the case of learning, the learner becomes fully immersed within a perplexing experience that is initially ‘felt’ rather than conceived”
The learner does not “solve” the problem but engages in a process of experimentation that “takes place below the level of conscious thought, beneath the identities representations offer” (Todd, 2005, p. 112). Thus, learning, as well as, learning to think are not purely conscious activities designed to recognize a pre-existing entity. They are both conscious and unconscious processes that involve feelings, sensation, and movement. According to Chatzantonis (2021), Deleuze also conceived of “learning as [an] apprenticeship…of exploratory experimentation and enquiry that reflects the movement and labour (sic) of thought as an act, rather than as content” (p. 8). Chatzantonis also notes that Deleuze believed that the primary purpose of learning is to learn how to learn not to gain knowledge, and this process is different for each individual. Just as with thinking and learning, the concept of difference also applies to teaching too in that there is not one fixed set of teaching methods that can be applied that cuts across all learning contexts (Chatzantonis, 2021). What teaching can do, through a process of apprenticeship, is set the conditions for thinking and learning by creating a space where students are able to immerse themselves in encounters that force them into space between the encounter and the imperceptible. This conception of thinking, teaching, and learning is quite different from what is found in many collegiate teacher education programs. In many of these programs, emphasis is placed on the technical mastery of high-leverage or core practices where, to be effective, teachers must, through intensive rehearsal, master “activities of teaching which are essential” to student learning (Ball & Forzani, 2011, p. 19). Thus, rather than the cultivation of thinking, the focus is on making sound professional judgments that support effective action.

Integrated Arts and the Artistic Encounter

When I first developed this course nine years ago, I initially conceptualized it as a type of methods course that would provide pre-service teachers with the technical skills needed to integrate the arts across the entire K-6 curriculum. It became apparent to me after the first semester that I taught it, that the course was about something quite different—a difference that I experienced as an imperceptible feeling that would, on occasion, offer me brief flickers of understanding. For example, even though they received the same assignment prompts, students’ responses to these prompts were often quite different from one another. These differences were so apparent that students made frequent comments about them. I also noticed that there were many assignments or in-class activities that, unlike a traditional methods class, elicited a variety of emotional responses from students. These responses ranged from joy, happiness, sadness, grief, anger, surprise, relief, and/or frustration. It was not until I began working with the philosophical concepts associated with thinking (teaching and learning) found in Deleuze (1994) and Braidotti’s (2011) work that I fully realized what was happening in the course. By providing students with artistic encounters or problems, I was enabling students—and myself—to get at thinking, teaching, and learning in ways that tapped into their affective and emotional worlds in ways that other teacher education courses did not.

The course has a syllabus. A syllabus implies that course content is arranged in a sequential manner. However, while there is a certain arch to how the content is presented, this is not the case. When we engage in encounters associated with the visual arts, I do not present these encounters to students as a unit of study. Students are asked to engage in various artistic modalities (e.g., visual arts, music, drama, and poetry) in non-linear ways that have them begin repeatedly from the middle. What I mean when I say that we begin from the middle is this: I ask them to explore some problem associated with the visual arts. In the process of this encounter, I
support them as they discover the myriad connections this piece has to music, poetry, literature, history, their lives and who they are becoming as thinkers, learners, and future teachers. These potential connections give the course a nomadic quality. New ideas are generated through these connections and new relations are made and unmade constantly throughout the course.

**Assemblage**

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) use the term *assemblage* to describe a constellation of distinct elements found within a particular setting. These elements, which can be human and non-human, “function collectively in a contextually unique manner to produce something” (Strom & Martin, 2017, p. 7; italics in original). In other words, each element is seen as “an active agent in the joint production” of the something that is ultimately produced (p. 7). In its current iteration, the *Integrated Arts* class is an assemblage made up of students, a course instructor, various art-materials, movement, songs, poems, artistic encounters, and discourse practice. It also includes elements outside of the classroom such as the college mission statement, student demographics, and college policies. The *something* produced within the assemblage of this class might be a set of professional dispositions, a specific teaching practice, or new ways of thinking and theorizing about teaching and learning.

Although there are constants that cut across each semester that I teach the *Integrated Arts* course, there are also differences that reshape not only the shape of this assemblage, but what it might produce. For example, each semester I encounter a different set of students, or I might decide to use different art materials or songs. During the spring semester of 2020, the course was also shaped by COVID-19 and our immediate shift to online learning. All these elements have the potential to collectively produce new ways of thinking about teaching and learning.

**An Apprenticeship for Thinking**

Most of the students who take this class, are young women between the ages of 18-22. They are from White, racially homogenous, suburban communities located within a two-hour drive from the college. The history of their academic success—or lack thereof—has been shaped by their ability to accurately follow assignment checklists and/or rubrics that lay out what they are expected to know. They expect to be able to do a task at the end of a lesson or unit of study. Students often express a great deal of concern regarding what they think that the course instructor wants from them in terms of academic output. It seems that throughout their entire schooling experience, including college, these students have been led to believe that learning means being able to identify a predetermined set of criteria, skills, and/or knowledge. That it is, their job as students is to discover it. They have had very little experience—at least academically—seeking out the new and different, and when confronted by the possibility of moving beyond representational thinking, many become very uncomfortable. Some even panic. Given the experiences of my students, I have come to see my task as one of setting up conditions that help them move toward new and different ways of thinking. However, rather than tell students to “do as I do,” I must ask them to “do with me” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 23). Thus, I work to create a context where students are able to engage with a variety of open-ended, collaborative artistic encounters or problems through an apprenticeship driven by experimentation. Certainly, part of my role is to facilitate. However, as the course instructor, I also must serve as the guide that supports students as they begin to perceive the “stable identities of world” as “destabilized”
(Chatzantonis, 2021, p. 10). It follows that I am just as embedded in the middle of each encounter as my students.

Below are two examples of artistic encounters that the students in my Integrated Arts class have been asked to engage with over the past two years. As I discuss each of these encounters, I describe how each served or has the potential to serve as a force that disrupts students representational thinking and move them to new ways of thinking about teaching and learning.

**Artistic Encounter: Artistic Investigations**

Throughout the semester, students are asked to engage in a series of short “artistic investigations” that require them to experiment with a variety of artistic concepts, such as, repetition, movement, sound, reflection, and/or space. Many investigations come from a set of art assignments compiled by Sarah Urist Green (2020). None of these investigations require expensive materials or a great deal of time; they can be done during the course of one’s day (Green, p. xi). The intent is to provide students with a space to experience art as a bodily sensation and/or feeling. The purpose of these investigations is not for students to follow rigid directions that results in a predetermined product. Below is an example of one of these investigations that comes directly from Green’s (2020) text:

**Drawing What You Know Rather than What You See Inspired by the Work of Kim Dingle (b. 1951)**

**Materials:** Drawing implements (e.g., markers, crayons, pencils, pens, etc.) and 2 pieces of paper (large paper might be easier to use, but standard-sized paper can work just as well).

1. Find two pieces of paper, a drawing implement, and a blindfold.
2. Blindfold yourself and draw your home*. Remember to draw what you know about something rather than just what you see.
3. Put the blindfolded drawing out of your line of sight before removing the blindfold.
4. Remove the blindfold and make a second drawing of the same subject.
5. When the second drawing is finished, compare the two. Which is more expressive?

Feel free to try this assignment several times and see what happens. For example, try to the activity sitting down and standing up. If you’re displeased by your first attempt, keep doing it until you’ve created something that you find interesting.

*The term “home” can be represented by anything. For you, it could mean a house or your dorm room. You can also interpret it as something that you know a great deal about such as the members of your family, your pet, or your friend-group (pp. 14-17).

This investigation allows students to experience a sense of disequilibrium as they attempted to create an image of “home” blindfolded. For many of these students, this investigation was disruptive in that they were concerned the blindfolded version was not “accurate,” or “good.” Many students reported that they did the assignment more than once so they could create a better
product. Thus, for many students, although not all, it was a challenge to move beyond a carefully curated representation of home towards something different.

In Figure 1 below is an example of one student’s blindfolded and non-blindfolded drawing. What is striking about these two images is that, even though both clearly represent a house with trees in the front, the blindfolded drawing has a greater sense of movement and freedom—it is moving away from the standard representation of a home—it’s becoming different. This could have been a transformational moment; however, in her non-blindfolded drawing, which was drawn after the blindfolded version, the student resorts back to a representation that she is comfortable with. Although there was only a momentary, fragmented disruption caused by this encounter, there was still a brief fragmented glimmer of something new.

Figure 1

Student Example: Blind-folded and Unblind-folded drawings
Artistic Encounter: Creative Expression Project

The Creative Expression Project is a long-term project that serves as a final assignment for the course. The stated purpose of this project is to help students explore their own creativity and artistic potential through the creation of a personal artistic presentation rooted within a particular art form or forms (e.g., drama, music, dance, storytelling, puppetry, photography, the creation of a graphic novel, performance art, etc.). The overarching goal of the project is to use the arts as a means of researching/theorizing/learning about a particular concept, big idea, or question. Although students are required to produce some kind of product, the most important part of the project is that they record the story of their project in a process journal. Since I have been teaching this course, student projects have focused on the following:

- Multiple children’s books that have addressed topics such as the meaning of family, special education, civil rights, hospitalization, environmentalism, and Alzheimer disease
- A cubist-inspired portrait of the family dog
- Water-color paintings of the Cape Cod
- A quilt that served as an homage to family
- A short video about being diagnosed with a chronic illness
- A collage that served as a means of working through the death of a close friend

This is not an exhaustive list. Suffice it to say, each of these projects is individual, unique, and different. This is likely because this project is designed so that it has very few constraints. As a result, it is up to each student to decide what the focus of their project is and what artistic medium they use to present it. This can be a challenge for students who are used to being told what they need to say and do to receive a good grade. It can be especially hard for academically successful students.

To provide students with adequate time, I give them this assignment during the third week of the semester. In addition, I provide them with class time to talk to their peers about their project. I also meet with each student at least once to consult with them about their work. My task during these one-on-one conversations is to follow the student’s lines of becoming as they engage in the process of building their project.

Given the length of this project, I would argue that there are multiple artistic encounters that are embedded throughout it. For example, there is the initial encounter when they first receive the assignment, as well as other smaller encounters along the way to their final product. Below is an example of one of these small encounters that I uncovered in a student’s process journal:

I struggled when trying to come up with a topic for this creative expression project and before I knew it [the college] was shut down [due to COVID] and classes had been turned virtual. As a senior, I was looking forward to my final months... and was forced to leave too soon. Much like millions of people all over the world, I was feeling all types of emotions about this pandemic and the changes it has caused to daily life. I was feeling such mixed emotions. It was not until one morning I came downstairs to begin my schoolwork that I saw a nursing book with an anatomical heart on it, while I was...
listening to a song called Human Condition. This sparked the idea for creating a piece that involved emotions we all feel as humans and the human heart. I wanted to try to grasp the variety of emotions and experience that humans can feel to evoke emotion, either all at once or a few at a time. I wanted to attempt to map out feelings of the human heart, some that I am experiencing right now.

An encounter with a nursing textbook “sparked” an idea for this student. It interrupted the struggle she was having in identifying a topic and artistic modality for her topic. This was an “event of becoming” that transformed her experience of this project, as well as her relationship with the COVID-19 pandemic and the emotions she was feeling about being sent home in the middle of the last semester of her senior year (Atkinson, 2018, p. 135).

**Pedagogical Immanence**

In this section, I will briefly explore how this course, rather than being grounded in a pedagogy of recognition, is rooted in a pedagogy of immanence that asks the teacher to “try to understand how something matters for a learner in a particular learning encounter” (Atkinson, 2018, p. 128). According to Atkinson (2018), “[p]edagogies of recognition function on the basis of presumed transcendence that determines the ‘recognized’ object—the practice and outcome of learning—according, for example, to the teachers’ expectations that constitute his or her framework of recognition” (p. 104). In other words, a pedagogy of recognition refers to an entity, such as a generalizable teaching method, parameters, or criteria that are outside, not within, the world of the teacher and or student. As noted by Atkinson, such criteria and parameters are often “necessary for formulating appropriate pedagogic aims and methods of procedure” (p. 5). On the other hand, within a pedagogy of immanence, pedagogical practice is not located outside, but within the ebb and flow of classroom life. Therefore, there is no fixed image that teachers use to inform their pedagogical decisions. Pedagogical choices are made with and also create the world of the classroom. For Atkinson (2017), a pedagogical choice made from within a local context “revolves around ‘how something matters’ for a learner in his or her experience of a learning encounter and trying to comprehend this ‘mattering’ constitutes a pedagogical adventure for a teacher” (p. 141). When teaching the Integrated Arts class, each artistic encounter asked students to follow their own lines of becoming. I saw it as my job to follow these lines so that I could support the student as they entered unknown affective, emotional, and intellectual spaces.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of writing this essay was not for me to argue for a particular method that helps pre-service teachers learn to think. After all Jackson (2017), citing Deleuze, argued that because methods are always rooted within recognition and representation, they are unlikely to produce new ways of thinking (p. 673). Consequently, what I argue is that there cannot be a universal method associated with thinking, teaching, and learning that can be applied equally across all educational contexts. Each context is different and thus requires that “the problems that animate teaching, learning, and thinking” be addressed within rather than outside of local settings (Chantzantonis, 2021, p. 9). Given this, I recommend that teacher educators consider moving away from the idea of methods and towards what Atkinson (2018) refers to as a “pedagogy without criteria” (p. 5) Atkinson is not “advocating a pedagogy of ‘anything goes’” (p. 5), but rather
...a relaxing of parameters and criteria that underpin particular forms of learning and practice so as to enable those forms of learning and their outcomes that may be marginalized or ignored, to be recongized. The same applies to teaching. This involves a process of experimentation and invention. In many contexts, in recent decades, the practice of teaching has been subject to a series of competencies or standards whose purpose is to define and monitor good teaching. For some, this is viewed as a positive and constructive approach to improving teacher quality. For others, the idea of standards, which of course is difficult to dispute, has produced a rather mechanical and prescriptive approach to what they see as a creative enterprise...I think, to a Spinozan interpretation: that we do not know fully what teaching is or can become.

Over the past 20 years, the field of teacher education has had to contend with countless accountability initiatives designed to “fix” the “broken-system” of university-based teacher education (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018). As a consequence of these initiatives, teacher education programs has had to provide evidence that their programs meet state and federal standards. Given this, it would be a challenge to institutionally embrace a “pedagogy without criteria,” as such a term represents an anathema to the current climate where evidence, date, and effectiveness reign supreme. Having said that, I believe that there are spaces in many teacher education programs—spaces like the Integrated Arts class described here—where pre-service teachers are engaged with learning encounters that are not based upon criteria mandated from outside of their respective programs but occur within an individual program. In the end, I am arguing that, as teacher educators, we must provide our pre-service teachers with opportunities that allow them to become attuned to the vibrant flow of multiple perspectives and virtual potentialities. These opportunities can help emergent educators make new and potentially empowering connections that will help them move beyond the representational thinking they encounter in the field and towards different ways of thinking about teaching and learning.
References


