

Tangling in Remix

*R. Darden Bradshaw PhD.,
University of Dayton
Barbara Bergstrom PhD.,
Bowling Green State University¹*

ABSTRACT

This project illustrates an alternative, or remixed, method of writing about a collaborative inquiry of two art educators. Their journey comprised searching, identifying, quarreling, and ultimately, proceeding forward on issues related to gaining relevant relationships with the culture of remix and the authors' practices as art educators. The layout used to illustrate the discourse between the authors presents a philosophically as well as emotionally labor-intensive de/reconstruction of personal and professional issues related to using concepts of remix with students in art education classrooms. The journey itself enlightened the authors and energized a challenge to come to grips with topics they didn't understand but *wanted* to understand in order to more fully connect with the media-rich lives of their students. This document shares lessons learned around a process of being transparent about differences, modeling rigorous discourse about the unknown, and sustaining a curiosity for meaningfully honoring the lives of our students.

The term remix has been flowing in and out of our awareness for years. A colleague in graduate school used the term to describe his research. Darden used the term with her mother when discussing a partially failed piecrust recipe. Her daughter, laughing with a friend in the backseat, used remix to describe a song that has been reinterpreted by a new contemporary artist. Despite such recollections, we, authors Darden and Barbara, discovered that our understanding of remix was vague and fleeting, and that we much preferred analog to digital remixes. Through research and discourse we investigated the relationship between remix and art education. At times, we struggled to communicate as we realized how we teach from places very different from one another, as well as from where our students come. Compounded with our discomfort and anxiety about remix, our real-

¹ Correspondence regarding this article may be sent to the authors at dbradshaw1@dayton.edu and bjbergs@bgsu.edu

ization called attention to the fact that we are both *digital immigrants*, dissimilar to our students who are *digital natives* (Prensky, 2001). The two of us were confronted with the knowledge that in order to reach our students and support them in becoming educators who can reach *their* students, we must change. We found ourselves resistant.

This article attempts to give tangible, visual form to our collaborative journey exploring remix as both practice and as culture. Within it we ask, how might our understanding of remix help our teaching? The two of us agreed that it was important to proceed knowing we would be transparent about our journey while modeling to our students the ways remix culture influenced us as pedagogues. In turn, we believed that our students might benefit from a similar expedition into the concepts of remix as a means of enriching their individual teaching practices and philosophies. Going forward, we honor each voice; we use the column format to indicate our various approaches to remix. These parallel threads are complementary but distinct. Darden's more conversational narrative stands in contrast to Barbara's matter-of-fact prose.

We begin this article by gathering contexts in which remix is used by artists, scholars, and musicians. We agreed that we would use the term remix as follows: *a mixture, a combining together of all experiences, beliefs, theories, backgrounds, and values associated with who we are*. In what follows we present our understanding in four sections.² In the section we call "Searching," we move forward from our understanding of *remix* by examining our relationships with remix and teaching as well as remix and artmaking. Next, in "Identifying," we investigate our individual relationships with technology and the networked culture in which we live. In the section we call "Quarreling," we come together to share our different understandings. Finally, in the section we call "Proceeding," we articulate the ways in which we imagine this journey could potentially inform the work undertaken by art

² The educators and experiences to which we refer in the text represent various relationships and occasions that made an impact on our journeys. Therefore, they are footnoted individually for the reader's benefit.

educators in higher education and, ultimately, their pre-service art education students.

Searching

In our attempt to find ways in which remix, as we understand it, could be used in valuable ways within contemporary social, cultural, and educational practices, several thought-provoking questions challenged our research process. The following exchange begins to reveal our unsettling individual differences and indicates the complexity that accompanied our journey. Here are excerpts from our collection of writings and thoughts that informed our conversations about remix. You will see that the column on the left indicates Darden's process while the column on the right indicates Barbara's.

I find myself recalling an incident three years ago. Driving down a Tucson highway with my then 15-year-old daughter and her best friend in the backseat, the radio is blaring and floating up toward me over the strains of the music are comments about "how awesome is this new song." As they discuss the artist's attractiveness and his ability to lay musical tracks over one another, I chuckle.

They do not realize the song is a remix. The version I knew in the '80s has been remixed into this 2011 version. I listen and laugh, not at them but with them, as I realize I said almost the exact same thing at the age of 15. And

Literature by Amerika (2011) and Lessing (2001) were referenced at the end of the *jCRAE* call for submissions from Garber and De la Rosa. That's where I started because I knew very little about contemporary concepts around

my mother politely told me the original song had been made in the '60s.

In the past, when I thought of the term remix, I interpreted it only from a technological perspective in which a musical work of art is altered and revised to include another. Yet as I consider Amerika's discussion of "hybridized, post-studio arts practices" (2011, p. xiii) I wonder...is what I do as a teacher also remix?

Remix culture creates derivative works. And to avoid copyright issues, the work has to be so transformed as to no longer

remix, let alone its potential relevance to art education. That said, the term was not foreign to me as I vaguely recalled that remix employed technology.

I understood remix to have started in the hands of artists, specifically musicians. I also understood the use of remix to be a creative act. But wait.

Remix can be made up of artifacts from our personal archives (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008).

Amerika (2011) has claimed remix to be a "cross between an improvised keynote address delivered at a conference on disrupting narratives, a stand-up comedy routine, and the kind of live, pedagogical performance found in experimental seminars and lectures . . . in a lab focused on inventing future forms of avant-garde art and writing" (p. vii).

I remembered a lecture that I had recently attended by Drs. Wong and Wong, authors of *The First Days of School: How to be an Effec-*

reflect the original (Lessig, 2008). Yes, teaching is an act of derivation. We take the experiences we have had, the moments of learning that were most pivotal to us, and use them as the springboard. Certainly, my teaching practice is a hybridization, derived from that I have experienced as a learner. Yet I question, am I altering those experiences enough that they no longer reflect the original or so that they are used in such a way that I make them uniquely my own? Is it possible in a remix culture for something to ever be uniquely one's own?

Today, a sophomore undergraduate said to me, "Last week when I presented my lesson to the class, I heard phrases coming out of my mouth I had heard Mr. W. say during my observations of him." I smiled encouragingly at him. Yes, I thought . . . we are

tive Teacher (1998). One of the first slides in their presentation read "STEAL" in massive letters. Dr. Wong asserted that *that* is how to be a good teacher, *steal* from your colleagues. To me, this seemed to be a kind of remix.

I am also curious about Amerika's "realm of autohallucination," or what sounded to me like a sort of forgiveness we give ourselves before taking risks with hopes of new discovery.

I searched phrases that included the terms "remix" and "education." What accrued was an eclectic collection. One page that caught my eye was captioned, "Teacher Binder Remix." Coincidentally at the time, I was working with my sophomore

all appropriating, or ripping off our teachers. When I took Dr. Beudert's³ assignment to create an autobiographical art education timeline and used it in my own classes, I was appropriating that from her. Perhaps she appropriated it from someone else. We are part of a culture in which we "consume and then critique, customize, create, and recreate" (Burwell, 2013) the pedagogical texts we use.

Everyone does this, right?

I have used Dr. Garber's⁴ aesthetic puzzle assignment to have students investigate the process of creating an open-ended question about aesthetics and art, Kyla Macario's⁵ cultural literacy exercise to confront the biases we carry into our teaching practice, Saphier and Gower's *Skillful Teacher* (1997) graphic organizers to help students gather and

3 Dr. Lynn Beudert, Professor Emeritus of Art, the University of Arizona.

4 Dr. Elizabeth Garber, Professor of Art, the University of Arizona.

5 Kyla Macario, Professor of Practice, Teaching and Learning Center, the University of Arizona.

undergraduates as they began to assemble parts of their teaching portfolios. I thought, perhaps the concepts I could learn about building a "remixed" binder would enhance my students' professional portfolios. It did not take one critical minute for me to gather the overarching purpose of this blogspot. As I saw it, the site merely offered some advice to new teachers: get organized!

I thought, "duh!"

synthesize lecture information, and Dr. Short's⁶ studio/lecture format to organize a class. If I listed or noted everything I use that I've ripped off/borrowed/appropriated/remixed from my former teachers, books I've read, videos I've seen, I'd have a book. Yet, little of that is using technology but every bit of it is a type of networked remix (if I understand remix).

Thomas Moore, in *Care of the Soul* (1992), remixes Renaissance philosophy and theology as he situates a set of suggestions for how one might begin to think and act in a way that allows us to care for our soul—ultimately to push back against the ways in which we become divided selves.

Care comes from the Latin term *cura*. To curate is to "look after the items/objects in a collection"

6 Dr. Kathy Short, Professor of Language, Reading and Culture, the University of Arizona.

Later, I heard a report that focused on the popularity of smart tools and the unique ways in which they interacted with users. Feedback from smart tools was reported to be constructive, not punitive, and often happens through a series of progressing levels. A user's purpose is then advanced, as if in a game. "Classroom pedagogy stands to learn much from remix practices and smart tools and how they enable learning and achievement" (Lankshear et al., 2013, p. 30).

In the nearest margin I wrote, "This quote scares the crap out of educators like me." Smart tools have not been a part of my world—educationally or otherwise—until recently. When will I find the chance to fully immerse myself with technology in order to find comfort participating within it? I wish to model to students an authentic engagement with contemporary tools.

I continued to think . . .

or to “select, organize and present . . . typically using professional knowledge” (Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/curate#curate-2>.)

In delineating our teaching practice, we are curating the classroom and learning experiences for our students. The artists, artwork, pedagogical structures and practices, teaching tools, and performative strategies I chose are, in fact, carefully selected to correspond with the knowledge gaps, purposes, and goals of the course, personalities of the learners, and my past experiences teaching the course content.

This is remix, is it not?

The ongoing 20-year old international art show *do it* continues to tour the works of artists including Adrian Piper, Félix Gonzales-Torres, and Ai Weiwei. The exhibition includes various sets of instructions written by approximately 250 artists and, according to Obrist, “every work is very much a collaboration between the artist who writes the instructions and the artist who actually executes it (as well as) the visitor who interacts with it” (Nathan, 2013).

Remix, right?

According to Deleuze and Guattari (Wolters, 2013, n.p.), “Rhizomes, taken from a kind of root system found in nature, are non-linear, and non-hierarchical” (n.p.).

Remix, right?

I recall one of my favorite part-time jobs, working as a librarian’s assistant at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. There, my

Do I have the cultural literacy to engage in remix? In our discussion, Barbara keeps addressing technology. I desperately want to ignore that piece. I am uncomfortable with that part of the discussion and keep trying to change the subject. I don’t really know what a meme is and every time the word is used, I feel my anxiety rising. How can I participate in remix culture when I am deeply resistant to being open to learning about it? Why am I resistant?

I feel silly being resistant.

And maybe a valuable question

passion for the Fluxus art movement exploded as I routinely experienced the works John Cage, Yoko Ono, Dick Higgins, and Charlotte Moorman. These artists and their work, like Yoko Ono’s Instruction paintings, are remix, right?

Cultural literacy required!

I learned that part of what makes Amerika’s (2011) *remixthebook* “more than a print book published by a prestigious university press,” is its “concept of writing to include multimedia forms composed for networked and mobile media environments” (p. vi). Aha! Here were familiar references to technology that encouraged my understanding of multimedia forms and mobile

to ask myself is, am I willing to dismiss *my* understanding of remix because it does not include technology to the greatest degree?

With each new reading, each time I sit down to investigate remix, my conception of it is modified. Just as I feel I have a handle on remix, there is a seismic swing and the paradigm has changed. Remix is a form of deconstruction (Amerika, 2011), a hybridization that combines parts from other wholes into a new work (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008). As I read and engage in this discourse, am I remixing the personal archives of Darden?

networks. I recognized a new desire to combine my visual art teaching practices with computers. No longer dragging my feet, I was encouraged.

Indeed, for me, my personae has included that of an interloper.

I learned from Knobel and Lankshear (2008) that remix could be taking cultural artifacts and combining and manipulating them into new kinds of creative blends. They claimed that remix “had expanded from remixing music and sound to [include] moving and static images, television, the Internet, personal archives” (p. 27). I like that. I saw the potential of finding personal value in concepts of remixing as it could include my “personal archives.”

Finally, I had to quit looking for definitions after I came across Lessig’s (2005) comment that there is “no end to remix.” Instead, there are fertile, “current remixes that reference previous remixes in a layer of significance indicat[ing] the fertility of an earlier remix” (p. 26).

Identifying

We came back together. In the process of sharing the results of our searching, there were several impassioned differences that separated our perspectives. We experienced frustration, “a-ha” moments, and (dis)connections as our individual artistic practices as well as teaching practices did not coalesce, yet seemed to naturally embrace concepts of remix. This phenomenon reminded Barbara of another research project she had done where similar circumstances emerged while participants were investigating sense of self and identity. In that study, participants did their best work in collaboration with one another. Barbara recalled, “it took a collaborative investigation to determine the intricacies of our individual selves” (Bergstrom, 2014, p. 212). Together, the two of us discovered a stronger sense of self while making room to acknowledge one another. In our “Searching” section, we began our individual investigations of remix, yet here in “Identifying,” using concepts of mash-up, our identities, and specific theorists, we move from the internal dialogue to a collaborative discourse. We kept remixing.

As an educator I am continually becoming . . . my identity, knowledge, and experiences as artist, researcher, teacher, advocate, mother, and colleague are pieced together into a particular construction. I am engaged in a collage process on a daily, momentary basis. By doing so, am I the producer of culture? Or am I still a consumer? (see figure 1)

I love to think of myself as a remix of several powerful experiences I have experienced in schools. My teaching philosophy stems from my unique combination of Mrs. Mitchell’s⁸ “cheer” to help us learn important dates in European literature; Robin Williams’ character in *Dead Poets’ Society*; Mom, who reminded me that as a student, sometimes you learn about what kind of teacher you don’t want to become; Dad, who told me while in elementary

⁸ Mrs. Ann Mitchell, Barbara’s twelfth grade English teacher at East Grand Rapids High School.



Fig. 1 D. Bradshaw, *Crazed identities*, 2014. Hand-sewn fabric scraps.

The Exquisite Corpse game started by Andre Breton is a type of mashup. Slamming a noun, adjective, verb, adverb, noun, and so on up against another to create a sentence is, in effect, pulling together disparate elements into

school that if I am going to do something . . . do it completely; and many others.

I believe that I model having empathy for students better after my fifth grade teacher brought me to tears having taught that no woman has ever been President of the United States.

a new whole with new meanings and derivations. Every class I teach, I use the Surrealist Exquisite Corpse drawing game⁷ as a way to encourage collaboration, play, and creative problem solving. As students engage in an analog form of mashup, they discover the relationship of semiotics, artmaking, and visual culture literacy.

Amerika addresses the opportunity that arises from mashing up academic writing and popular culture (2011, p. xii), yet I am conflicted. I am excited, on the one hand, by the idea that our work as scholars and educators can be shared in various forms (written narratives, digital narratives, or digital non-narratives) and through various outlets (journals, blogs,

⁷ Surrealist artists adapted the Exquisite Corpse poetry game to one that involved a drawing created by a group of people. Each person would create a drawn image on a piece of paper, fold down the paper, and pass the image on to the next participant, and so on. The resulting collaborative drawing had an element of chance and unpredictability. The original intention of the game was to engage the collective unconscious and see phenomena in new ways.

As artists, are we not “performing theory as a part of a creative process in which artists intuitively construct various conceptual personae to see exactly what it is they are becoming?” (Amerika, 2011, p. vi)?

books, videos, or other yet-to-be imagined means). That opens up a great space for me as an artist and teacher to find a hybrid research methodology. Yet on the other hand, as I am trying to figure out the protocol for achieving tenure at my institution, the reality that research can be more practice-based and performative while resisting categorization makes me feel vulnerable. If I, as an artist and art educator, struggle to remix definitions of scholarship, how will my colleagues from other disciplines who must evaluate my work respond? I would be much more comfortable sharing my research in various formats and modes if I knew with certainty the University Tenure and Promotion committee understood remix as I do.

“For myself, I find that my attitude towards, and understanding of my work is in a constant state of flux. I am continually learning more of what my work is about from other people and other sources” (Haring, 1984, p. 369).

Is the value-added approach to understanding the visual arts dependent on a viewer’s interpretation, or on remix? Isn’t this what I have read Barthes (1972) proposed, that a work of art is complete only after the viewer has drawn meaning from it?

Further, I learned, media and remix literacy fortifies users’ civic engagement by facilitating new forms of participation (Mihailikis 2012).

While we are modeling remix practices, are we consciously and overtly articulating that it is remix? I hear myself channeling Ms. TerVeen, my high school art teacher: “Pay attention to where the light hits the object. Do you see the range of values? What is the relationship of one form to another?” As I turn to another student, I realize that Gayle Wimmer, my graduate fibers professor, has just appeared over my shoulder as I challenge the student to consider what they are trying to say.

In my role as an art educator, I demonstrate my own remix of all the pedagogical influences I have experienced. Might I consider myself “en route to an identity,” as Amerika might propose?

Amerika (2011), claimed that in the “*remixthebook* project [he hoped to] indicate to emerging artists and scholars, particularly those engaged in advanced forms of digitally processed, practice-based research, an alternative model of multimedia writing . . . as part of a professional course of action” (p. vii).

Every semester, I give the same assignment to all my students, regardless of course topic. I ask that they go somewhere or do something they have never done before. Their written reflections about their experiences have included eating like a vegan for a weekend and taking a piano lesson. They write about new perspectives they have gained. A sort of remix emerges for them, such as when an exchange student from Korea did her best to cook Mexican food for her college roommates.

"Eleanor Antin once said that when she started making visual art she began constructing new personae to step into and out of as a way to develop new work" (Amerika, 2011, p. 102).

We do this as teachers, finding our way through meaningful pedagogical practices.

"I would focus on myself as the instrument that acted on whatever ground was . . . available" (Acconci in Amerika, 2011, p. 103).

Why not perform my handwritten artwork as "a spontaneous and continuous theory-to-be"?

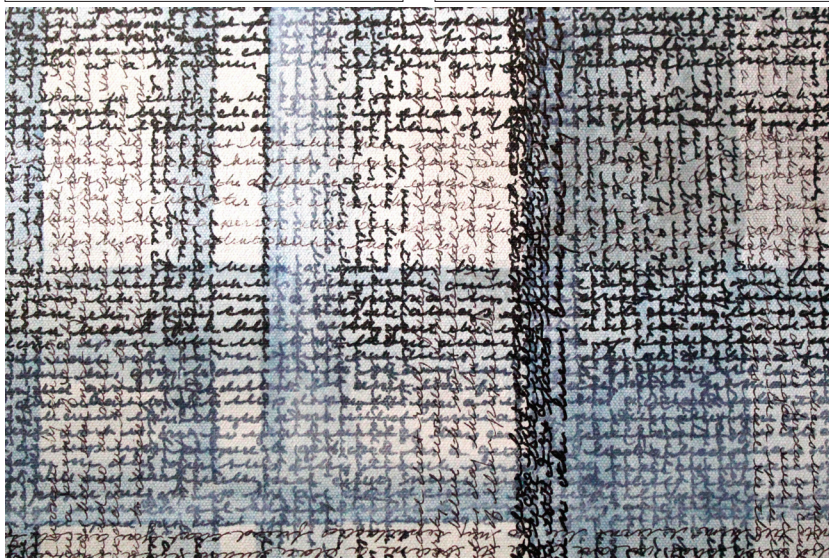


Fig. 2 B. Bergstrom, *Just a Thought*, 2012. Acrylic on canvas.

I said to Barbara today as we departed our meeting at the coffee shop in Lima, Ohio, that as we research remix I feel like we are vultures, circling over road kill. Just as we swoop down and grab a piece of remix that meshes our ideas and/or furthers our understanding, a semi-truck comes along so we quickly fly away leaving with just tiny little morsels.

I read what Amerika crossed out on page xvi in *remixthebook*, "Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself. I am large, I contain multitudes."

Um . . . Yes, I believe that we all contradict ourselves at times. I began to wrestle with how this fact relates to being a classroom teacher and an inspiration to future artist-educators.

The phenomena of "becoming" intrigued me and was consistently part of my art-making practices. As addressed in my artist statement, in my art I consider *the human performance of everyday and how one's personal priorities coincide with time spent.*

Okay. At this point, we have read about disrupting narratives, the phenomena of becoming, theories-to-be, being en route, and always becoming. Are we any closer to knowing what remix means?

Quarreling

Coming together again after numerous sessions where we had spun our wheels, we were determined to find consensus and move forward. With hope and determination, we aimed to collate. However, as colleagues and friends, we were caught off guard by the messy nature of our collaborative process.

The following “Quarreling” section reveals evidence of the continued clash of our two divergent voices. Rather than being a transcribed dialogue, these thoughts and writings visually chronicle the impetus for conflict.

At least once a month I find myself handing my phone to my daughter and asking for her help solving another technological problem. I resent being dependent and not being able to quickly or easily convey my ideas because I do not have technological know-how.

Convinced that remix employs technology in some way, I investigated new ways to make art using a computer. Attending the Ohio Art Education Association conference, I was sure to visit sessions that would help me appreciate and adopt technology in my classroom. The sessions that I attended had titles such as “An introduction to internet-based art-making,” “Operation iPad,” and “Digital art lessons using free software.”

I realized I share this frustration of feeling dependent with my students. Recently one of my preservice students wondered aloud how it was I had the ability to walk into a classroom of Kindergarten students without fear, and step in or take over a lesson she had been teaching that had begun to fall apart. That ability and sense of confidence was gained through exposure, experience, and remixing the pedagogical practices of my own teachers. She will get there, if she keeps learning and if she stays open to finding her teacher voice, I assured her.

Will I get there with remix?

I heard students discussing SnapChat again. My daughter is tethered to her iPhone in much the same way I am tethered to my pencil. I love the feel of holding the pencil, the dark marks of graphite on the white paper, and seeing the words take shape. The disconnection and sterile process of sending a text message bothers me. I’d rather meet and talk in person with someone, yet I see my daughter in a room with four of her friends, all completely

A few weeks ago, I realized that I had lost track of time and “wasted” one and a half hours blundering around on a website where I could “paint” for free. A few minutes later, I thought about how unfortunate it was that, without hesitation, I believed trying to figure out how to paint using my computer had been a waste of time. Had I not just made a commitment to gain new understandings relevant to

silent as they communicate digitally via text and Snap messages.

my students' lives saturated by technology? Wasn't I doing what I said I would do... discovering new artistic tools and engaging with digital media? Perhaps I was even beginning my own "archive" of art and technology?

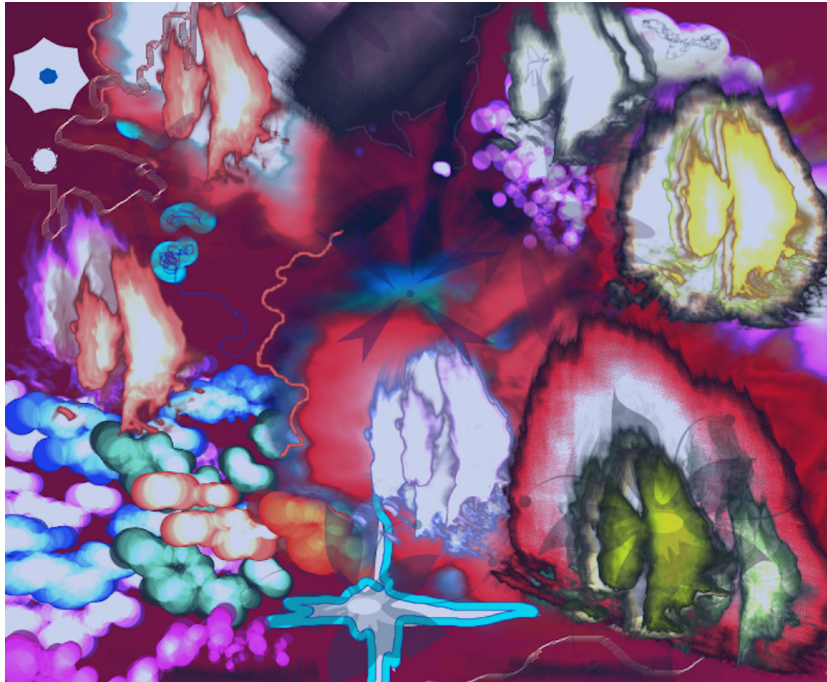


Fig. 3 B. Bergstrom, "Wasted" Time, 2014. Digital painting.

I questioned, what are the larger set of social practices in which learners are engaging now? How have these Apps and social media sites changed their relationships with learning? As I investigated SnapChat™ with my daughter one evening, I discovered that she and her friends place little value on the

content of the "snap." Rather, the value comes from the number of people following you. If one does not respond or snap back, people stop following you. I was stunned. What is being said is less important than the volume of people hearing you say nothing? If students are producing culture and the content of what is produced is irrelevant, what value is there in the production? My anger has ignited a fire. I must find a way to cross this technological and cultural divide. Is remix the answer?

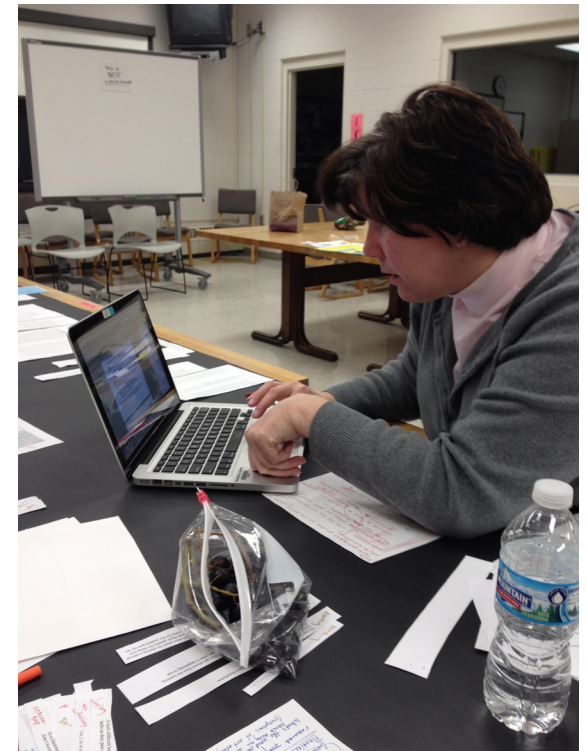


Fig. 4 Darden wrestling with technology.

I must confront my relationship with technology, or more accurately, my anxiety with it that precludes me from moving forward. I may never lose my “digital immigrant accent” (Prensky, 2001, n.p.) but I will at least be conversing in the same language with my students.

“Women have always collected things and saved and recycled them because leftovers yielded nourishment in new forms. The decorative functional objects women made often spoke in a secret language, bore a covert imagery. When we read these images in needlework, in paintings, in quilts, rugs and scrapbooks, we sometimes find a cry for help, sometimes an allusion to a secret political alignment, sometimes a moving symbol about the relationships between men and women. We base our interpretations of layered meanings in these works on what we know of our own lives - a sort of archeological reconstruction and deciphering” (Shapiro & Meyer, 1996, p. 153)

Paik claimed new media artists can focus on “cyberated life,” that I translated as, lives that I considered to be technology-saturated.

How about the artist as medium?

I wondered, how about the teacher as medium?

Paik continued, “Cyberated art is very important, but art for cyberated life is more important, and the latter need not be cyberated” (Paik in Amerika, 2011, p. 104).

Recently, in order to achieve my vision for an arts-based research project in which I was involved, I reluctantly had to learn how to create a website. The investment of time and energy was tremendous; my learning curve was steep. I am proud of the work I achieved, yet exhausted at the thought of having to invest precious resources so I can learn numerous new technologies to continue moving forward and share in the language of my students.

I wonder, will I carry that experience over into my classroom? My students must be competent to create a website, right? There is this voice in my head that says I am the professor, I am supposed to teach them but more often than not, they are teaching me. (Bradshaw, 2014).

Paik ends his *Artist medium instrument* remix with, “The culture that’s going to survive in the future is the culture that you can carry around in your head” (Amerika, 2011, p. 105).

Our apparently different understandings of the ways in which technology has to be incorporated or used in remix seemed to be a tripping point in our discussion; we trespassed upon one another's identity. We argued, pushed, and got our hackles up.

"I'm so lost. I don't get what your frustration is." Darden

"I don't know what to do about [our discord]. I feel like this is getting icky." Darden

"I don't see how me saying that technology *has* to be part of remix is confusing." Barbara

"Me too." Barbara

We stepped on one another's toes and then insisted that we each provide clarification as we articulated and processed the complex thoughts, viewpoints, and ideas that comprised our interactions. On the verge of exasperation, we had to step back. Finally seizing an opportunity to draw connections between the use of technology in remix and art education, we shifted focus onto our students. Having reached the peak of our dispute, we realized that the process of searching, identifying, and quarreling greatly heightened our individual awareness for the subtexts from which the two of us approach teaching and artmaking.

Remix allows us to move away from the mass-produced product of education, the branding, if you will, of students into our theories, beliefs, and ideas . . . it creates a culture through which we are encouraged to foster students to cultivate, create, critique, and ultimately re-create the text of the teacher they are becoming. Am I creating an environment where my students can write and rewrite the

text of their lives (Barthes, 1972) as Dr. Beudert encouraged me to do years ago?

Remix is not new (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008) and has been a part of cultural development before digitization. Yet technology has become "increasingly integral to how [young people] make meaning and express ideas" (p. 23).

If, as Iser (1980) notes, the act of reading is a process of becoming conscious, am I creating a space where students are *reading* their culture and becoming critical remixers?

According to Wilson (1997), the goal of art educational research is to provide knowledge about the ways art-learners use special artistic insight to expand their conceptions of themselves, past and

It made sense to me that remix could be part of an aesthetic; however, it seemed that, by definition, it would not be part of a summative assessment of students' work. Right?

How might we remix degrees in higher education to emphasize sharing and participation as a valuable didactic practice?

present worlds, imagined and future worlds, and the norms by which individuals govern their lives through writing the texts of art into the texts of their lives within and beyond school. (p.3).

As I ask my incoming art education majors why they want to teach, am I inviting them to research into their views of themselves, to investigate what education has been for them and ultimately to remix their own teaching philosophies?

In my resistance to technology, am I precluding my students from writing and remixing the text that allows them to find their own meaning as a teacher? I have become part of what Prensky (2001) notes is the single biggest issue in education—teachers who speak an outdated language teaching students who speak an entirely different one.

Have I been unfair to my students? How could I make participation with personal electronic devices a valuable practice in art education?

I'm working on it.

Recently I found myself in an unfamiliar situation as an educator. I took a moment and, Barbara's and my remixed version of the popular phrase, "What Would Jesus Do," asked, "What would Elizabeth do?" What pedagogical practices are there in my past experience, my toolbox, my awareness that I can draw from, combine, and recreate to address this particular situation?

How might an art educator be considered a "creative blend?"

How does a teacher (and pedagogy) become a remix of images (moving or still), television, the Internet, and personal archives?

And then, what about making them meaningful to a group of art students?

What about technology?

I wanted to escape into what Knobel and Lankshear (2008) call "game world physics" (p. 25). The idea of leaping up to the rooftop of the university's library, screaming out to release every last complicated thought, then turning invisible to change my pursuit seemed refreshing. I wanted to escape my internal battle and understand how to be a relevant, contemporary art educator as well as escape my external battle with Darden over what remix is, does, permits, or prohibits.

Proceeding

Using these insights as the springboard to welcome our new understandings of remix into our classrooms, studios, teaching, and artmaking practices, we finally began articulating our paths going forward—the ways we intend to bring remix into our pedagogies.

How might fan fiction be useful in creating a space in which my students become the actors in their own teaching? Fan fiction is a rewriting of a movie or television show in such a way that there is a new version, storyline, or character development (Berkowitz, 2012). Literacy scholars advocate bringing this practice into the K-12 classroom (Gee, 2004; Knobel & Lankshear, 2008; Manifold, 2009), but what if we focus in art education on *fan non-fiction*. I define fan non-fiction as remixing and rewriting based on real events lived with real art educators that occurred in the course of one's art education and *through* which the learner becomes a fan of the

Teachers . . .

How might we collaborate to use remixing as a route to meaningful pedagogical practices in visual arts education?

How might we remix the plethora of pedagogical ideas, experiences, and standards to make them meaningful for our future students?

educator or their practices. As a result of that fan experience, the participant rewrites and remixes their art education philosophy, pedagogy, or practice as a byproduct of the original lived experience mashed up against the situation and educational experiences in which they find themselves and through which they remix themselves.

I often say to my daughter, “don’t knock it till you try it.” I am usually referring to a food item but those words can apply to me. I found myself encouraged through this process to 1) not dismiss what I don’t know and am afraid of, and 2) not throw out my beliefs in the adoption of a new thing. Rather, I can find a way to remix my teaching practice to include and build on; to celebrate the technological, digital, and cultural references of my students while still celebrating the way I learned and am comfortable teaching.

Near the end of the time we delegated to writing this piece, I tried something new with my students in a Foundations in Art Education course. Wanting to explore as many technological opportunities in the art classroom as possible, I made a list of media-based tools that could *potentially* be used in teaching and asked several groups of four students to pick a tool at random. Then they were asked to use the tool to teach a studio art project to those in our class.

Several of the students’ immediate responses claimed they had never heard of Popplet, Web 2.0, or Weebly. I thought to myself... this is perfect! “That’s why we’re doing this assignment,” I explained.

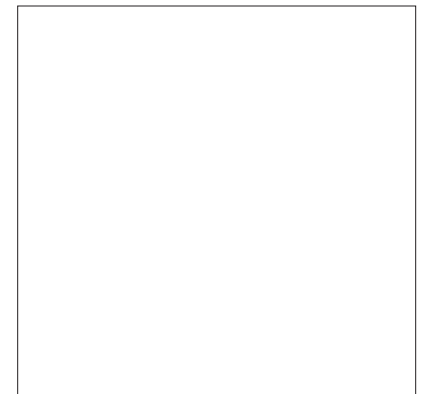
This past semester I invited students to bring their ideas and experiences to remixing our collective understanding of visual culture. Students were asked to consider the ways in which visual culture signs are mixed and remixed to layer meaning, to interpret the ways in which those signs have impacted their particular disciplinary focus, and then to find a way to share or disseminate their findings to us. The students created videos, blogs, twitter accounts, instagram accounts, and websites to articulate their developing and remixed understandings of visual culture. Opening up my practice to invite their technological expertise enriched everyone's learning.

Remix is another tool for social justice and democracy. It can be a method for breaking down barriers between those who have access to information and those who do not. Rather than we, as teachers, holding all the cards and knowledge, our students

After each group had done their lesson's presentation, the most engaging discourse of our semester emerged. The 20-25 minute presentations were thought-provoking and triggered the students' imaginations. They elaborated on ideas for how to use these technologies as ways to create new platforms for critiques, build ongoing art history timelines, assign collaborative mind-maps as homework, and construct interactive portfolios for submissions to various creative competitions.

Perhaps students enjoyed the fact that I was putting myself at risk when doing this assignment with our class. Walking into the unknown proved to be inspiring.

come to us with access to and experience with finding and producing that knowledge. Perhaps the more pertinent of our tasks is to help them critique and analyze what they are producing? Isn't that what education should do—help students discern how to remix everything together as they find *their* voice?



In Closing

Here we have articulated the difficult process we experienced in our attempts to come to terms with something we did not understand. We knew from the start that intense efforts would be required from the two of us. We had anticipated that this project would demand an openness that made vulnerable our personal values and beliefs. At the beginning of our journey, neither of us necessarily *wanted* to understand remix. Yet we also knew that being able to empathize with our students of the 21st century would make us better art educators and, perhaps, better artists. With our heightened awareness of various concepts of remix, we agree with this claim made by Keith Haring,

I think the contemporary artist has a responsibility to humanity to continue celebrating humanity and opposing the dehumanization of our culture. This doesn't mean that technology shouldn't be utilized by the artist, only that it should be at the service of humanity and not vice versa. (1984, n.p.)

Reflecting back on the ways we managed our challenges, the two of us can see that we needed to have dialogue through which to debate, process, and grasp theories about remix and hybridization. Confrontations among our philosophical, emotional, and organizational positionalities helped us realize that remix and hybridization are not about figuring out an answer; rather, they are about participation and process. Additionally, the environment of community we regularly

created with our students was a fundamental factor in our willingness to deeply and persistently engage with what was at first risky, foreign, and alienating. This commitment to one another as colleagues brings to light one of our initial intentions for this project: that of modeling the value found in doing collaborative research—or remixing—while remaining transparent and honest with one another as friends, tracking our progress as professionals in the field, and keeping our pre-service art education students at the heart of our pursuits.

The comfort we developed with one another and our individual differences demonstrated for us the value of intentionally creating environments that foster collaborative explorations. As an outcome of this experience, we better understand ways we may support our students to authentically participate in their own remix—searching, identifying, quarrelling and proceeding. We possess a renewed investment in opening fresh spaces for discourse throughout the milieu of visual arts education.

Maybe we have advanced the complex process that is remix. Or maybe we have merely cultivated the enigma. In the end, we are able to share the importance of seeking understanding even if—especially if—it means reaching well beyond our comfort levels to build meaningful, educative relationships. Remix, right?

References

Amerika, M. (2011). *Remix the book* (Kindle ed.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies: Roland Barthes*. New York, NY: Hill & Wang.

Bergstrom, B. (2014). *Engaging a sense of self: Participatory action research within a course for MFA graduate students in the visual arts* (Doctoral dissertation). Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest TX7-865-458.

Berkowitz, D.E. (2012). Framing the future of fanfiction: *The New York Times'* portrayal of a youth media subculture influences beliefs about media literacy education. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 4(3), 198-212.

Bradshaw, R. D. (2014). Dialogue & reflective visual journaling: A means to empower pre-service art educators. *VOKE*, 2. Retrieved from <http://www.vokeart.org/?p=481&spoke=1>

Burwell, C. (2013). The pedagogical potential of video remix: Critical conversations about culture, creativity, and copyright. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 57(3), 205-213. DOI: 10.1002/JAAL.205.

Bryant, C. (2010). A 21st-century art room: The remix of creativity and technology. *Art Education*, 63(2), 43-48.

Curate 1. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/curate#curate-2>

Gee, J.P. (2004). *Situated language and learning: A critique of traditional schooling*. New York: Routledge.

Haring, K. (1984) Untitled Statement. In K. Stiles & P. Selz (Eds.), *Theories and documents of contemporary art: A sourcebook of artists' writings* (pp. 369-371). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Iser, W. (1980). *The act of reading: A theory of aesthetic response*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Knobel, M., & Lankshear, C. (2008). Remix: The art and craft of endless hybridization. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 52(1), 22-33.

Lessig, L. (2005). Creative commons. Paper presented to the Annual ITU conference, Creative dialogues. Oslo, Norway: Network for IT-Research and Competence in Education (ITU), University of Oslo.

Leesig, L. (2014). *Remix making art and commerce thrive in the hybrid economy*. Las Vegas, NV: Epic Publishing.

Moore, T. (1992). *Care of the Soul*. New York: HarperCollins.

Nathan, E. (2013, July 2). *You can 'do it'*. Retrieved from <http://www.artnews.com/2013/07/02/you-can-do-it/>

Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, Digital immigrants. *On the Horizon*, 9(5), 1-6.

Saphier, J. & Gower, R. (1997). *The skillful teacher: Building your teaching skills*. Acton, MA: Research for Better Teaching Press.

Schapiro, M., & Meyer, M. (1977-78) Waste not want not: An inquiry into what women saved and assembled-Femmage. In K. Stiles and P. Selz (Eds.), *Theories and documents of contemporary art: A sourcebook of artists' writings* (pp. 151-154). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Song, Y.I.K., (2009). Media art remix: A tool for social action. *International Journal of Education Through Art*, 5(2-3), 229-240.

Wilson, B. (1997). The second search: Metaphor, dimensions of meaning, and research topics in art education. In S. LaPierre and E. Zimmerman (Eds.). *Research, methods, and methodologies for art education* (pp. 1-32). Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.

Wolters, E. (2013). Watch: Deleuze and Guattari's "rhizome" explained. Retrieved from: <http://www.critical-theory.com/rhizome/>

Wong, H. K., & Wong, R. T. (1998). *The first days of school*. Sunnyvale, CA: Harry K. Wong Publications.