

Culture Shack and the art of intercultural learning

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ABSTRACT

This article describes the interdisciplinary arts and education research project, Culture Shack, which particularly addresses the use of arts to engage young people across cultural and geographical borders. Drawing heavily on Weis, Fine and Dimitriadis' suggestion for a "new research imaginary" (2009: 437), this paper is a call to arts educators, particularly those working in the global South, to seize a moment of emergent criticality in which the business-as-usual of education research can be productively disrupted. Culture Shack is one such ongoing innovation-in-progress, informed by the peered and tiered learning model that collaborative arts pedagogies make possible. As Rizvi's global relationality (2009) is understood as both long-distance geographical interfaces, and also local intercultural ones, Culture Shack links these intersectionalities in both pedagogical and creative terms.

*“Our moment is marked by fundamental conditions of incompleteness and contingency”
(Appadurai 2006 in Weis, Fine & Dimitriadis 2009: 444)*

“The postmodernists proclaimed the death of utopia. It never died but was transformed from HOPE into an exercise of IMAGINATION. Art Educators of the World, do not give up Utopia as an exercise of Imagination.” (Ana Mae Barbosa, 2008: 12)



Fig 1: participants of Culture Shack, Victoria University, 2011

INTRODUCTION

Any creative project engaged in the work of deterritorializing ethnographies borrows from Appadurai (1996, 2006), Merry (2006), and Wise, Fine & Dimitriadis (2009) among others, and references an increasingly rhizomatic canvas of global proportions. This article describes an interdisciplinary pilot program, Culture Shack, which particularly addresses the use of the arts to engage young people across geographical and cultural difference in a further education pathway. Drawing heavily on Weis, Fine and Dimitriadis' suggestion for a "new research imaginary" (2009: 437), this paper is a call to action for arts educators, particularly those working in the global South, to seize a moment of emergent criticality in which the business-as-usual of education research can be productively disrupted. This article argues that a project like Culture Shack is an example of this new research imaginary, incorporating Rizvi's global relationality (2009), Appadurai's recognition of the uncertainties of flow between the global and local, and a convergence of these two binaries. I argue that explicitly as an act of destabilizing pedagogical practices with recent migrant and refugee-background students, Culture Shack goes some way toward establishing an understanding of creative pedagogies as global relationality.

A pathway's pilot using creative pedagogies, Cultural Shack is a program of (Melbourne-based) Victoria University's School of Education, a deterritorializing project that reaches across geographical, methodological, and cultural sites and imaginaries. Culture Shack links diasporic learners, artists and teachers in the US, Canada

and Australia across varying zones of action (Marcus 1998), to creatively extend the project of educational equity. Weis, Fine & Dimitriadis (2009: 440), ask us to “open our imaginations as to what ‘counts’ as schooling and education today” and this article and the Culture Shack project seek to contribute to this interdisciplinary conversation.

Taking as a starting point for this new research imaginary Wise et al’s (2009) articulation of the “three key analytic moves” (444) this article frames Cultural Shack against an emergent interdisciplinarity in Education in which the global and local can be considered together in interdependent and co-constitutive ways rather than polarised ones. In participatory action research like Culture Shack, students-as-innovators are leading the way in arts education toward a more inclusive, collaborative and transcultural approach, on the ground but informed by global flows. This article will identify the ways in which Cultural Shack responds to Weis’ three key analytic moves as follows: firstly, to situate our work within a “*contextual and historic* context” of “limit situations, within historic moments, unequal power relations, and the everyday activities of life” (Weis 2009: 444-445), secondly, such an approach relies “with some admitted ambivalence, on *categories of social and relational identities*” (p.445) which demands an explicit intersubjectivity that rejects essentialising categories of race, ethnicity, class, gender or sexuality, and thirdly, that such new research designs must seek to “excavate *differences* within groups, so that social analysis can never fix, freeze, or petrify (in both senses of the term) groups” (p.445), toward a new research and pedagogical imaginary that challenges the status quo. This article will articulate the ways in which Culture Shack, as a practice-driven intercultural pedagogical experiment, meets the challenge of the search for this new research imaginary.

OVERVIEW

As part of ongoing equity and access program development within Victoria University’s School of Education, the Culture Shack program was created to explore educational pathways for learners from migrant and refugee backgrounds who are active in the creative arts but may not be thinking of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) or university as a viable option now or after they leave school. While educators have been writing about the literacy and socialization challenges faced by refugee-background learners (Harris 2009, 2011; Cassity and Gow 2006), arts as an ongoing educational pathways remains an elusive tool, particularly in an increasingly standardized curricular environment. With Australia joining the ranks of western nations pursuing a national curriculum, creative arts offerings and strategies may continue to lose traction in curricular hierarchies. Therefore programs like Culture Shack, which offer diverse entry and exit points for young people who want to be in school, but sometimes don’t know how, serve an important role in providing longer-term, but also achievable, pathways into further education.

Culture Shack’s structure flowed along three ‘streams’ (Drama, Media and Hip Hop), all offered during the two week school holiday period in April 2011. Some of the young participants were keen to explore two or more of the streams, but after an initial taster session had to commit to one stream for the duration. All participants did not attend every day, and they did not all create final animations, play scripts, or raps. The program was conducted on multiple community arts facility sites: Footscray Community Arts Centre (program hub), Kindred Studios, and Youthworx Media.

The Culture Shack workshop period ran from Monday, April 11 to Wednesday April 20th (with no weekend classes). Thursday, April 21st was a public forum and performance outcome for the program, entitled *Artful*

practices: a community conversation, which was attended by approximately fifty-five youth workers, community development officers, artists and educators. The average number of participant per day who attended the workshops was sixteen, with twenty-four participants in all over the two week period. The ages of the participants ranged from fourteen to twenty-three years of age. A cultural, gender and age breakdown of participants, artists and interns can be seen in Table 1 below. It is important to note that almost all participants were female, with an average 15:1 ratio of girl to boys. The reasons for this are unclear. Anecdotally, many of the Sudanese participants identified 'arts centres' in general and 'arts workshops' specifically as 'girlie' and would not be of interest to teenage Sudanese males. Pre-commencement of the program, twelve males had signed up but only one attended.

PARTICIPANTS	AGE	ETHNICITY/CULTURE	DISCIPLINE
1 female	18	Vietnamese	Animation
5 females	14-20	Samoan	Drama
1 Female	24	Samoan	Hip hop / drama
1 Female	14	Samoan	Animation / drama
13 females	14-18	Sudanese females	Hip hop
1 male	16	Chinese	Animation
2 females	17	Chinese-Vietnamese	Animation / hip hop

Note: 12 males were registered who did not attend, and 3 additional females, all within the 17-23 age range. These 24 participants did not all attend every session.

INTERNS/pre-serv teachers:		ETHNICITY / CULTURE	DISCIPLINE:
Female	20s	Anglo-Australian	Visual art
Female	30s	Anglo-Australian	Dance
male	20s	Anglo-Australian	drama
Male	20s	Vietnamese-Australian	media
Male	20s	Vietnamese-Australian	media
Female	20s	Greek-Australian	Visual art/hip hop
Male	30s	Anglo-American	media
Male	40s	Anglo-Australian	dance

STAFF:			
Female	40s	American-Australian	Co-investigator researcher (local)
Female	50s	Anglo-Australian	Co-investigator researcher (local)
Female	50s	Anglo-Australian	Project manager
Female	20s	Sudanese-Australian	Research Assistant
Male	40s	American (Anglo)	consultant researcher (local)
Male	50s	Australian-American (Anglo)	International research partner (USA)
Female	50s	Anglo-American	International research partner (CAN)
Male	40s	Anglo-American	Teaching Artist – international (drama)
Female	40s	Anglo-Australian	Artist – local (drama)
Female	30s	Caribbean-Canadian	Teaching Artist – international (hip hop)
Male	30-40	Anglo-Australian	Teaching Artist – local (digital stories)
Female	40s	Indigenous Australian	Teaching Artist – national (animation)
Male	20s	Anglo-Australian	Teaching Artist – local (music/sound)

Figure 2: Collaborator/participant demographic data

KEY ANALYTIC MOVE #1: “LIMIT SITUATIONS” AND THE ART OF INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

The collaborative arts project Cultural Shack prioritized the needs of young migrant and refugee-background young people from Melbourne Australia’s multicultural western suburbs, in responding to requests for alternative educational pathways based on arts workshops. The pilot program, which ran during school holidays in April 2011 brought together over 50 educators, artists, and scholars from Australia, Canada and the United States), to collaborate with culturally and linguistically diverse preservice teacher-interns and participants from Samoan, Sudanese, Vietnamese and Chinese backgrounds. Working on-site at three arts organisations which included Footscray Community Arts Centre, Youthworx Media and Kindred Studios, the young people participated in workshops in three streams: drama/playwriting, hip hop and animation. The program was funded through a Victoria University internal Learning and Teaching grant.

Appadurai (2006:7) argues that “the uncertainties about identity that global flows invariably produce” are constitutively affecting youth culture in particular. For young people from recent migrant and refugee backgrounds, this sense of uncertainty, or “the anxiety of incompleteness” (p. 9) can be crippling. Not only do unequal material conditions create a prevailing frustration in response to the myth of sameness and opportunity, but this sense of deficit positionality permeates both conscious and unconscious lived experiences. These challenges affect the learning experiences of migrant and refugee-background young people both inside schools and in communities at large.

By using the “consumer-media culture” of interdisciplinary arts programs, creative pedagogies are able to assist the emergence of what Kenway and Bullen (2008:30) call a “young global citizen as both a critical observer and as a cultural producer” in response to these prevailing frustrations. Many such short-term programs have emerged in recent years for those engaged in resettlement, but Culture Shack aims to provide longer-term relationships and opportunities. This cannot be done outside of the “historic moment, unequal power relations, [and] everyday activities” that Weis et al (2009: 445) call us to recognize. Similarly, Rizvi reminds us that in collaborating, teaching, and doing research with diasporic African young people we must remember that “one cannot understand how globalization affects African communities outside their colonial histories,” (2009:102) representing his understanding of globalization as mobility, “in terms of interconnectivities and interdependence that stretch across time and space” (101).

This chapter will introduce the unique peered and tiered learning model being piloted in Culture Shack that draws on cross-sectorial and intercultural expertise and collaboration, but equally on peer-to-peer mirroring. This model is being developed in conjunction with the stated needs of the co-participants, who are collaboratively learning from *both* peers and within a hierarchical (or tiered) mentoring scheme of artistic and education experts. The Culture Shack artistic team included: an international arts-education scholar (New York), two artist-practitioners (Montreal and New York), a local scholar-collaborator (Monash University), an Australian Indigenous artist (Central Australia), four local artists, three community arts facilities and their staff, and the 24 young people who participated.

This article highlights the benefits of what Bresler (2007: xvii) calls the “intensified cross-fertilization” possible in interdisciplinary partnerships like Culture Shack. Such models soften “boundaries [to] allow border crossing” (xvii), a phenomenon both methodological in research spheres, and which in arts disciplines “is manifested in the juxtaposition of artistic genres and styles” (xvii). This chapter seeks to highlight the value of multi-perspectival critiques of arts education work with a critical social agenda, and the ways in which the notion of identity may be usefully replaced by narratives of location and positionality (Anthias 2002).

Unlike Dimitriadis (2008), Appadurai highlights methodological choice of sites, and recommends against multi-site ethnographies, but only of single or dual-sited. He cautions against missing attention to the necessary global mobilities in a single-site study, but “if you pick the right location then I think you are constantly seeing things, as it were, moving through them” (Appadurai 2009: 48). Appadurai further suggests that by altering our interrogatory position to “What kind of switching point is it?” we might shift the “classical question” to one in which the researcher is now “paying attention to the velocity, force and form of those things that are transparently here and on their way elsewhere, or have been elsewhere and now come here”, and he suggests this opens up a “more practical method, though in some ways more difficult” (2009:p. 48).

Culture Shack was and still is a continuing attempt to shift our interrogatory positions as educators and artists. It did and still does research the ways in which this affects the experiences of the collaborating partners, with practicality as our driving force. Part of the impetus for developing the Culture Shack program was to create educational pathways for learners from migrant and refugee backgrounds who are active in the creative arts but may not be thinking of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) or university as a viable option now or after they leave school. While educators have been writing about the literacy and socialization benefits of arts methods when offered to refugee-background learners (Harris 2009, 2011; Cassity and Gow 2006), arts as an ongoing educative pathways remains an elusive tool, particularly in an increasingly standardized global environment. With Australia joining the ranks of western nations pursuing a national curriculum, creative arts offerings and

strategies will no doubt continue to fall in curricular hierarchies. Therefore, programs like Culture Shack, which offer diverse entry and exit points for young people who *do* want to be in school but sometimes don't know how, serve an important role in providing longer-term but also achievable pathways into further education.

Considerations of gender were equally as important as race and diasporic identities. Of the twenty-four participants, twenty-three were girls (despite vigorous recruitment of boys), and gender was a frequent topic of discussion. Griffin problematizes contemporary discourse of Girl Power as having “seldom examined the ways in which this powerful discourse is racialized, nor the implications of this racialization for different groups of girls and young women” (2004: 33). For the Samoan, Sudanese, and Vietnamese young women who participated in the pilot program of Culture Shack, Griffin's recognition of the polarized modern/traditional girlhood representation identifies a site of discomfort and incommensurability of recent migrant and refugee-background young women in diasporic contexts. As one Samoan young woman noted:

...last year, I was like 'oh, I love drama, I want to act.' But then this year-- year 12-- I should get serious, do something better, like something that will help my family...not exactly something I would like.
(Vineta, 18)

Culture Shack also draws on its 'tiered and peered' knowledge transfer model by integrating the creative pedagogies of preservice teachers in the collaboration. Preliminary data suggests the preservice teachers have found participation transformative both artistically and pedagogically in relationship with the participants and also in relationship with the artists and scholars. This is research-in-action, pedagogical modelling that is both good art-making and good teaching. These are the kinds of teacher-training experiences that see first year teachers through to a long-term career in education. American research highlights the role the arts can play in teacher retention, where “one-third of new teachers leave the profession within three years; half within five years”, creating instead a climate in which schools can “become vibrant and successful centers of learning and community life” (Stevenson & Deasy, 2008: 10). This American trend is mirrored in Australian classrooms, with teachers and their students paying the price.

This project has used an ethnographic and action research approach to provide in-depth and peer-generated profiles of culturally diverse and former-refugee learners in need of scaffolding support, and to respond to their special challenges with innovative arts pedagogies. Further, this project recognises the paradigm shift that continues to reposition arts-based pedagogies as research with interdisciplinary validity. Given the background of the target learners, there was a need to scaffold their learning beyond basic literacies, including creatively developing conceptual knowledge, critical literacies, and information technology literacies. In addition, learners from culturally diverse and refugee backgrounds frequently report feeling alienated from traditional learning environments (Donelan, 2010), and a majority of these participant learners reported the same (anecdotally to program staff and artists). By providing community-based interactive programs, which are nevertheless intrinsically placed within a larger educational paradigm, these young participants experienced access to both arts and educational institutions in new ways.

Culture Shack used a variety of digital media tools both for participant-driven information sharing, and as data gathering methods: workshops were videotaped by preservice teachers for use in their commentating on the pedagogies employed by artists; participants videotaped themselves and each other by the use of Flip Cameras, which participants then were able to upload onto computers (when desired) for viewing, sharing or social networking. Workshops were also documented by photographs, drawings by participants, model-making, and

Photoshop posters. Participants were given the choice whether to be photographed and/or filmed, a choice repeated throughout the workshops (two participants declined to be represented this way). The participants, artists, and preservice teachers were also interviewed on the evaluation day at the end of the workshop period.

KEY ANALYTIC MOVE #2: CULTURE SHACK AS AN 'EXPLICITLY RELATIONAL METHOD'

Just before, when I was interviewing Julie, I was just asking her, "So, how has it felt being with different cultures?" and she was saying that because of Culture Shack she now feels more comfortable to approach people at school...whereas when she first came she was really timid and couldn't really connect with anyone, and now she feels more comfortable to actually go and talk to people at school, if she sees them. So, I thought that was a really nice thing. (preservice teacher/intern in focus group)

With a few notable exceptions (Burnard & Hennessy 2006; Rabkin 2004; Bamford 2006) there is scarcely a mention of arts education in globalization literature, yet creative approaches to learning and teaching have been growing in educational circles for some time now. Both Mason & Eca (2008) and Spring (2009) address a global creative arts project by turning to UNESCO. Spring uses UNESCO's World Conference on Education in the Twenty-First Century (1998) to foreground its goals for the "intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind" (101), through a commitment to "advance, create and disseminate knowledge...in the creative arts" (102). As stated, such a universal goal is problematic in its presumption that "globalized forms of higher education will teach similar values to all students" (103). Mason & Eca reference the slightly-later UNESCO Regional Meeting for Experts in Art Education in the Pacific Region (Fiji, 2002). The resulting Action Plan contradicts the World Conference in both tone and content: using the culturally referent frigate bird, "Delegates were called to...lead the consolidation and communication of creative arts in education as a way of strengthening cultural knowledge...throughout the global world" (Mason & Eca 2008: 22-23). Here the local begets the global, hardly surprising in a regional conference versus the global conference four years earlier. Yet the 'top-down' versus 'bottom up' difference is striking, and such distinctions and their methodological and ideological repercussions are noted in other contexts by Apple, Kenway and Singh (2005).

Global relationality can be understood as both long-distance geographical interfaces, and also as local intercultural ones. When Julie, the young Vietnamese-Australian participant of Culture Shack comments to her Vietnamese-Australian media preservice teacher/ intern Huy that she will now feel more comfortable talking to her Sudanese and Samoan classmates, this too is what Rizvi has in mind as global relationality. When the Sudanese young women recorded self-portraits and music videos in the Culture Shack media workshops in order to send them home to Juba with one push of a button, the canvas of global proportions comes to life (Weis et al, 2009). In projects like Culture Shack, Appadurai and Rizvi agree in seeing a "relational form of ethnography" (Weis et al, p. 444), one in which the nature of the relationality supersedes any fixed notion of sites and their numbers. While Culture Shack is currently representative of one site (Melbourne), it can be relationally understood as multi-sited in its constitution of Samoan, Vietnamese, Sudanese, Chinese, and multi-arts methods and locations. Relationalities, too, take many forms. Of the eight preservice teachers and six artists who collaborated on this project, most became involved in participants' families, churches, neighbourhoods, school concerns, and cooking. Conversely, the young participants sought contact with the mentors' extended relations as well. These deep intercultural relationships which were natural outgrowths of the Culture Shack program are what Apple et al call "localized inflections of" (2005: 9) global trends.

Those of us practicing and teaching in the global South cannot overlook Sassen's concern with "geographies of centrality and marginality" (as cited in Apple et al 2005: 8), particularly in relation to migrant and refugee background learners. These participants in Culture Shack have at times articulated their resettlement in Australia as a move to the centre, only to discover the ways in which this elusive centrality continues to evade them. Again needing to refocus on "complex and contradictory experiences of, reactions to, and engagements with various aspects of globalization" (Apple et al 2005: 8), rather than necessarily geographical multi-sites. Deep and ongoing intercultural and pedagogical work is possible in collaborative arts projects that are long-term and tied to ongoing and real-world educational and workforce pathways. Like Apple et al, Culture Shack uses the "realities of education" to examine "the dialectical connections of education with globalization" (p. 9); such realities, for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, are challenging and often negatively aligned with globalization. Culture Shack offers a more positive global engagement.

Weis et al (2009) recognize the ongoing value of multi-site ethnographies and research imaginaries, yet draw on Apparadurai's (2009) more recent comments on the value instead of single-site approaches, with attention to mobilities. Here there are no proscriptions on how to 'do' relationality (whether multi or uni-sites), but rather on the re-focused emphasis on intersectionality and relationality.

Culture Shack draws on those scholars (Wilson, 2003 for example) who propose a reconstitution of curriculum that foregrounds not only linguistic but visual and performance forms of communication. Citing an increasingly rhizomatic wave in education (and contemporary culture), and drawing on the American notion of schools without walls, Wilson proposes that a contemporary pedagogy which is "fully submitting to the new and popular" (p. 214) and which moves "pedagogy to a space situated between conventional...school curricular content and content from contemporary art and popular [visual] culture," (p. 214) provides a way for "teachers and students to collaboratively embrace dynamic changes and expansions of content" (p. 214), exactly the kind of mobilities identified by Weis et al. Culture Shack structurally recognizes such mobilities in its efforts to move across pedagogical spaces (between vocational and higher education sectors), and artistic ones.

Grierson's (2008) overview of recent Southern states developments in arts education as explored and documented through UNESCO's regional gatherings from 2001-2004 shows some encouraging patterns in a systemic and globally-interconnected project in and for arts education, and presents some exemplars which have linked global and local curriculum and pedagogy. However, these projects and discourses of arts education in a global South may not go far enough. Into the second decade of the twenty-first century, there seems to be a need to go beyond curriculum and pedagogy as isolated areas of enquiry, to link with broader, more interdisciplinary material conditions including global migration and material conditions. Grierson's analysis takes as its foundation the need for a national curriculum (a debatable imperative, yet appropriate to the New Zealand context in which she was writing), and the resulting evaluations to address the challenge of introducing a renewed criticality into contemporary arts education, a valuable and welcome contribution (Grierson & Mansfield, 2003). Here, recognizing the neoliberal context in which arts skills and knowledge must be "audited...exchanged in the market-place, and priced accordingly" (Codd 2005, in Grierson 2008) forecloses on the "potential of the arts for engaging in emancipatory and oppositional practice" (p. 28).

Yet arts and the market cannot be disentangled – if indeed they ever were. Culture Shack is one project with the potential for sustainability across sectors, including the fee-paying further education marketplace. While many young people from Sudanese, Samoan and Vietnamese backgrounds are active and skilled in the arts as children, and often the recipients of local government and non-government community arts programs, they too

often discontinue their involvement as age and sometimes culture exert their own local relationalities, as with co-participant Achai:

Achai: My aunties, they sing. They're artists. In Dinka, in Kenya, in our country – in our culture. My mom sings as well. She sings in our language. And I can't sing that language. But I got the voice of her, thank god.

Anne: So your family might support the arts, right? But you're saying—

Achai: All they want me to sing is just in our language.

Anne: So they support you but not necessarily in the way that you're doing it.

Achai: Yeah.

(Achai, South Sudanese, 15)

Achai and many of her co-participants from various cultural backgrounds articulated anecdotally the pressure they feel (both at home and at school) to 'get serious' as they approach their late teens, and to pursue more economically rewarding pursuits. One other effective relational project which might hint toward what Weis et al are proposing as a new research imaginary is The South Project (2004-2008) run by Craft Victoria (Melbourne) which brought together "arts practitioners and educators from fourteen different countries" including meetings in Melbourne, Wellington, Santiago, Johannesburg "...to explore a way forward to reconceptualising The South through the mobilization of creative knowledge in and of southern regions" (Grierson 2008: 28).

Shared between Culture Shack, UNESCO-sanctioned programs of which Grierson writes and other worthy projects operating in Australia and other Southern regions, Rizvi's prized relationality between local, regional and global is being amply demonstrated in ways which artists and arts educators are able to activate "research and knowledge exchange as a mode of regional thinking" (Grierson 2008: 30), and in which "their epistemological capacity to provoke and actualize the political dimensions of local and global knowledge cannot be overlooked" (p. 30).



Fig 2: self-portrait, Ana, from Culture Shack, 2011

KEY ANALYTIC MOVE #3: “DIGGING DEEP AND THEORIZING WIDE” TOWARD A NEW RESEARCH IMAGINARY

If projects like Culture Shack are to offer new and rhizomatic possibilities for Appadurai’s attention to “the velocity, force and form” (2009: 48) of mobilities and their human actors, what counts as research and curriculum must change as well. While national curricula seemingly move in the opposite direction, research (as imagined by Weis et al) might throw some light on ways in which research can talk back to policy makers and curriculum writers. Both must surely be based on relationship or relationality; not news to good teachers and critical educators.

Mason too stresses the possibility of moving beyond the global/local dialectic, but instead a productive compatibility – indeed necessity – for collaboration across disciplinary, cultural and geographical research sites – of “new, more appropriate paradigms of education that transmit and transform culture through the humanizing languages of the arts” (2008: 14). The challenge is now how this can be applied (via projects like Culture Shack) in learning sites (not necessarily schools) which might serve as a “canvas” painted with the deep and self-reflexive colours of “relational analysis” (Weis et al 2009: 443) that comes from true collaboration.

Perhaps the best example of this can be seen in the ways in which cultural border-crossing progressed throughout the two-week program. All members of the research team noted the ways in which the twenty-four young participants self-segregated along cultural lines. We discussed this amongst ourselves, but not directly with the participants, who nevertheless used Flip cameras to film each other, sometimes documenting cultural groupings. The last day of the program served as both a rehearsal day for the public performances and our data gathering day for interviews and focus groups. Preservice teachers ran focus groups for the ‘arts stream’ they had worked with throughout the two week period. The animation focus group was facilitated by John and Huy, the hip hop focus group by Angie, and the drama focus group by Nick. Deep bonds had already been established, which also showed in the depth of responses from the participants. Focus group questions ranged between artistic, educational and cultural. The following exchange shows how aware the young people were of the cultural dynamics on the first day of the program:

NICK: Do you think Culture Shack has other important values besides educational pathways, especially for young people from migrant or refugee backgrounds?

VINETA: Definitely. Because at Culture Shack there’s people from different backgrounds coming together and they’re not only learning about the arts, they’re also learning about each other and their backgrounds as well. So, even that first week when we started off it was like the Asians were in animation and the Islanders in Drama, and the Africans in hip hop; now the relationship between the kids are together ...we’ve changed completely.

If programs like Culture Shack can offer a new research imaginary, its strength is in the identification across hierarchies, and the culture question that became a focal point throughout the pilot that was shared by all. The following exchange occurred during the preservice teacher / intern focus group, which was facilitated and filmed by me:

AUTHOR: ...cuz there did emerge some border crossers, gender-wise and also culture-wise, and some of those were articulated, like “My sister Newjoy decided to go to animation to break through the culture thing.” So who does that? And who doesn’t do that? And why?

We knew that the participants constructed different narratives representing competing identities, which – like Appadurai’s “disjunct global flows, [that] produce local contradictions and tensions of many kinds” (2006: 30) – are intrinsically linked to (and informed by) intercultural exchange. Here the preservice teachers shared my hunch based on both my pedagogical and theatre-making background that cultural and creative border-crossings were linked:

PATRICK: I think it could have happened in time.

(hubbub of agreement)

AUTHOR: it did start to—

PATRICK: I found that Rania, for instance, started to join the continental dance that I was doing with the Islander girls—and she was really keen to do that, and I could see that that was intentional. And if we had more time, then that would have happened more. But I think there could have been a bit more experimentation with that. Cuz that’s what’s been the great opportunity for me, is to experiment – to see what works and what doesn’t.

Experimentation was key to all stakeholders in this program, and Culture Shack’s contribution might be best understood through this lens. Ongoing collaborative and creative relationships allow us to “dig deep” into our own rich border-crossing histories, and a theory that is applicable globally and locally follows.

CONCLUSION

Apple, Kenway & Singh agree with Weis et al “on the necessity of adopting a global analytic” (2005, p. 1-2), a global research imaginary that is only now coming to education as a discipline. Culture Shack attempts to do this by bringing together young people, artists and educators from a range of diverse cultures, ages, geographical locations and perspectives. The Culture Shack pilot program was characterized as successful in both pedagogical and artistic terms by its co-participants: a majority of educators, preservice teachers, artists and youth participants expressed a desire to continue participation, and a belief that it had been beneficial to them in artistic and educational terms. While the program’s aim of mapping this work to a Certificate Three in Creative Industries requires further work, the program has suggested that teaching and learning in community locations has positive implications for all stakeholders. Such implications include collaborative learning, interdisciplinary benefits, cross-sectorial collaboration, and sustainability for all participating organisations. The “relative dearth of education research identifying what these implications are and canvassing the issues invoked” (2005, p. 1) make it hard for pedagogical innovators, but good work is emerging, and Culture Shack hopes to be one of these ongoing innovations-in-progress, informed by the peered and tiered learning model that collaborative arts pedagogies make possible.

Using Weis et al's three key points, this article has attempted to formulate a critical imaginary for taking research in arts education forward globally and locally; it offers Culture Shack as an embodiment of this new research imaginary which acknowledges Appadurai's uncertainties of flow between the global and local. It is – and must continue to be - based in Rizvi's relationality, one in which economic and pedagogical sustainability are linked inextricably to the active intercultural engagement of preservice teachers, students, scholars and community artists. Long-term results need long-term monitoring, but in the student, artist and preservice teacher feedback there are clear and positive responses to both the kinds of relationship and the kinds of work that were produced during the Culture Shack pilot. Despite increasingly neoliberal imperatives in the universities and arts organisations where such pilots originate and take flight, good arts practice, good learning and good business might be possible in the collapsing binary of yesterday's global/local.

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