

Transgressions Towards Difference: A Tertiary Arts Educator's Reflection on Teaching in Norway

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Abstract: This chapter explores the idea of transgressions within tertiary arts education, focusing on how transgressions might lead us toward understanding notions of difference, and contributing to understandings of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), inclusion, and diversity in education. These ideas are explored from my first-person perspective as a tertiary arts educator and researcher, with the research taking a qualitative auto-narrative approach. Through unpacking my auto-narratives this chapter identifies how transgressions within teaching might add to the teaching and learning context, and I ask: How might we, as educators, see these transgressions as opportunities, and as ways to encourage difference in our teaching and learning? Through critiquing my own pedagogical choices and practices, I reveal that when seeking to embark on an inclusive and dialogical approach towards education, transgressions can be made, and through these transgressions there are opportunities to develop teaching practices in arts education.

Keywords: arts education, difference, Foucault, Norway, transgression

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I walked into the large open studio space to teach my first class in Norway. The students, all in the final years of their teaching degree sat behind tables that were haphazardly placed around the room. One tinkered on a drum kit in the back of the studio, another played a few chords of the guitar, however as soon as they saw me in the room and heard me say “hei everyone!” they stopped. I had tried to give the “hei” my best Norwegian accent, but had only had one Norwegian lesson in the two weeks I had been in Trondheim, and didn’t yet know what the word for “everyone” was, so reverted to English. In response to my greeting tables began to move into orderly lines, chairs were straightened, but as I saw them do this I asked them to place the tables and chairs in a circular shape. They followed my instructions diligently, and there was a quiet hush to the space, just table legs scraping over the wooden floor, and the thud of chairs landing in their new locations. I thought to myself: “Maybe it is because the students have never met me that they are being so quiet and ‘well’ behaved?”

This chapter explores the idea of transgressions within tertiary arts education, focusing on how transgressions might lead us toward understanding difference, and contributing to understandings of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), inclusion, and diversity in education. I specifically investigate such ideas from my first-person perspective as a tertiary arts educator and researcher from Aotearoa/New Zealand, who recently arrived in Norway. I follow the proposition offered by bell hooks (1994) in *Teaching to Transgress* where she notes: “I celebrate teaching that enables transgressions – a movement against and beyond boundaries. It is that movement which makes education the practice of freedom” (p. 12). bell hooks describes teachers who are willing to transgress as “catalysts” (p. 11) for learning. Inspired by catalysts for learning, and through sharing vulnerable moments of my own teaching with the hope of provoking thought and reflection, this chapter highlights my own willingness (or perhaps unwillingness) to transgress during a particular class I taught early within my tenure in Norway. Through reflecting on my own practice as an arts educator and researcher I hope that there is the potential to unravel the conditions that make it possible for teachers within tertiary arts education to consider how they might engage with acts of transgression. At the same time, I look to encourage reflections on difference

within education environments, and how moments of transgression might be encouraged within teaching and learning.

This chapter takes a qualitative auto-narrative approach. I specifically focus on short auto-narratives developed after one of the first classes I taught in Norway. The auto-narratives I share were generated from informal journal entries I wrote within the week following this one particular teaching experience. At the time of writing these journal entries I did not intend to use them for this chapter, or indeed for any particular piece of research. I scrawled notes and memories of what I saw and felt during my teaching, without too much thought of them ever being shared publicly. These notes were bullet pointed, brief sentences, individual words, and half formed ideas. It was only several weeks later, when beginning the draft of this chapter and contemplating focusing on the ideas of transgressions coupled with difference, that I thought about the moments that happened in this particular class. I returned to my notebook – a small non-descript book with a beige cover and unlined paper that I can write on in any direction – and I looked at what I had written. I started to bridge the notes together, adding what I could recall from my memories of the moments to flesh out the context of the stories shared.

The auto-narratives generated from this one class are used as the data within this chapter, anchoring ideas and offering tangible examples. Catherine Reissman (2005) notes how narratives do not speak for themselves, but rather require unpacking and interpretation when engaged with as data. This interpretation was through a thematic process of analysis. To engage with a thematic analysis process, I created a table to map and sort the auto-narratives I had generated, and based this table on various themes or theoretical viewpoints I was curious to explore. Through constructing a table, it enabled me to shift the theme or lens through which I was analysing the data. This was time consuming and involved disassembling and reassembling the data numerous times, but led to a thorough analysis of the data and the opportunity to be clear on what auto-narratives I needed to share and what meaning there was to be made from these.

I understand that my role, as both the researcher and the writer of the narratives, is one that could be considered to be problematic by some

and certainly not an easy task to take on by others. There is no distance between the data and I – I am the data. With this in mind, a key consideration is my active work to have reflexivity to interpret the underlying themes and concepts of the narratives I offer and how I then present these within a critical discussion (Reiley & Hawe, 2005). I do not at all pretend to have objectivity within my analysis or writing, nor do I pretend that my experiences are necessarily any more significant or special than anyone else's. However, I do purposefully work to be reflexive, continually questioning the data, using theory as a lens to interrogate the data, and stepping away from the analysis and allowing the data to 'breathe' without me for a while before returning to it.

In crafting and analysing these narratives, I have been curious around how the moments of transgression played out to create or limit space for dialogue. This curiosity stems from exploring how dialogue, theoretically and practically, might create conditions for difference to be embraced within education (see: Anttila et al., 2019). However, I view that setting such conditions can be challenging, and our practices as teachers do not always work out as we plan; we have transgressions, and our students have transgressions. Rather than trying to restrict these transgressions, I wonder how they might *add* to the teaching and learning context, and within this I ask: How might we, as educators, see these transgressions as opportunities, and as ways to encourage difference in our teaching and learning? Through critiquing my own pedagogical choices and practices, I hope to reveal that when seeking to embark on an inclusive and dialogical approach towards education, transgressions can be made, and through these transgressions there are opportunities to develop teaching practices. Coupled with this critique and reflection, in this chapter I use quotes from core theorists as 'prompts' into discussions. In this chapter these function as subtitles of sorts, a way to provoke and give impetus into discussions. I do not always seek to make meaning of these and unravel them in their entirety in the chapter. Rather, I invite the reader to see these short quotes as entry or departure into a new idea, to see them as a playful or poetic prompt for thought.

Through my critical unpacking of my own practice, I aim to extend on the theoretical foundation for dialogical pedagogy (Buber, 1937/1970,

1947), and bridge this with Michel Foucault's (1977) theory of transgression. From this theoretical standpoint, this research attempts to uncover and unpack moments that can exist within tertiary arts education classrooms, and how as educators we might have a variety of 'transgressive' moments in our teaching that might reveal our own difference, assumptions and expectations, even when we seek to foster inclusive, liberatory, and participatory learning environments. I conclude the chapter with how the implications of transgressive acts might sit within arts education and how arts educators might explore these in practice.

"Perhaps [transgression] is like a flash of lightning in the night" - Michel Foucault (1977, p. 35)

The Foucauldian term of transgression is viewed as a way that an individual might express or act which subverts historical and dedicated discourses. Foucault (1977) observes that transgressions emerge through biopower, with transgressive actions often operating out of desire, and made in resistance to constraining limits. Biopower, as coined by Foucault, is a term that refers to the managing of humans and is a way to control entire populations. Through these small actions, individuals can be seen to challenge the biopower around them. Foucault did not see acts of transgression as actions that would enable permanent change in society, but as ones that might help individuals to find moments of freedom and otherness, moments away from constraining social dictates, and I would propose, moments of difference to be presented. While the term 'transgression' tends to be loaded with negative connotations within daily language, I, like Foucault, see that transgressive moments can be viewed favourably and as opportunities.

Foucault (1982) envisaged transgression as a means for individuals to challenge the boundaries and limitations set out by society and enforced by biopower. Because transgression can be envisaged as a subversive form of resistance (Foucault, 1977), I wish to explore whether transgression could be considered an important place to locate difference within education. Articulating the subversive nature of transgression, Foucault (1977)

uses lightning as a metaphor to describe an act of transgression and how such an action might strike the social boundaries by which the individual carrying out the transgression is constrained. Foucault writes, “[p]erhaps it is like a flash of lightning in the night which [...] gives a dense and black intensity to the night it denies” (p. 35).

Lightning is a manifestation of intense power, and when it strikes through the sky, it lights it up with an explosive force. In the metaphor offered by Foucault, the night sky could represent the constraining social boundaries experienced by people within various teaching and learning environments. With its power, the lightning lights up the night’s sky; using their power, people in teaching and learning situations highlight the social boundaries that are constraining them. In the same way that lightning denies the night sky its darkness, transgression denies constraining social boundaries of their legitimacy.

Furthermore, since ‘having agency’ implies having the power to take ownership of one’s life and go beyond existing power structures, there may be embedded in any transgressive act an individual’s agency. As Paul Duncum (2009) explains, this agency and transgression relationship may facilitate a playful pedagogy. With this connection between transgression and agency in mind, and as a teacher who aims to facilitate an inclusive and relevant learning environment for my students, how might I understand my own acts of transgression in the class as expressions of agency and in turn enactment of difference?

“Let’s start by talking to each other about ourselves ...” – Lee Maracle (1996, p. 139)

After setting the tables in the circular shape, I started with a small game to get to know the class. The game was simple, and certainly nothing special. Each person would say their name followed by making a sound movement – a clap, a click, a stamp, a tap – with the sounds accumulating as we moved around the circle of about 12 students. I asked the group to make sound movements they liked, followed by sound movements that they felt were quiet, loud, funny, odd, or awkward. I immediately noticed how the group relaxed, there were some

laughs when we forgot the sounds, or when someone perhaps added an extra sound to the composition being made. I remember thinking to myself “this is just like in New Zealand, it will be easy to work with this group”. This thought was one of my first mistakes.

In initiating this opening to the class, I saw it as a way to gently bring a little individuality, fun, and play to the class. To set a tone of everyone being together within the learning space, and creatively find ways to begin “talking to each other about ourselves ...” (Maracle, 1996, p. 139). In using such activities within my teaching, I like to think that I am a culturally responsive educator, as in I often try to adapt and morph my teaching and the activities within the class to suit the context of where I am in the world and who is in the class with me. I write about this within my research (see for example: Martin, 2013) and work to practice it in my teaching. However, how culturally responsive can one be when they have recently arrived in the location in which they are teaching? Culturally responsive teaching (CRT), which is also often referred to as culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), is a pedagogical approach that has the ability to strengthen relationships between teachers and create a sense of community (Antrop-González & De Jesús, 2006; Gay, 2000, 2002). I must say that teaching in Norway was certainly not the most challenging cultural context I had found myself in to facilitate a class. I have taught in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, dance schools in Jordan, folk dance companies in Egypt, universities in China, and an array of learning environments in Aotearoa/New Zealand, which perhaps has the most diverse student cohort that one could imagine (J. Smith et al., 2018) – Norway should have then been a breeze. However, it is perhaps the idea that it is indeed similar to what I was used to, or what I *assumed* it to be similar, was where the first issue arose. In my mind, early in this class, the students were similar to those that I often taught in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The same game I played with my new group of students in Norway seemed to work well, and without any obvious issue. This then perhaps lulled me into a false sense of security, where my cultural responsiveness was not necessarily heightened in any particular way and if anything, my notion of cultural difference in this situation was rather limited.

After some time discussing a reading about arts education in locations of trauma, and unpacking some of the challenges (and joys) of engaging with arts education in such contexts, we began a task about the idea of ‘privilege’ within arts education. I asked the students to work in pairs on drawing what they saw the idea of privileged to look like in arts education. Two by two they set to work, some at the tables in the circle, others on the floor. When I noticed that most of the drawing had concluded and more chatter was emerging, I asked the class to move to one pair’s drawing so they could explain what was happening in their picture. The image had many instruments sketched out, with stick figures dancing on a proscenium arch stage. The students explained their drawing, noting that privilege was the opportunity to learn arts within a formal context, with lessons, resources, and qualified and supportive teachers. The class nodded in agreement. I was expecting another layer to come – something about how within this privileged there were other layers to consider, issues of genders, cultural identities, sexualities, ages, abilities. But it did not emerge. I was used to the conversation immediately jumping to privilege in relation to financial status and cultural identity. In New Zealand at least these two topics paved the way for much debate between students. Here, in my new teaching environment, there was no debate, there was collective agreement. I wanted debate, so I set about creating it. I asked the group questions, trying to prompt discussion. I got nothing in response.

It has been noted that “culturally responsive teachers endorse positive beliefs about cultural diversity and act as reflective practitioners” (Civitillo et al., 2019, p. 341). While I still consider myself to be a culturally responsive teacher who does indeed hold cultural diversity as a central pillar of what makes education both relevant and important to the world we live in, what can be observed in the narrative above is a moment where my assumptions and expectations coming from one cultural context did not clearly transfer into another situation. I was expecting the students to highlight certain issues that I ‘thought’ they should be aware of, and perhaps I was looking for difference within the group rather than identifying that the difference might have existed between my own expectations, background and experiences and those of the students I was teaching. Coming from a cultural context which is clearly bi-cultural in relation to education policy and practice (L. Smith, 1999), and multi-cultural in relation Aotearoa/New Zealand more broadly, I was used to cultural

difference being a topic of discussion within education, and then particularly within arts education, and specifically questions such as the following being asked on a regular basis: Whose culture is, or is not, part of learning? Who is, or is not, invited or able to creatively express and experience through various artistic approaches to learning? And who is, or is not, marginalized from thinking and representing ideas through artistic approaches in the learning environment?

I led with these questions, or at least questions that were prompting in such directions. But, I received no clear engagement with these questions I was asking. It was one of those moments where you felt like you were talking to yourself, and there were just eyes looking back at you. In the moment I desperately wanted someone to talk, to respond to my queries, but because I received nothing I just kept talking, and asking questions. I did not know this group well, and this was our first meeting. I look back on the encounter and cringe a little at my desire to engage in ‘dialogue’ in my efforts to encourage criticality, and to bring them closer to what I perceived to be active points of discussion. Reflecting on this further, I was struck at how my dialogue in this moment was distant from the notion of dialogue based on Buber’s (1970) relational ontology of dialogue as ‘in-between’ the *I* and the *You*. Dialogue from Buber’s point of view is a state of encounter, of being with the other in direct and embodied ‘I–You’ relation with the whole person. It is a mutual meeting with awareness to “experience the other side” (Buber, 2002, p. 114). There appeared to be no mutual meeting in this moment.

The philosophical underpinning of what dialogue is, connects with Farquhar and White’s (2014) idea of “ontological orientations to pedagogy as a relationship” (p. 821). Such pedagogy clearly exists and echoes the theories of scholars such as Buber (1970) and Merleau-Ponty (2012), in being “relational and systemic because it is capable of seeing relationships rather than related terms [...] capable of generating itself in a constant relationship with the world” (Hoyuelos, 2013, p. 334). The relational aspect in this moment of my teaching in the narrative above seemed to have vanished. At the same time as these dialogical tensions were occurring, I became conscious in the moment that this activity was not working. Yet, I purposefully continued rather than changing the path in the lesson. This

purposeful action could be viewed as a transgression within my pedagogical practice. After pursuing this transgression for a few minutes, I paused. I thought to myself, “maybe *this* is a moment of difference?”.

“There’s no need to fear or hope, but only to look for new weapons” – Gilles Deleuze (1994, p. 4)

Having received blank stares to my questions about privileged and power, I posed a question that I thought might be more straight forward to be explored. I asked, ‘what issues do you care about in the world?’ to the group, and handed out yellow post-it notes to them to write their responses. Some immediately began writing, others sat back for a moment and crossed their arms. I noticed that one student took out his phone and opened Instagram. After a couple of minutes I saw that most people had written at least five or six different ‘cares.’ I asked them to chat with the person next to them about these and then stick the post-it notes on an empty wall to one side of the room. The notes got stuck on the wall and I saw clusters of ideas – ‘refugees’, ‘inequality’, ‘micro-plastics’, ‘animal rights’. We started to talk through the ideas, and the cluster of words such as ‘refugees’, ‘war’, ‘immigration’, ‘conflict’, and ‘displaced people’ was one that kept being returned to. One student asked: “So how can we actually do anything about this? Like, I’ve never been a refugee, how can I know how to work with those who have been through that situation?” This led another student to say: “I am a music teacher, I don’t need to deal with anything like that.” Another followed with: “But it IS our responsibility to think about what it is like to live lives that are not our own, AND attend to this through the arts so everyone is included.” Then quickly a student followed with; “I mean, we are kind of all the same, us, here [in Norway], so it [a refugee experience] is hard for us to understand”. Now the discussion was heating up.

In light of not receiving the response I expected to the questions I was asking, I changed my approach. However, reflecting on this shift I have asked myself, “why did I not pursue this moment of difference?” and “why did I allow this momentary transgression to take place, but not to challenge or extend this further?”. Thinking further about this moment,

I recall feeling that maybe the students were not comfortable with my questions, I remember thinking in the moment that they were perhaps silly questions to ask, or that they did not understand the ideas I was trying to get across because I was speaking English rather than Norwegian. My transgression was perhaps short lived because I did not feel confident to pursue the difference I was encountering – maybe this was because I was new to the context, or because I did not know the students. However, in making the choice to change directions, to ask a question that was more ‘open’ and perhaps allowed space for a multitude of responses to emerge, dialogue began. I could breathe again.

In the conversation that emerged, divergent perspectives were raised. In these views students were voicing their opinions as student teachers engaging with arts education. I was desperate to ask them to explain more, and I wanted to know much more about who they were behind these opinions. But, I let them continue, without my interruptions. On reflection of this moment, I have considered the fine balance between engaging students in tasks that draw on their real life-worlds located outside the classroom, and requiring students to disclose to others potentially sensitive aspects of their lives. I have thought about the statements made by the students, and the phrase that stuck with me over the weeks following was “we are kind of all the same”. This statement shocked me, and it made me feel uncomfortable.

It is clear that the notion of difference is an intricate philosophical concept. While there are many philosophies of the notion of difference, and what this is within an educational setting, what can be observed is that these philosophies reject foundationalism and totalitarianism that marginalize or eliminate that which is different. The following often quoted paragraph by Gilles Deleuze (1994) provides insight to difference, where he notes:

[E]very time we find ourselves confronted or bound by a limitation or an opposition, we should ask what such a situation presupposes. It presupposes a swarm of differences, a pluralism of free, wild or untamed differences; a properly differential and original space and time; all of which persist alongside the simplifications of limitation and opposition. (p. 50)

Drawing on Deleuze's work here is in no way an attempt unravel his philosophical viewpoint – and this chapter is not the location for such conversations, nor can I do this justice in relation to unpacking it in relation my own lived experiences. But rather, I see that Deleuze's view provides a glimpse of what might be able to be understood from these moments of difference in our teaching and learning. According to Löytönen (2017), Deleuze's view of difference strives toward multiplicities and possibilities rather than toward categorical difference that makes distinctions. This view, is perhaps in contrast to what I heard from one of the students in my class where I was hearing “we are kind of all the same”, and difference seemed to be eliminated from the view entirely. Yet, at the same time I was feeling my own difference to be more pronounced than usual within this particular teaching situation.

A few weeks after this teaching encounter, as I began to sketch out the skeleton of this chapter, I stumbled over a quote from Deleuze (1994), where he states that “[t]here's no need to fear or hope, but only to look for new weapons” (p. 4). While the quote might be viewed as rather dramatic for the context that I am speaking about, it resonated with my feelings around not quite knowing what to do within this moment of teaching. What the quote offered me was a suggestion to continue to explore for alternative ways to work within the classroom and negotiate such situations, new teaching ‘weapons’ to work with such encounters. Again, I thought to the ideas of culturally responsive teaching and how Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) defines this as “a theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate” (p. 469). Returning to Ladson-Billings (1995) articulation, I thought: How might I encourage my new students in this class in Norway to both accept and affirm their cultural identities while also developing their criticality of the contexts in which they find themselves in? And within this, how might my notions and experiences of difference shape my perceptions of these identities and criticalities? While also asking, how might moments of transgressions within my teaching create space for this difference to be acknowledged?

“It is that movement which makes education the practice of freedom” - bell hooks (1994, p. 12)

As the discussion continued, tensions emerged in the room. I noticed some of the students looking at each other with knowing glances, or there were nods of agreement with certain statements, or frowns that seemed to indicate a different point of view. I was looking for ways for the group to connect their practice as arts educators to wider social responsibilities to attend to these ‘big’ issues. However it seemed clear that the conversation had turned into one based on personal opinions rather than critical discourse offered with sensitivity. I sensed that a couple were waiting for me to intervene and stop the conversation and ask everyone to move on to another task. But, I did not stop the talking, I did not interrupt. Given my ‘new-ness’ to the cultural context of Norway I was unsure about where to step in, and while I had some understanding of the situation around immigration, refugee cases, and a rapidly diversifying Norwegian population from policy, scholarship and conversations with academic colleagues, I was not sure of how the topics were shared at a grassroots level. It seemed that there were differing views among the group yet a clear idea that ‘refugees’ were something very ‘other’ or ‘different’ from the group in the room. I saw that there was a desire from the group to try to ‘resolve’ the differences of opinions, by sharing more opinions. I let them continue, and I am not quite sure why.

Looking back over this narrative I continue to see transgression within my teaching. I let the group continue to debate and talk well beyond what might have been expected. In the moment it was happening I gained a sense of this transgression by the students who were looking to me to change directions. Yet, I did not change the direction of the conversation, I allowed the conversations to continue. It can often be observed that transgressions are treated as delicate matters, with those making the transgression at risk of public admonishment in front of those around them. Moments of transgression have the potential of undermining a member’s social status, with transgressions being frequently mitigated through humour, embodied displays, such as smiling and laughter, and often acknowledged with explicit apologies. In this particular instance

I did not seek to ‘hide’ or apologise for my transgression. However, on reflection I did have a momentary feeling of being a bit embarrassed about not maintaining ‘control’ and ‘direction’ during the class, worrying that this might lead to the group of students thinking that perhaps I was not a competent teacher.

Within Slavoj Žižek’s (1998) article titled «The Inherent Transgression» the idea of inherent transgression is offered. Žižek’s text explores transgression and its relation to the dictated beliefs of nameless powers that tend to leave the subjects to the unknown. Žižek’s exploration of transgression reveals the depiction of new identities. Perhaps in the new context I was encountering, I was exploring transgressions as a way of figuring out my location and my position. Alongside such ideas, Foucault (1977) articulates that transgressions are forms of resistance, that are subversive yet never antagonistic or aggressive, explaining that,

Transgression, then, is not related to the limit as black to white, the prohibited to the lawful, the outside to the inside, or as the open area of a building to its enclosed spaces. Rather, their relationship takes the form of a spiral which no simple infraction can exhaust. (p. 35)

But within these moments was I ‘resisting’? Perhaps my resistance within the transgressional moments of these experiences I reflect on are in this more blurry ‘grey’ zone Foucault identifies, and performed as ways to explore what might result in response to my actions, rather than seeking to achieve a certain aim or objective. Extending on Foucauldian ideas of transgressions and shifting this to the context of education, for bell hooks (1994) education is a site for transgression, as a location for learning communities “to open [students’] minds and hearts so that [they] can know beyond the boundaries of what is acceptable, so that [students] can think and rethink, so that [students] can create new vision” (p. 12). This kind of learning community is one which, according to hooks (1994), “makes education the practice of freedom” (p. 12). With such ideas in mind, I suggest that it is this connection between learning, transgressions, and freedom that must be at the centre of any theory of dialogical and culturally relevant education, that is, education opposed to coercion into predetermined forms of knowing and being.

Implications of transgressive acts within arts education practice

Although the experiences shared within this chapter are drawn from the context of a tertiary arts education setting, I do not claim that these phenomena are intrinsic to participation in tertiary education, nor especially unique to an arts education context and interaction. However, it has been noted that tertiary education might carry an important purpose within it – that of resistance, transgression, and difference – where, as Nørgård et al. (2017) explain, “the purpose of the university might be the ability and will to push against standardization of education and thinking, to make room for different people and voices, to embrace otherness, strangeness and things that seem intelligible and of no use at first glance” (p. 80).

At the same time, it could be said that arts education is a prime location for transgressive pedagogy to flourish, as artistic practice has often been associated with the transgressive. Often transgressive moments in arts are perceived in moments of what might be deemed as ‘shocking’ or ‘forbidden’ (Cashell, 2009). However, this is perhaps a narrow view of what might be considered as transgression in artistic work, and we can expand our thinking of this to encompass an alternative view deviating more broadly from a norm or expectation, where power and hegemony is challenged in some way. As Cashell (2009) notes, art can give possibilities and can offer liberation, while also noting that transgressive moments within art can be a “valued cultural practice” (p. 2). This could mean that as arts educators we can consider how additional space might be given within practice and dialogue, while also contemplating how we might allow a ‘slowness’ to be encouraged for transgressive moments in arts education to unfold. While we are often encouraging the idea of trying something ‘new’ in arts teaching and learning, how might we guide this ‘newness’ to be driven by desire or what might be considered as ‘gut’ instinct, which again might allow for transgressions.

My moral or ethical views perhaps directed the transgressions I reflect on in this chapter. These moral and ethical views stem from my concern with promoting particular social values informed by principles such as inclusion and diversity. Acknowledging this, it can be said that in moments of transgression consideration must be given to the ethics of

the actions taking place. Transgressions might highlight unequal power relations, where, for example, the teacher holds the ‘power’ to engage in a transgression, but students might not. The teacher may also be in the position to make decisions about where transgressions (for students and themselves as teachers), might begin and end, and in turn, some might see moments of transgressions within pedagogical practice to be forms of manipulation. Transgressions taking place increases the teachers’ ethical responsibility to create safe and healthy settings for learning.

Within our arts education practices, many of our encounters are relational and deeply embodied (Green, 2003). This means that our bodies and minds (as teachers and as learners) can become disciplined to particular knowledge regimes. We can become accustomed to certain approaches, and in turn perhaps make assumptions about what might ‘work’ or be ‘new’ within particular lessons or learning moments. In teaching and learning certain artistic ideas, skills, or forms, a docility of the body and practice can be created, which in turn might inhibit transgressive opportunities and the emergence of transgressive moments within our pedagogies (Rowe et al., 2020).

With these thoughts in mind, as arts educators we can look to further reconcile our agendas of inclusive, culturally relevant, dialogical and non-authoritarian pedagogies that have so frequently been explored in arts education scholarship (see for example: Almqvist & Christophersen, 2017; Fox & Macpherson, 2015; Hatton, 2015), and the reality of our pedagogical practices. Attempts to escape the hegemony of existing structures, knowledge and expectations in arts can involve acts of transgression. Transgressive acts do not need to compete or replace other modalities of teaching, but rather we could explore how they might sit with and alongside our work as arts educators, providing “moments of freedom and otherness” (Allan, 2007, p. 93).

It can be said that when a limit is transgressed in our teaching, there is only the uncovering of a new limit. Transgressing such limits can expose our preconceptions, assumptions, and differences, in turn revealing the structures that underpin different forms of the relationship between knowledge and power within the learning space. Through revealing moments within my teaching that I perceive to have been transgressive,

and considering how and why these moments might have taken place, I can see that there is the potentiality for difference to be highlighted and for my preconceptions and assumptions about the students I was teaching to be brought to light. In my efforts to engage in a culturally responsive way with the notion of dialogue at the centre of my teaching practice, I found challenges that perhaps motivated my transgressions when located in a new cultural context.

From the small reflective narratives shared within this chapter I have sought to reveal the personal. It is clear within the literature that narratives have the rich potential to focus on researching the personal dimensions of human experience. However, reflection can be considered a slippery concept, one that is highly subjective. With this in mind I consider Foucault's (2000) words: "I'm imprisoned, enmeshed in that tangle of problems. What I am saying has no objective value but may shed light on the problems" (p. 257). While not necessarily offering resolution, I hope that reflections on my personal teaching experiences shed light on some problems. Within this I hope to have illuminated how transgressions within pedagogical practice may both challenge and attend to culturally relevant pedagogy in practice. At the same time, I continue to hold awareness that I write of these transgressions from a position of privilege – as a teacher, as a white woman, and as an individual who has a platform and space such as this chapter to voice such reflections.

From developing this chapter, I ask: What spaces currently exist within our tertiary education for transgressions? How might arts education within tertiary education offer unique spaces for transgressions? How might transgressions occur while simultaneously embracing Otherness? And can tertiary arts education simultaneously be a non-violent, affectionate, and caring place of resistance and space for transgression without losing the 'disorderliness' and 'disobedience' that transgressions might also hold? These queries may frustrate readers at the conclusion of this chapter. That is the point of asking them – I want to transgress from trying to offer 'the answers', and I especially want to encourage thinking. These questions sit in line with current discussions within social justice education pertaining to 'safe' and 'brave' spaces for teaching and learning (see for example: Arao & Clemens, 2013). Thinking around what future

tertiary education, and specifically tertiary arts education, might offer to promote places of resistance and spaces of transgression might bring about deeper considerations of difference within education, and specifically facilitating agency and awareness over these differences we all hold.

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