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Using Visual Journals as a Reflective Worldview Window into Educator Identity

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Abstract

This ethnographic case study research and content analysis presents the conclusion of a three-year study involving 37 teacher candidate participants across a three-year study within a two year (2 semester program) Bachelor of Education program at a university in Ontario, Canada. Each academic year participants were intentionally given time over two semesters of literacy courses to engage in literacy practices and knowledge of self through the use of multimodal visual journals. Candidates reflect on their conceptions of literacy, teaching, identity and worldview within an institution grounded in the Christian faith. Findings, philosophical ponderings and content analysis suggest that the identity of the teacher candidate filters learning through visual and multimodal ways. The findings raise questions about the place of multimodal learning, self-reflection, faith and worldview in the learning process, and in identity formation of educators. We suggest that this study may inform current multimodal and visual literacy research while generating enriching discussions on how multimodal forms of literacy instruction may assist in acknowledgement of worldview recognition and self-identity awareness.

Keywords: Multiliteracies, visual journals, self-knowledge, worldview, identity, visual literacy, multimodal literacy, teacher education

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Cover Page Footnote

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Abstract

This ethnographic case study research and content analysis presents the conclusion of a three-year study involving 37 teacher candidate participants across a two-year Bachelor of Education program at a university in Ontario, Canada. Each academic year, participants were intentionally given time over two semesters of literacy courses to engage in literacy practices and knowledge of self through multimodal visual journals. Candidates reflected on their conceptions of literacy, teaching, identity and worldview within an institution grounded in the Christian faith. Findings, philosophical ponderings and content analysis suggest that the identity of the teacher candidate filters learning through visual and multimodal ways. The findings raise questions about the place of multimodal learning, self-reflection, faith and worldview in the learning process, and in the identity formation of educators. We suggest that this study may inform current multimodal and visual literacy research while generating enriching discussions on how multimodal forms of literacy instruction may assist in acknowledgement of worldview recognition and self-identity awareness.

Introduction and Philosophical Foundations

This paper explores the changing landscape of pedagogy ushering in the incorporation of visual journal use in higher education. It presents the engagement of visual journals as a form of multimodal literacy, and how reflection on and engagement with visual journals over time provides philosophical considerations revealing worldview, identity and self-awareness in teacher candidates.

Visual literacy emerges and is fostered in childhood, yet somehow diminishes throughout elementary and high school learning, and is seldom seen in university as a viable part of literacy instruction (Costa and Xavier, 2016). Visual literacy is a concept that is historically rooted in the arts as well as literacy. It combines the ability to read, write, and design visual images in different modes and media. Essentially, visual journals are multimodal artefacts which combine written, visual, aural, musical, tactile, and spatial modes through various media. Each mode is unique for its rich semiotic resources, making the production of texts varied and personal in nature (Kress, 2009). Visual texts, like the visual journals in our research, offer the possibility of representing ideas through various semiotic resources, such as colour, line, shape, typography, and symbol in various media such as print, photography, sculpture, painting, film, or video (Duchak, 2014; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). This merging of modes and reconceptualization of ideas allows rich possibilities for communicating (Debes, 1969; Herriman, 2016). Visual journals present a mode of storytelling about learning and reflecting upon content over time that does not need to diminish with age, as the process of reflective thinking and agency of the learner is highly valued within critical literacy acquisition (Loerts & Belcher, 2015, 2019; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004; Vaughn, 2014). This research engages deep exploration about the intersection of literacy and identity while engaging visual journals as literacy, which incorporates reflection of knowing self in teacher identity and worldview

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awareness (Palmer, 1993, 1998, 2003; Hyland-Russell, 2014; Morawski, Rottmann, Afrakomah, Balatti & Christens, 2016).

Reflective engagement with visual journals may unlock literacy learning as well as providing a sense of place. Gay (2018) presents learning as a deeply reflective mode of knowing self while also pursuing a quest of incarnational humanism: a way of knowing that includes a deep faith perspective on what it means to be socially adept and fully human. Gay (2018) urges learners to engage reflective practice, maintaining that a way of being more fully human, a way of being more, not less of ourselves, is warranted not only to improve ourselves, but to understand others. To that end, professors and students need to become more, not less, of their true selves, and to consider our humanity in deep, reflective learning. As a philosophical stance, this study suggests that visual journals may be a key to doing so.

Education is rapidly changing. To get to the heart of visual journaling, one must take a route that is more contemplative upon visual representation. In the case of this study, the use of such reflective contemplation with a guided or prompted purpose is enriched by invoking a reflective pedagogy through the process of visual journaling. This research is framed as a philosophical and reflective story.

Literature Review:

As wordless books, graphic novels, art, advertisements, emoji's, web pages, videos, and bit-strips (for example) flood our senses, visual literacy is becoming more mainstream in education. Visual Journals align with pedagogical practices that foster critical thinking and creativity grounded in higher level thinking skills (Kress, 1997; Kerslake & Wegerif, 2017; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006; State Government of Victoria, Australia, 2019). Our use of visual journals in this study greatly extends the arts-based practice of using sketchbooks to be more inclusive of a multiliteracies pedagogy where multiple modes of communication are considered. This is consistent with the research literature as previously mentioned that recognizes visual literacy as well as multimodal literacy as valid

constructs for literacy engagement and communication.

Built on the foundational work by the New London Group (1996), visual literacy utilizes the richness of literacy practices through multimodal texts - something that has made its way into current Language Arts practices in education (Bainbridge & Heydon, 2015; Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006; Walsh, 2011). Little has been written on what engaging visual literacy looks like in practice over a period of time through the eyes of the learners in a higher education setting, especially in Bachelor of Education programs. However, some visual literacy research exists in other academic subjects. Bleed (2005) describes the success that an anthropology professor had when he substituted a ten-page written assignment with a digital movie submission. Their visual literacy communication "far exceeded the quality of their work done with written papers" (p. 9) and that was just with one assignment over a short period of time. Crider (2015) taught university students to not only read and interpret visuals to make meaning within the discipline of astronomy, he also had students integrate visuals into presentations to visually communicate meaning in multimodal ways through text, images, and design/layout. Students in a university marketing course were introduced to design elements, brand identity, and marketing strategies that focused on multimodal ways to "interpret, use, appreciate, and create images and video ... in ways that advance thinking, decision making, communication, and learning" to enhance their visual literacy skills (Pun, 2009, p. 100). And recently, Hyland-Russell (2014) and Morawski, Rottmann, Afrakomah, Balatti, and Christens (2016) noted multimodal pedagogy, combined with educational philosophy, as being key to deeper reflection in an education program, as experience became rooted in the developmental process of reflective learning and identity enrichment formation. This enhanced the connection between new information and personal narratives.

The aspect of time being crucial to deep learning about identity and worldview (Iselin, 2009, 2010; Belcher and Parr, 2011) lead us as researchers to include the heuristic of epistemological shudders (Charteris, 2014, 2018). Epistemological

shudders, as a reflective device, allowed us as researchers to employ an intentionally reflexive gaze on worldview and identity discourse (printed, artistically formed in various modes and media, or spoken), stirring up a shudder metaphor of puzzle and/or paradox. "Shudders" affirms that something is not quite complete, provoking the reader to consider what is not being said along with what is being said. In doing so, unquestioned assumptions around content and context are brought to the fore. For the purposes of examining worldview, we use this definition from Walsh and Middleton (1984) to guide our reflection:

A worldview is never merely a vision of life. It is always a vision for life as well. Indeed, a vision of life, or worldview, that does not actually lead a person or a people in a particular way of life is no worldview at all. Our worldview determines our values. It helps us interpret the world around us. It sorts out what is important from what is not, what is of highest value from what is least ... A worldview, then, provides a model of the world which guides its adherents in the world (pp. 31, 32, italics in the original work).

Epistemological shudders, as a reflective device, allowed us as researchers to employ an intentionally reflexive gaze on worldview and identity discourse (printed, artistically formed in various modes and media, or spoken), stirring up a shudder metaphor of puzzle and/or paradox.

In addition, questions emerged about identity within discourse, creating spaces for seeking truer depth and understanding of any textual interpretation or conversation. In short, these moments became reflected within interviews and discussions throughout analysis, while engaging current perceptions of agency (Charteris and Smarden, 2018; Fielding, 2012), and valuing

students as being active respondents, co-enquirers and authors in their own learning.

Methodology

Ethical clearance for the study was approved by Redeemer University. Participants (who were teacher candidates), volunteered to be part of the study by signing and submitting a voluntary letter of consent after the study was explained to them. Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time (though no one did). Visual journal assignments were collected from the literacy courses that we taught in each division. Class discussions and interviews were taped and transcribed. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to protect their identity when work was used in the writing from this study.

In Ontario, teachers are certified by division, primary/junior (PJ) which spans kindergarten to grade 6 for students ages 5-11 and junior intermediate (JI) which spans grade 4 to ten for students aged 9-15. Data was collected from 37 participants over the course of the study that lasted three years. There were 8 males and 22 female participants. The breakdown of these designations for our participants included 22 from the PJ division (2 males, 20 females) and 15 from the JI division (6 males, 9 females). Each professor in this study used the Ontario Language Curriculum (2006) to ground literacy instruction which supported Ontario literacy resources, class readings, discussions, and practicum learning experiences. Teacher candidates took two semesters of 14 classes each in 75-minute blocks twice weekly. These courses took place in semester 2 and semester 3 of the 4 semester B.Ed. program.

We collected a variety of data over the study including the visual journal artefacts of which there were 170 submissions (as visual journal submissions varied between three and six journal entries in a semester per participant). Other data sources included written feedback given to participants on their visual journal submissions, transcribed interviews that took place before and after the literacy courses to collect participant reflections on the experience of visual journaling, and transcripts of in-class discussions around visual journals. We triangulated data separately

and then came together to compare notes so that we could be more confident in the trustworthiness of the findings (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2013).

This qualitative research involved a blend of content analysis and individual case study, which was then filtered through the work of Krippendorff (1989/2004) for the purpose of narrative identity and worldview analysis. Krippendorff's six steps for analysis included **design**/context (the context of the study in a Christian university using visual journals to understand how identity and worldview were developed and voiced), **unitizing** (identifying units for analysis, which we did via prompts), **sampling**/representation, (findings from participants), **coding**/categories (by chart and similarity/differences), **inferencing**/phenomena, which we linked to worldview by reflective analysis of work, and **validation**/analysis of communication. These steps also listed six questions that need to be addressed in every content analysis. These questions are: (1) Which data are analyzed? (2) How are they defined? (3) What is the population from which they are drawn? (4) What is the context relative to which the data are analyzed? (5) What are the boundaries? These questions shaped the analysis in each section of the study.

The visual journals for **unitizing** and **sampling** were categorized by year and semester to locate change and growth, similarity and difference. We paid attention both to individual journal artefacts but also to themes that we found collectively by semester groupings. The **coding** included looking at the data to create categories of collected ideas which noted perceptions over time from individual participant comments both in interviews, in-class transcriptions of visual journal sharing, and the artefacts themselves. The **inferencing**, (which Krippendorff considers to be the most significant of all of his steps) included teacher candidate perception of learning that occurred, showing voice within the visual journal which engaged epistemological shudders on what was not said to also be evident to the researcher, raising questions for further study. The **validation** analysis took into account the totality of the experience of visual journaling from the participants and the researchers' reflections as well as the documented stance of the teacher

candidate toward self and worldview recognition within the literacy learning process through in-class conversations, artefacts, and interviews.

We wondered if the visual journals helped teacher candidates not only reconceptualize ideas about the value of visual literacy practices and the discourse surrounding multimodal literacy, but also to help them be innovative in their teaching practice.

As both of us have previously used visual journals in our B.Ed. literacy courses leading up to this research, we had conversations surrounding the nature of the process of learning utilizing these visual artefacts. One of us had been previously involved with visual journaling for nearly two decades while the other had worked with multimodal literacy practices for a number of years including dissertation work. We wondered if the visual journals helped teacher candidates not only reconceptualize ideas about the value of visual literacy practices and the discourse surrounding multimodal literacy, but also to help them be innovative in their teaching practice. We also wondered if the digital natives in our classes entered our literacy courses being able to grasp the logo and visual replication of ideas but had trouble moving beyond to the wonder, creativity, and development of selfhood to become reflective practitioners. We began to wonder about what kind of 'being' our literacy 'doing' was creating from our literacy instruction. The research questions that we crafted were: 1) *How do teacher candidates interpret the journey of becoming visual literacy learners, and would their perceptions change over time?* 2) *How would multimodal literacy engagement in the form of visual journals connect to perceptions of self or identity as a teacher?* 3) *Why or how could the process of visual journaling over time impact teacher candidates and their perceptions of literacy and identity learning?* A major consideration in the planning of this research was being sure that time was allowed for

deep reflection in processing (Iselin, 2009, 2010; Norsworthy & Belcher, 2015).

When the teacher candidate participants started their first literacy course in each of their designations (PJ or JI), our first research question became the focus. To that end, we invited participants to engage in a group interview to ask them about their initial understandings of literacy, visual journals, and previous experiences with literacy so that we would have a baseline from which to see the participants' growth as we moved on to research question two and three over the two semesters of literacy courses in the B.Ed. Program. We ended with another group interview session that asked about their engagement and perceptions of self/identity with multimodal literacy in the form of visual journals (research question 2) and their effect on themselves as teacher candidates over time (research question 3). While experiencing this journey with our teacher candidates, it became clear to us that time and reflection were essential to our results, and that the three-year collection of data provided a larger canopy of understanding into visual journals and their value than one short semester project ever could have done.

Initial Reflections to Findings in the Study:

As candidates began to engage with visual journals, changes were noted in process, pace, perception of self-identity, and cohesion of product. As these changes became more fluid, teacher candidates also became aware of a greater sense of personal voice, and a need to have a 'why' which could be verbalized and embodied for what they did, thought and believed. They became cognizant that the identity of the teacher could not be separated from the process of teaching students. Reasons for what they chose to display about their learning were more commonly voiced, and they became aware of who they were as learners, colleagues and professionals. Sometimes, they even surprised themselves as they said what they believed without considering it a part of the assignment. However, it is significant to note that this process took time, and that the digital age tends to favor speed and efficiency over effectiveness. This was also noted

in the awareness that students began to say that they found their visual journal work to be both therapeutic and a way in which hands, head and heart met in the creative process of discovering what was valued for life and learning in the classroom. As some visual journals expressed, what was not said became considered in their critique of learning, as well as what was said. Teacher candidates became aware of the inner depth of their own thoughts, as well as the thoughts of others, which resulted in a very bonded community. This would align with Gay (2018) as a social and personal act of awareness; as an awareness that:

... you don't need practical solutions so much as you need philosophical commitments, convictions about the way things are – or at least about the way things ought to be ... convictions are often religious, and therefore, are religiously held ... from the point of view of the Christian religion, then, modern technology's diminishment of ordinary embodied human existence poses a very serious problem ... technologies ought to enhance embodied relationality ... to prioritize embodied face-to-face relations ... indeed, "transhumanism" – the belief that human beings must evolve beyond their current embodied limitations – has increasingly become part of our cultural vernacular. (p. 13-15)

Of interest in this study is the observation that in the early stages of engagement with a visual journal, participants noted that their perceptions of literacy were rooted in previous experiences which were mostly linguistically based, that is, essay dominant. Thus, participants became timid and frustrated in implementing a reflective and personal visual journal that was multimodal in nature because they never engaged with it at a university level. We, the researchers wondered if our teacher candidates had been reduced to 'heads on sticks' for process learning and would they lack the joy of literacy and the creative spirit to really know themselves as literate in multimodal ways. To the participants, visuals appeared to be just visuals or passing entertainment or as hooks or springboards to more linguistic modes of learning, and possibly,

even ‘edu-tainment’ (the art of amusement without serious consideration of intent for learning and application) - something we also noted was reflected in the research literature (Bailey, 2012; Little, 2015; Loerts, 2013).

The following chart serves as a broad brush of engagement and awareness of self across the

semesters in which data was collected for teacher candidates. This chart identifies the process and flow of learning from initial to final teacher awareness regarding worldview and identity. More detail in support of each stage will occur as this paper proceeds.

Semester	Unitizing Sample	Context Focus	Identity	Worldview
Question 1 (initial survey)	PJ and JI participant artifacts	Some cross curricular introduction into the purpose and place of a visual journal in non-literacy courses being modelled in other subject areas taught to this year’s group by the authors of the study		
Question 2 (view as teacher)	PJ and JI participant artifacts	How to do a visual journal with confidence; evidence of <i>doing over being</i> in content analysis, managing content in context; finding voice and reflection	Process oriented; learning how to learn; Focus on learning about how they process thoughts and reflect	Not as evident within written reflection
	PJ and JI participant artifacts	Becoming more reflective; better sense of dance between visual and learning for meaning making is a priority for the teacher and how teaching occurs	See process as therapeutic; beginning to think about what is not said as well as what is in visual and print, and noting their response to the difference	Some emergence of worldview and identity as being crucial to why candidates do what they do within the journal and reflection process
Question 3 (view as staff)	PJ and JI participant artifacts	Candidates became aware that having a purpose for learning drives learning and assists in making them more self-aware and more effective socially	Candidates were using more 1st person active voice in their work, and were more engaged in noticing the learning styles and talents in others as to how they approached meaning making.	Candidates were transferring their identity from not merely task, but into embodied life and knowledge of themselves and their effect on others. They were able to verbalize beliefs, reasons and priorities as an act of service socially and/or spiritually. Sometimes without even using words.

Figure 1:1 visual journal engagement with meaning in context for the study

Finding #1: Early Visual Journal Engagement and Reflection of Course Content

In the early portion of the study, it became clear that teacher candidates needed to reflect on their metacognitive practices. Below is one example of how engaging content was seen as a task to be done, rather than as a process to be refined. Teacher candidates were given the prompt: *Visually represent your understanding of a particular chapter or key concept from your class readings.* After creating the visual journal, teacher candidates shared their learnings in class within small groups. Conversation focused on process, purpose and meaning making of the visual journal as a literacy teacher.

To the participants, visuals appeared to be just visuals or passing entertainment or as hooks or springboards to more linguistic modes of learning, and possibly, even “edu-tainment” (the art of amusement without serious consideration of intent for learning and application)

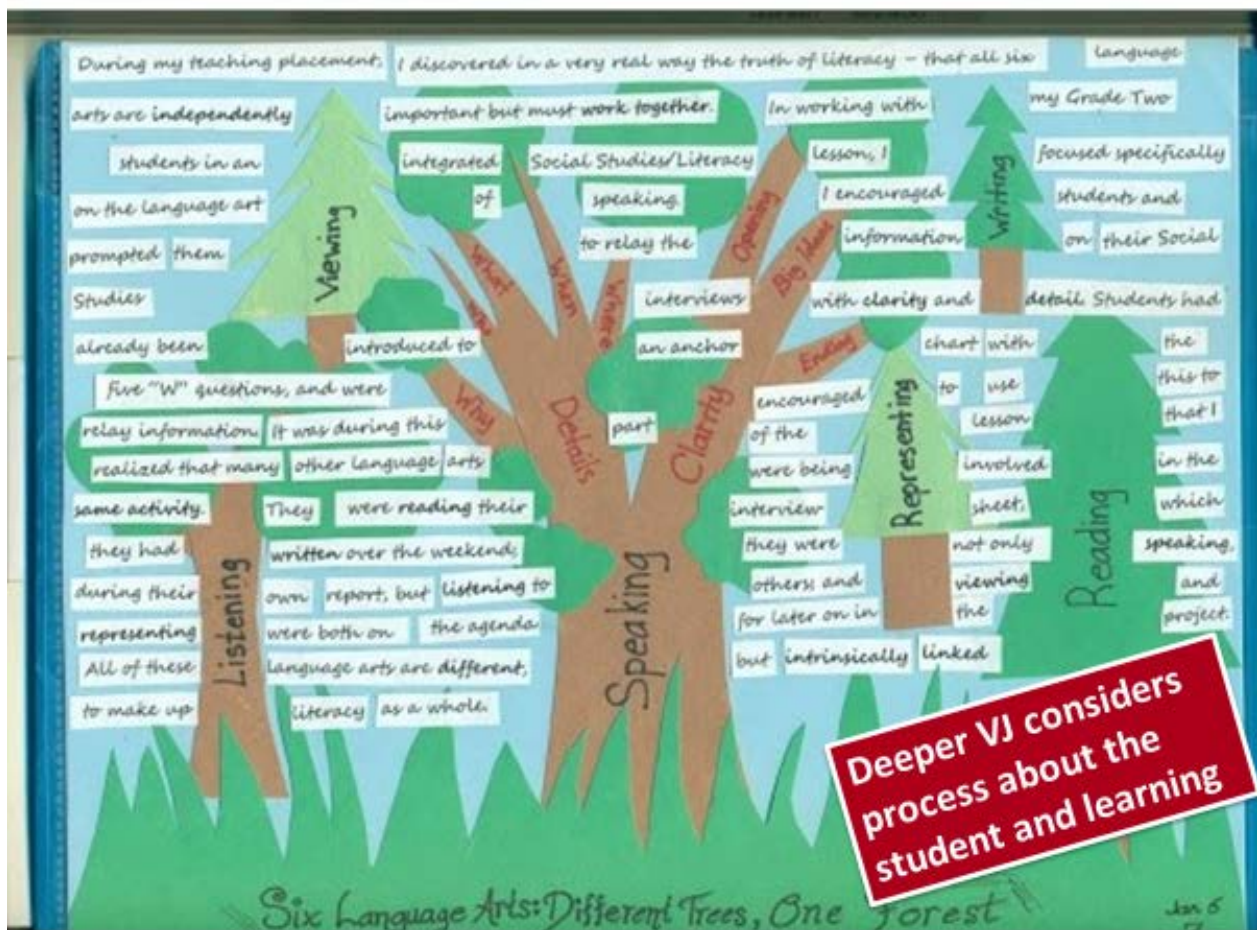


Figure 1.2: Semester 2 Visual Journal Engagement and Reflection in Context

Candidates were learning how to learn and how to critique themselves in the learning process through reflection. A selection of participant comments following their first journal artefact, which were shared during class time, illustrates some of these reflections:

- *I had such a fixed idea of what it's [visual journal] is supposed to be that it was hard to let it go a little bit and to give it a chance to evolve. (Shawna)*
- *Now I am starting to realize for me there is a big visual component so that I understand things better when I 'see' ... Sometimes if I do something visual with my writing it helps me internalize it. (Cloe)*
- *I can tell a story with pictures... it took so much thinking but I am glad we could explain ourselves too. (Dan)*
- *By doing the visual journals you can look at it [concepts] in a bigger perspective, with multiple views. (Kathy)*
- *It's a process – it doesn't have to be perfect and the way you express yourself will be different from the way I express myself because it's all about my life experiences, values, and you know, they'll be different. (Everly)*
- *It was not an easy process to visually transfer the feelings, emotions, and thoughts. It was even harder because the message was very personal. However, I do not think it would have been any easier if I had to do the same through writing alone either. This made me appreciate the value of developing multiliteracy skills; it helps us frame our thoughts in deeper ways. (Mila)*

In their next submission, participants had become more comfortable with the process of using a

visual journal and began to dig deeper into the value of choosing visual journal use even in their own teaching practices. Their prompt for this was to respond to the question: *What is your practicum experience teaching you about your role as a teacher?*

Teacher candidates moved into seeing others and their purpose with others as being more relational as seen in the comments below:

- *When talking about this – it is a growth mindset ... you are not your mark. It's a process and it doesn't have to be perfect. I can give my students that ... in teaching them, to make them feel confident in what they know. (Aisha)*
- *In experimenting more, I think you're staying out of your comfort zones. It just shows you, you know, if you put your mind to something you can do it. And I think that's something when we become teachers in a classroom to just tell your students – now I know how that feels – that uncomfortable feeling ... it will give me some common ground and I will know how to approach them and to encourage them to move on. (Faith)*
- *I really appreciated that we had the time to think about it – how important thoughtfulness and mindfulness is to literacy. You sort of – you honored us and trusted us to think about it. This is definitely an exercise in deep thinking which is critical. (Brian)*

In the visual journal artifacts, reflection and peer engagement began to display more of an awareness of the agency and identity of the teacher, involving the metacognitive, philosophical educator identity, as noted in artifact Figure 1.3.



Figure 1.3 Becoming Aware of Teacher Agency and Identity/Worldview (Ben) (Transcript of Writing is included in following reference for the benefit of the reader – Appendix 1)

In this submission, candidates were seeing themselves as future teachers who would consider the meaning making of using visual journals as a mode or mirror for self-identity and worldview awareness. Room for philosophical pondering became evident. teacher candidates responded to the prompt: *What is important about engaging visual journals in the learning process, and what does it teach you personally?* Reflective comments in the class included:

- *The sharing of a visual journal is very important... the oral communication piece with having someone explain why did you do this? ... and then verbalize why they did something that may/might provide some insights as a teacher that you had not expected and all of a sudden, the explanation makes perfect sense. (Mark)*
- *I tried to convey the message that everyone has stories to tell, but we...often hide and keep those stories back. Because of this we tend to forget that everyone has hurts, wounds, pain, and scars, and become very self-focused being locked up in our own self (Jenny)*

Although unprovoked by the criteria for teacher identity or worldview to be included in visual journals in their reflections, candidates began to relate this learning to the essence of who they were personally as people of faith in a final, summative journal at the end of the course. Examples include these comments:

- *As a Christian educator I think it is important to help students understand that there is something deeper to stop and think about. And teaching them to take time and be thoughtful, just to pause and reflect, is a huge part of their development and their walk, in terms of their faith and in just getting them to consider such things is very important. (Hope)*
- *I found it interesting because I was not necessarily thinking 'Oh, I am going to add a Christian perspective to this; I am going to bring my faith into this' but it turned into a whole, with the fabric and underlying layers. I started thinking all these things and it turned into an almost*

spiritual, deeper meaning and journey. (Hope)

After participants were finished their literacy courses, they participated in exit interviews. These revealed that participants not only understood the value of visual journals as a mode into deeper thinking about and within literacy, but also valued their reflective understandings of what it means to teach and to be fully themselves. As one participant put it:

- *I learned something valuable through sharing the vulnerable side of my life with people around me. It helped me shift my attention from wallowing in my self-centered mind to asking God what He was trying to say to me. This is what I tried to express through my visual journal. (Eva)*

As educators committed to living out their faith in practice, participants acknowledged their agentive role in the world through reflections such as those by Wendy: *"Literacy is a beautiful way for Christians to both engage with and make culture."* These reflections also emerged clearly in their visual journals; in some cases, the worldview and identity were clear without any words at all.



Figure 1.4: What You are Filled With Come Out Visually: Few Words Needed. (Hope)

Discussion of the Findings

During this study, certain points were pivotal for epistemological shudders. Three tended to frame further implications for research and learning. In feedback from the first visual artefact, our shudder occurred in the awareness that some participants were looking for even more specific direction in how to create the visual journals because they wanted to do it 'right' while others valued the somewhat open-ended aspect of visual interpretation. When participants saw the feedback we gave after handing in their first visual journals, this eased their minds about the learning process that we kept fostering. The second 'a-ha', was that we, as professors, had to mentor and scaffold learning philosophically, by question and nudge, and not just by giving directions (which had been given in a set of criteria for them to refer to). Class discussion ensued about the value of their interpretation and how that needed to be considered - not from a judgmental aspect for a grade, but for the learning it fostered. The third shudder was that some teacher candidates were surprised that their worldview emerged without being asked for it specifically in their own thinking processes and reflections. Visual journals add to the work on how faith/worldview beliefs could be engaged in vocational work that furthers the whole person mentally, physically and spiritually. Reflection and conversation assist teachers in significant identity formation and self-knowledge within a supportive community of care.

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The findings of this study also gave us, as educators and learners, a window into how the learning process may unfold in the learner while using visual journals, and how time is essential to the depth of the learning process. This information would apply to other aspects of reflective study, and further the discourse on the need for reflection to embed learning that lasts over time.

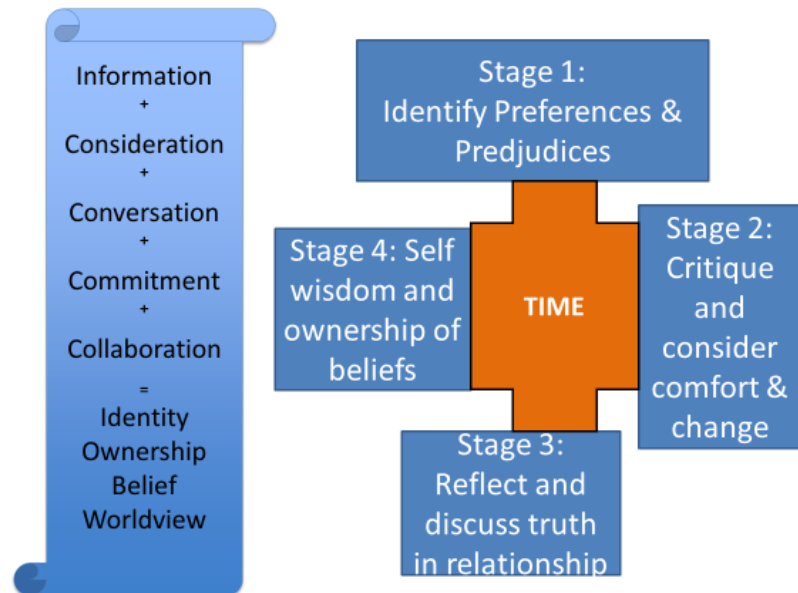


Figure 1.5: A process of Literacy Acquisition Through Visual Journaling

When considering how ethnographic work and identity combine, our work with visual journals echoes the words of Dorothy Smith (2002) on ethnographic work and voice: *"The presence of institutional organization is in what someone has to say about her or his work"* (p. 26). Charteris and Smarden (2018) then relate to pedagogy and its link to opportunity for growth in student knowledge. This research convinced us that the *identity* of the teacher *over time* serves to enhance learning and raises questions about the place of faith and worldview in the learning process – as learners, educators, individuals, and Christians. As participants progressed through their semesters of literacy courses, facility with the modes and media increased, and so did participant's awareness of how literacy can be lived.

People will reveal what they believe over time, and this tension of time and outcome is significant to educators in public, independent, and Christian institutions who serve to develop strong citizens who know who they are, why they do what they do, and how education serves others.

Within this research study it became apparent that when more modes of literacy were used together (visual, oral, written, artistic, graphic, musical, etc.), the more significant the meaning making became for the teacher candidates. The collaborative learning, critiquing, and support during the visual journal process became a vehicle for not only acquiring the content knowledge of what literacy learning entails, but also a forum for the candidates to reflect and articulate both visually and verbally what BEING a teacher entailed. Worldview and identity are what help us to remember who we are and where we are as we travel through life both inside and outside of the classroom.

Implications for Further Learning and Research

In further studies regarding the influence of narratives, identity, worldview and disequilibrium in learning, this study may be valuable in its awareness that time and reflection upon learning and process over time make a definite imprint on the learner. As educators of future teachers, we have found the need to dig deeper in our classes and become more effective, not just technologically more efficient. The key ingredients appear to be time and intentionality in the learning process. Findings, philosophical ponderings and content analysis suggest that it is the identity of the teacher that filters learning through visual and multimodal ways. Just as the writing of this paper was concluding, one of us by chance overhead someone on the phone say “finally, I have made contact with a real person.” What a fitting way to end the need for identity and worldview understanding. Like the Velveteen Rabbit, (Williams & Green, 1995), love is found in being real; in having a firm foundation for life, in being loved and in knowing your philosophical underpinnings for your purpose and task. And like life, it takes time, but is abundantly worth the effort. Perhaps the use of visual journals in higher

education classrooms and beyond may at least crack the door to such discussion and understanding.

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- “O Mr.” it asks,
“Who shall lead us in the way we should go?”
“Who will come to us in our time of need?”
“O Mr.” it asks, “Do you really love me?”
No sooner asked did the answer begin to dawn.
“I see,” he said, “That’s what it’s been about all along.”
Months later when asked what changed the tone of his song,
he simply replied,
“What changed, was me.”

Appendix I

Transcript of visual journal Figure 1.3 Becoming Aware of Teacher Agency and Identity/Worldview (Ben)

“Why must children misbehave?”
Some young teacher sighs.
“Where are all the good young gals and guys?”
The well of patience, it seems, has run quite DRY.
“Was it always this bad?”
he wonders aloud
He had high hopes when he started,
but now they have run aground.
And this RACKET! This DISASTER!
What’s to be done with this crowd?
“How do I teach!?! Can I even turn this around?”
A voice cuts through the screen of sound
As if to respond
A voice as old as time,
and MIGHTY like thunder
Yet spirited like fire and innocent as wonder,
Asking a series of questions for this teacher to ponder.