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Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies Fills a Gap

By Jeannie Brown Leonard, Dean of Student Academic Affairs, Revising, & Retention, George Mason University

Interdisciplinary undergraduate programs demand a lot from faculty and students. Students are expected “to differentiate between disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to learning and research, follow and critique interdisciplinary arguments, understand interdisciplinary process, and assess the quality of their own work” (Repko, 2014, p. xv). This task is ambitious for an introductory course, but it is the stated goal of Allen Repko’s *Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies*. As a faculty member teaching adult students to be interdisciplinary, I have had to gather a set of resources to support my work. This text offers important support and will help my students understand, design, and justify an interdisciplinary academic program. It fills a gap in the interdisciplinary studies arena and offers a clear organizational outline for the semester as well as explicit instruction on the process of interdisciplinary integration.

One guiding principle for many educators is “making the implicit explicit,” a phrase I borrow from Barbara Lovitt’s book of the same name. *Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies* succeeds in translating for students the nuances of interdisciplinary work by pinning down definitions and probing the differences among disciplines that matter. Most impressively, Repko explains and shows his readers what it means to be interdisciplinary by beginning with why it matters. Grounding

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Jeannie Brown Leonard

A REVIEW

Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies. Allen F. Repko, with Rick Szostak & Michelle P. Buchberger. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2014. 332 pp. Paperback (ISBN 978-1-4522-5660-3). \$55

Report on “Integrating Arts and Sciences” Conference at Miami University

By Nicholas P. Money
Western Program Director and Professor of Botany, and 2013 Conference Chair

The 35th Annual AIS Conference was held in Oxford, Ohio, sponsored by the Western Program and the Department of Integrative Studies at Miami University. Miami’s Marcum Conference Center was chosen as the hub for the meeting, with social events at the University Art Museum and historic Peabody Hall on the Western Campus. The conference theme, Integrating Arts and Sciences, attracted more than 120 participants from the United States, Canada, Europe, and the Middle East. We were particularly pleased to welcome many younger scholars to the

conference as evidence of growing interest in interdisciplinary teaching and research.

The pair of plenary speakers showed the breadth of the conference theme. Carl Zimmer, award-winning author and columnist at The New York Times, discussed the relationship between his undergraduate experience as an English major and his career as a science writer. His evocation of links between the deep questions posed by Herman Melville in *Moby Dick*, and recent discoveries about the evolution of whales offered a beautiful illustration of the synergies between literature, philosophy, and science. The second speaker was Carolyn Haynes, Interim Associate Provost at Miami University. Like Carl, Carolyn included personal

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narrative and explained the importance of interdisciplinary thinking in her work. Her openness about her experiences as a beginning faculty member and growth as a teacher was inspiring and she stimulated audience participation by soliciting feedback on model writing assignments by students.

Concurrent sessions of themed presentations occupied most of the conference schedule. The diversity of subjects in these sessions renders any summary inadequate, but these are a few topics that reflect the range of interests: scientific themes in paintings (Corrie Baldauf, Alberto Rojo, and Donna Voronovich from Oakland University); integrating arts and humanities into climate change science (Zion Klos and Michael O'Rourke from University of Idaho and Michigan State University); fiction and science in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (Kay Satre from Carroll College), and science in poetry (Arthur Stewart from Oak Ridge Associated Universities, Douglas Dechow and Anna Leahy from Chapman University, and Richard Law from Alvernia University). Simeon Dryfuss, from Marylhurst University, organized an unconventional session titled, *Open Mic: Artistic Responses to Scientific Themes*, which deserves incorporation as an annual event at AIS.

On the Friday evening of the conference we celebrated the 35th Anniversary of AIS in Peabody Hall and President Rick Szostak described some of the history of AIS and honored William Newell, the first president of organization, with grace and affection. Roz Schindler, longtime member of the Board of Directors, was honored at the conference too with the Newell Award for Exemplary Service.

The success of the meeting was extremely gratifying for the organizers, including Kim Ernsting, Audree Riddle, and Hannah Mills, who had dedicated so much energy to the event over the last year. We offer our best wishes to the organizers of next year's conference at Michigan State University. ■

Review: Repko's Introduction

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this text in the "real world" makes this journey to understanding interdisciplinarity relevant to students' lives. This entry point is consistent with what Baxter Magolda (1992) and other cognitive development theorists would advocate. Repko's attention to constructing a text that is consistent with cognitive theory is one of its greatest strengths.

As the preface makes clear, the 263 page volume is responding to a need driven by a proliferation of interdisciplinary programs in higher education and the uneven preparation on the part of individual faculty to deliver the process skills of interdisciplinary work as well as the content of subject-specific courses. Some academic programs teach introductory courses where the interdisciplinary aspect is secondary and implicit, leaving students to struggle on their own to understand how to recognize and do interdisciplinary work themselves. Other programs dedicate a course to understanding interdisciplinary studies, focusing on theory and interdisciplinary process. Although this text can work for both kinds of courses, my experience is with the latter structure. The pacing and scope of this text complements the goals of process courses that, until now, have had to produce compilations of eclectic sources to undergird the course goals.

The text is constructed in three parts: Understanding Interdisciplinary Studies (chapters 1 – 6), Thinking Critically about Interdisciplinary Studies (chapters 7 – 9), and Interdisciplinary Research and Writing (chapters 10 – 12). Part I makes an enormous contribution to introductory courses and will resonate with novice interdisciplinary thinkers. Chapter 1 provides just enough context to permit the elaboration and expansion in subsequent chapters to work.

The boxed examples offer clear and relevant accounts of interdisciplinary study in action. At the end of this and all chapters, Repko generates "critical thinking questions" as well as "applications and exercises." These guiding ideas may be used by faculty for homework or in class discussion, small group work, or individual reflection. I would expect most faculty to sample from these suggestions and supplement with prompts that make sense for their context. From Chapter 1, students will learn that interdisciplinary work is essential to

Repko's attention to constructing a text that is consistent with cognitive theory is one of its greatest strengths.

meeting the complex demands of today's real world problems and that by pursuing this kind of academic work the student will be prepared to enter a changing workforce that demands flexibility, creativity, and discernment.

The contentious space of definitions occupies much of Chapter 2. A strength of this chapter is the exercise of close reading (a technique for finding common ground) to the problem of diverse definitions of what it means to be interdisciplinary. This chapter systematically explores terms related to interdisciplinary studies and embraces metaphor as an illustration of these foundational concepts. Here and throughout the text, the author does an excellent job defining terms as they are introduced to the reader. An extensive Glossary provides a quick reference guide to support student learning.

I have long heard the assertions that interdisciplinary thinking demands a certain set of values and traits. In Chapter 3, the reader is presented with these cognitive resources (the "cognitive toolkit") including

perspective-taking, critical thinking, and integration; the values of empathy, ethical consciousness, humility, appreciation for diversity, tolerance of ambiguity, and civic engagement; the traits of entrepreneurship, love of learning, and self-reflection; and the skills of communicative competence, abstract thinking, creative thinking, and metacognition. With the exception of the cognitive skills, for which there is some empirical evidence, the remaining claims are based on only the collective wisdom of members of the interdisciplinary community. These perspectives are compelling, but expert opinion is different from evidence based on scholarly inquiry and research. Beyond a lack of citations, this subtle distinction related to source may be lost on students new to higher education.

In Chapter 4 the author does an excellent job summarizing the history of higher education as it relates to discipline and specialization. This content could easily overtake the entire text, but it does not. Focusing on the history through a specific lens helps. I suspect not all students will be riveted by this history, but I support the inclusion of this historical understanding and the positioning of interdisciplinary work as a natural progression given this history.

Instructors grappling with how to teach students about disciplines will be pleased to incorporate Chapter 5 into their courses. This chapter explores how disciplines have distinctive world views, underlying assumptions, methods, and criteria for what counts as evidence. The instructor will need to provide scaffolding for this chapter, especially related to the epistemological foundations of disciplines. The material on disciplinary perspectives is excellent as is the section on disciplinary assumptions. This comprehensive chapter is one I can imagine my students using repeatedly, beginning with the task of justifying their self-designed majors and later

in providing their interdisciplinary rationale for their capstone project.

The natural follow up to a chapter on the distinctive elements of the disciplines is a similar treatment of interdisciplinary studies. Chapter 6 provides guidance on the assumptions, theories, epistemology, and perspectives of interdisciplinary studies. The chapter succinctly explains key constructs in interdisciplinary work and introduces the reader to the importance of theory as a foundation for interdisciplinary rigor and coherence. The section of this chapter called “How Interdisciplinary Studies Sees” is particularly effective in illustrating a distinctive world view. By tracing one complex problem, homelessness, through the four lenses of complexity, context, common ground, and ambiguity, readers begin to understand the application of theory to practice.

At the end of Part I, students should have a shared vocabulary and understanding of interdisciplinary studies that is rooted in the disciplines. For the course that I teach, this is where my use of this text would end. More advanced courses could tap the material in Parts II and III. The focus on using interdisciplinary studies to solve a problem or make a decision is excellent, but my introductory students are trying to create an academic plan using disciplinary courses as their units of analysis rather than disciplinary insights. I would supplement Part I with some resources and tools to help my students imagine how courses from different disciplines might contribute to their understanding of their self-designed program.

The logical next step is to practice some of the theory that was presented in Part I. The chapters that comprise Part II focus on “how to recognize and think critically (1) about disciplinary perspectives, ... (2) about disciplinary insights, and... (3) about interdisciplinary integrations

and understandings” (p. 139). Again, Part II makes an explicit connection that suggests cognitive complexity is needed to do interdisciplinary work successfully. The text suggests that critical pluralism (Perry, 1981) is a necessary precondition to interdisciplinary understanding. If so, it would be rare for a traditional first, second, or third year student to engage successfully in integration. Adult students who have significant life experience may be in a better position to produce interdisciplinary understanding, but this observation has not been explored empirically.

The aspirational nature of interdisciplinary work does not preclude efforts to nudge students on their journey from absolute knowing (Baxter Magolda, 1992) or dualism (Perry, 1981) to contextual knowing (Baxter Magolda) or critical pluralism (Perry). This developmental trajectory captures a fundamental purpose of higher education; academic and co-curricular experiences are designed to further student development along this continuum. Chapter 7 is poised to help all students learn about their own cognitive development and to recognize the importance of how one thinks over what one thinks. The thorough treatment of perspective taking as the tool for interrogating disciplines offers great explanations and examples for the reader. Similarly, Chapter 8 may help students recognize the importance of being actively engaged in their educations. It promotes dispositions that underlie successful critical thinking, such as recognizing the limitations of one’s knowledge, self-awareness, intellectual courage, and appreciation for different perspectives. The four critical questions that students should consider when engaging in disciplinary literature are practical and prudent: “What are the author’s conclusions?; What are the supporting arguments?; What assumptions does the author

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make?; and What evidence does the author marshal?" (pp. 164 – 165). Following the descriptions with examples provides the needed context; students are more likely to recognize disciplinary insights with these guided illustrations.

Chapter 9 discusses different approaches to integration, but focuses on the Broad Model approach and advocates for its use. Repko sets the stage for Part III where the actual steps of the Broad Model are explained and illustrated. An important part of this chapter is the section on the Result of Integration. Here "a more comprehensive understanding" is presented as the primary outcome of integration and Boix Mansilla's (2005) work is leveraged to explain it.

Some introductory courses, like the one I teach, will use only Part I. Repko notes at the end of Part II, "For some readers, the journey to becoming interdisciplinary ends here" (p. 193). Part III is specifically geared for students who need to produce their own interdisciplinary research. It outlines the steps students need to take to engage in the Broad Model of interdisciplinary work, and offers criteria to help students assess their progress.

Chapter 10 offers an excellent section on disciplinary bias, disciplinary jargon, and personal bias. I can imagine using these criteria to judge and improve students' research questions in class. Steps 1 and 2 of the Broad Model are explored in this chapter and a rubric is introduced. The remaining chapters in Part III elaborate on the interdisciplinary research steps. The exercises at the end of the Chapter 11 are good. I can imagine adapting them in my class to "workshop" the actual topics being explored by students. Here is where this text begins to overlap a bit with a more advanced research class. This chapter might also help me adapt an

assignment in an introductory class such that students explore pressing questions in the areas related to their self-designed interdisciplinary majors.

One of my fundamental frustrations with this text is the use of the Broad Model rubric. The rubric includes criteria that might guide an author in developing his/her work, making it a tool for self-assessment. This goal is stated on page 193 when the author forecasts the purpose of Part III, and again at the start of Chapter 10. Yet, on p. 206 the rubric's purpose is expanded to include supporting a faculty member in evaluating whether a student is able "to follow a process" and "to evaluate the quality of the student work" (p. 206). In measuring the success of the interdisciplinary product, I think the rubric falls short. First, I often do not reach the same conclusions about whether the criteria have been met by the examples given. For instance, in Example 1, is used to illustrate Step I of the interdisciplinary research process. I do not think the scope has been sufficiently limited. I also have no idea based on the text whether personal bias is an issue. It does not appear to be, but how can a novice student make this judgment?

The best rubrics are set up with a continuum of compliance for each criterion. This rubric uses only an on/off measure -- either the paper meets a criterion or it does not. I am not a fan of the Yes/No/Incomplete choices and advocate instead for a Developing/Competent/Exemplary continuum of proficiency. As constructed, the rubric is not a tool to assess quality of a work; it assesses only an author's compliance with the Steps. Step 3, "identify relevant disciplines" offers an illustration. There are two criteria relevant to this step: "identifying disciplines potentially relevant to the problem" and then identifying "those [disciplines] that are most relevant" (p. 233). I would expect an interdisciplinary product to include the relevant disciplines and perhaps the reasons for selecting them, but

including all the potentially relevant disciplines would be inefficient and distracting. Including the disciplines per se does not mean the selected disciplines are appropriate. The rubric might help authors adhere to a sequence of activities, but it does not measure quality.

The text is comprehensive. In almost all cases, the author provides thoughtful support for the main ideas and "unpacks" technical and complex ideas. The use of examples and end of chapter exercises facilitate comprehension. The integration of cognitive theory into the early chapters is a strength. Similarly, pointing out areas of interdisciplinary work that are contested strengthens the legitimacy of this work. The focus on active engagement with learning would be useful for all college students who need to be nudged from focusing on finding the right answer to learning how to construct knowledge. The text also claims to help instructors "meaningfully assess the quality of student work," a goal that is only partially achieved. However, I would be willing to develop my own rubrics for the advanced courses for which Part III is appropriate to have access to the rich earlier chapters that are thoughtfully and cogently crafted.

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Aesthetic Education and Interdisciplinary Learning

By Heidi Upton

It has been several years since my first “aesthetic education” experience, one that led to a lifelong interdisciplinary fascination with a particular time in human history. The impact of that experience changed me forever.

I was in a doctoral program at the time, a piano performance major in a research methods course at The Manhattan School of Music in New York City. One particular assignment was to choose a research topic and use it to explore the many resources available to the intrepid researcher. I chose the topic of baroque dance, not knowing where it would lead me, and began the project by attending a weekend workshop at Towson College. The workshop was led by Wendy Hilton, then a dance professor at The Juilliard School and the grande dame of courtly dance. That weekend, I learned to dance the minuet, bourree, and gavotte and watched more experienced students dance the courante, French style. Subsequent to that workshop, I accompanied baroque dance classes on the piano, had many discussions with Wendy Hilton on the correct performance practice of baroque music, searched the periodical universe for information on the subject, and eventually wrote a paper about what I had learned. Standard fare for a doctoral course, I’m sure, though the journey to get to this paper was far from standard.

It is the effect the experience had on me as a musician, a teacher, a member of the human community that makes the story remarkable. And I believe the core experience happened that first day, as I bent my knees and rose to my toes and turned, and learned. I entered a realm,

through the movements of my body, through my senses, that taught me about something timeless. I learned more than the steps to a dance. Through those steps, and ultimately through an understanding of the thinking behind the steps, I learned about a time in history I had previously cared very little about, but about which now I couldn’t learn enough; of people who lived by certain rules, rules of clothing and the art of bowing, and the endless toilette; people who enjoyed the juxtaposition of strong and weak beats; of rise and fall and crossed purpose; people who loved balance and glory, mirrors and words and, most importantly, gesture. I became hungry for any information on the time period, curious about this fellow Louis XIV, about a culture that groomed little children to appear as adults. I poured through books, read letters written by the endless party-goers who aspired to be in the presence of La Presence. The process of listening to and performing music of the Baroque period was forever changed, for now I understood in a physical way the importance of ornament. I understood because I had learned about people who held grace important above most everything else. And years later, when I was fortunate to visit Versailles where it all really happened, the experience was deeply and overwhelmingly meaningful.

What happened to me that weekend in Maryland? Why did a largely aesthetic experience enliven so many of my learning faculties and utterly capture my imagination? This question led me to aesthetic education, to The Lincoln Center Institute, and to a powerful

interdisciplinary teaching methodology that has served me well, for it is this methodology that addresses learning through the senses, incorporating the whole being in the learning process.

Aesthetic education methodology as described in this article began its formal life at the inception of The Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education (LCI) in 1975. Based in the philosophical views of Maxine Greene, its methodology is best described by the Institute itself:

Aesthetic education consists of continuous experience with a work of art over time, mediated by a particular form of individual and group inquiry. This inquiry occurs within and around art-making and uses multimedia and multidisciplinary resources to explore the social and cultural context of the artwork and any further questions that are sparked in the process. We see this model of inquiry having application to, and a resonance with, disciplines other than the arts. (Holzer, 2007)

In the early days of LCI, its founder, Mark Schubart (former dean of The Juilliard School), dismayed by the passive “bus them in, bus them out” educational arts exposure format in place for the city’s students at the time, partnered with Maxine Greene and practicing artists in music, drama, dance, and the visual arts who were brought in as the first “teaching



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artists,” to imagine themselves into a group dedicated to effecting change. The intention was to find ways to bring students into the presence of works of art through experiences that encouraged them to “choose to weave a circle of attentiveness around [themselves], to pause, to be there in person before the painting, the dance performance, the concert, the play, the text.” The underlying intention of these AE pioneers, though, was nothing less than to change paradigms, imagining an approach to encounters with works of art through which students would “discover a sense of their own agency,” a capacity Greene believes “essential for critical thinking and certainly for interpretive thinking, for deciphering the meanings of the world”(Greene, 2001).

The core elements of aesthetic education (AE) as it has evolved over time within this community of committed artists and educators – inquiry, art-making, contextual explorations, and reflection - serve as cornerstones in building curriculum that focuses on a particular work of art or text under study. This pedagogy has a foundation in the thinking of Greene, but Greene herself hastens to remind those who inquire that this approach to arts education has its foundation in thinkers as far back as Rousseau, includes the influences of Sartre and Kant, among many others, and is directly connected to the educational philosophy of John Dewey whose books *Art As Experience*, *Democracy and Education*, and *Experience and Education* provide grounding for AE processes. In the classroom, one can consider AE in the context of implementation of core elements,

strategies, and tools. Inquiry, for example, begins with a kind of “deep noticing,” a heightened awareness of what is there, an enterprise that results in a personal transaction with the object that is noticed. Aesthetic noticing requires a participatory form of attention, a “going-out” to the object, a beginning “to impart aesthetic existence to the work, to be present to it” (Greene, 2001, p. 125).

Students in a class using this approach learn to look at the world more carefully, allowing the aesthetic aspects of things – the colors, the textures, the shapes, all the qualities of these things – to become evident. In this way, they become “connoisseurs” of what is before them, able not merely to look, but to “see,” to make connections between and among the things they see, to place them in a “wider context,” and to make meaning of them in personally relevant ways (Smith, 2005).

The core elements of this approach exist in a self-reinforcing continuum – and a kind of choreography results that allows the elements to come into focus as the work proceeds. In an AE classroom, this translates into a variety of class-altering strategies: large group brainstorming, partnering, small group work, using text on text tools, sharing of perspectives, creating, exploring individually and otherwise. As the class unfolds, a community of explorers, gradually realizing there is nothing to fear, evolves. A variety of “tacit” knowledge is brought to bear on the objects and situations presented in community, connections begin to form, and meaning is made (Smith, 2003).

The evolution of AE practice has taken place – and continues to do so – through several means and in several directions. In terms of its evolution, it may be helpful to

consider a particular time period in its development at LCI, during the 1990s, with the work of a group called Focus School and Teacher Education Collaborative, a group of which I was a member, both as a part-time music teaching artist on the LCI roster and, subsequently, as one of the first full-time teaching artists at LCI.

The Collaborative, as it was termed, was a group of 20 or so teaching artists at LCI, led and guided by program managers and the assistant director at the time, Cathryn Williams, who met monthly to discuss, explore, and develop their individual AE practice. We came to these meetings fresh from our work in K-12 classrooms and schools of education serving both graduate and undergraduate students. This self-consciously motivated, reflective group of artists practicing in the art forms of dance, music, theater, and the visual arts, looked deeply at their practice and shared ideas, all in the context of AE philosophy. Through the “language” of AE (i.e. aligned beliefs, concepts, philosophical views) these artists could deepen their overall practice in the rich atmosphere of cross-pollinated ideas, strategies, and tools using a multiplicity of “texts” or works of art in various art forms as “works under study.” Now still, LCI provides professional development sessions for teaching artists and educators from time to time -- very exciting and dynamic affairs designed to renew and inspire the work that teaching artists experience “in the field,” though sadly The Collaborative no longer exists. 1

AE methodology has moved beyond its initial home at LCI,

1 The Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education is now known, due to recent “rebranding,” as Lincoln Center Education.

with similar institutes modeling this approach springing up throughout the U.S. and around the world. In addition, artists and educators interested in pursuing the evolution of AE have found a home in The Maxine Greene Center for Aesthetic Education and Social Imagination (MGC), which “provides opportunities for dialogue, reflection, and interaction in diverse communities, among participants focused on works of art as possibilities toward human growth” (Greene, 2013).

I well remember my first years as a new university “professor” (teaching artist flying under-the-radar), bringing the detailed and philosophically based knowledge of aesthetic education with me into the halls of academe. I remember the sudden isolation I felt, no longer connected as I had been to like-minded artist-educators who spoke my “language.” Now I was in a realm that was unfamiliar. As a teaching artist (and unlike many academics more traditionally trained) I approach each class I teach as a workshop rather than a lecture; I seek to encourage interactive learning rather than one-way communication from a podium; and I encourage multiple modes of understanding, rather than emphasizing linear thought.

As I prepared my courses in those early days I thought (as now) about the art of teaching, and how I might incorporate aesthetic perspectives into all aspects of my academic work. The work of teaching artists steeped in AE, the method, or approach, or “steps” the aesthetic educator takes as he or she considers how best to present material to students and then does so, are closely aligned, in my view, with those of the interdisciplinarian. After all, the examination of the text (perhaps a

work of art, perhaps a social issue) proceeds using a method requiring analysis of perspectives and contexts. It is in the examination of the connections between perspectives and contexts that interdisciplinary learning happens.

For the teaching artist, the process of investigation begins as he or she considers the aesthetic qualities of the “text” or work of art under study. This involves a kind of openness to what is there, an exquisite sensitivity to what strikes one about the work. Questions emerge that address those aesthetic elements embedded in the work that may open pathways of discovery to students. The musician as teaching artist might, for example, be struck by the textural sound world in Varese’s *Ionisation* and be inspired to guide students into similar worlds of their own making, imagining preparatory activities that might ignite curiosity not just about the work itself when eventually encountered, but also about the world order from which it emerged; the dancer might be interested in guiding students to witnessing and embodying the gesture vocabulary explored in the confined and liberated spaces of Bill T. Jones’ *Ghostcatching*, and generate similar curiosity, a desire to know more.

These initial investigations by the teaching artist planning a unit of study generate an overarching question, called a “line of inquiry.” This LOI becomes a tool in the crafting of experiential activities to be used in classes or workshops. It is always the teaching artists’ hope that their initial enthusiasm for the text be transmitted through these activities to spark similar enthusiasm and passion in their students.

Essential to any aesthetic education experience is the introduction of contextual material by the teaching artist, and it is here that the connections to interdisciplinary work seem clearest. To make this point, it might be helpful to consider a specific interdisciplinary use of aesthetic education in the classroom, one it was necessary for me to develop as a teaching artist morphing into a professor. Discover New York, a freshman transition course offered at St. John’s University, uses the city itself as text and context. DNYhome is my version of the course focusing on homelessness in New York. As a course that requires an academic service learning component, it shows how an adaptation of AE can provide students with new perspectives on nagging social problems through their participation in classroom activities and real life field experiences grounded in the creative process. An important course goal for students, beyond the borders of the course itself, is to enable them to develop and retain a sense of personal agency that is the only path to real civic engagement. It asks students to see a city that is filled with metaphors for homelessness, and course design includes direct experience with those who are homeless, readings from noted sociologists such as Elliot Liebow, and the requirement for students to connect text and context with their experiences in the field. The class requires students to reflect on these metaphors and new understandings using creative means such as photo essays, stories, and poetry. Students, confronted with the problem of homelessness, use multiple

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disciplinary perspectives and modes of expression to understand the complexity and seeming impenetrability of this social problem.²

The interdisciplinary pedagogy described above impacts not only the classroom but my work as a scholar. Scholarship, when it comes to teaching, is usually enacted within specific disciplines. This disciplinary style of scholarship is resonant in disciplinary work I know well -- that of music. My interdisciplinary scholarship, on the other hand, like the interdisciplinary pedagogy of AE as I practice it in my teaching, focuses on multiple tracks to understanding, a variety of ways of perceiving the world, and an effort to deeply consider the inextricably entwined nature of much of the human experience. The use of the imagination, the "cognitive capacity that is too often ignored in educational talk," is required in this kind of inquiry (Greene, 2001, p. 81). And though risky, questions that open inquiry into other unplanned-for, interdisciplinary realms lend aesthetic education scholarship, including scholarship about such teaching, an adventurous feel, where anything can happen.

Maxine Greene frequently references the work of Virginia Woolf, who in *Moments of Being* refers to moments when the world seems "embedded in a kind of nondescript cotton wool."

² For an in-depth discussion of this course and the attendant strategies for using aesthetic education in an interdisciplinary fashion, please see my article "Noticing the Homeless: Civic Engagement through Aesthetic Education," published in *The Journal for Civic Commitment*. The article constitutes a full-fledged example of SOITL, or the Scholarship of Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning.

Greene encourages us to awaken ourselves, and our students, to "be moved to put the severed parts together," to strive to make meaning of our lives and to guide our students to do the same in their own lives. If we do not do this, Greene powerfully states, we may "leave [our students] buried in cotton wool, in fact, and passive under the hammer blows of the fragmented, objective world" (Greene, 1978, p. 185; Woolf, 1976).

It is with these thoughts in mind that one is led to think of the tremendous value of an approach such as aesthetic education in the context of interdisciplinary learning. The shared perspectives of interdisciplinary studies and AE are grounded in philosophies that support the bringing together of "severed parts." The Maxine Greene Center and those who are carrying AE practice into countless other places in the world seek to create open spaces where no particular entity, individual, or manifesto dominates, spaces that welcome "conversation, debate, and multiple perspectives" such as we also associate with the evolution of interdisciplinarity (personal communication, 2013). If the story of aesthetic education methodology, born forty years ago and still evolving, might provide an example, it is in the creation of these open spaces, dynamic with the voices of many, creating opportunities that previously had no path to realization. Participatory experiences in the arts, through the approach known as aesthetic education, may offer a model that inspires other educators who are "in quest of wider landscapes, wider visions of what makes sense, what ought to be" (Greene, 1978, p. 159).

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Research Skills for the Future

In 2010 two French consulting companies published a massive report, *Les Besoins en Competences dans les Métiers de la Recherche à l'Horizon* (perhaps best translated as *Core Competencies Required in the Research Professions by 2020*). It is available at <http://presse.apec.fr/Presse/Communiqués-de-l-Apec/Les-Etudes/Les-besoins-en-competences-dans-les-metiers-de-la-recherche-a-l-horizon-2020>. Most recently, the *Journal of Research Practice* (<http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/index>) launched a new Viewpoints & Discussion section with a lengthy review by Werner Ulrich and D.P. Dash of that 2010 report, entitled "Research Skills for the Future: Summary and Critique of a Comparative Study in Eight Countries" (available at <http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/377/304>). This story is drawn from that review.

The 2010 report is of interest to interdisciplinarians for several reasons:

- The foremost change they find in the ways research is conducted is a trend toward inter- and multidisciplinary. Both the need and the opportunities for innovation lead to ever more research at the interfaces between disciplines. Competition for research funding increasingly requires a multidisciplinary orientation of research proposals. "The selection criteria during calls for projects include interdisciplinary cooperation. For example, as part of the project on childhood, they don't want only doctors to present the project, they want to see the involvement of social science researchers (Public-sector research director in Finland, cited in the Full Report, p. 58)."

- The second key research competency they identify is the ability to work and cooperate in interdisciplinary environments. "In the era of multidisciplinary research, when a new domain is being explored, it's important to be able to say: What questions should we be asking ourselves in order to become the leaders in a certain domain? What must be done so that this issue will be clear and pertinent for all of the disciplines touching on this subject? Is this an issue that can lead to technological solutions? (Research director of a large group in The

Netherlands, cited in the Full Report, p. 27)."

- The ability to work in an interdisciplinary environment is a top-level concern, they report, in The Netherlands, and a next-to-top concern in Germany, Finland, France, Japan, Switzerland, UK, and the U.S.

- One of the "paradoxes" they find is that interdisciplinarity is desired by universities, but channels of excellence and ultra-specialization are encouraged. Also, much is said about project management and other relational competencies, but without providing the means to develop these competencies. There is a growing requirement for

integrators, people capable of working with a sense of interdisciplinarity, but in parallel, the educational system is increasingly targeted in terms of discipline against a backdrop of scientific excellence. The channels of excellence are increasingly targeted and narrow, with doctoral students being very specialized in a given domain, but not necessarily capable of integrating knowledge or working in a multidisciplinary manner.

- Because the report is compiled from verbatim interviews with 80 senior researchers and research managers in both public and private sectors of the 8 research-intensive countries, it can be mined for useful quotes.

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Finalists will be asked to submit

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Contact:

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