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I believe that reflection and reflective practice should be more than words on a page. This belief extends from my reflective practices that examine how I come into a state of knowing (McGarry, 2019). My reflective process incorporates visual, verbal, and other textual formats that I collage together as conversation starters. Reflection, as I use it and teach for it, must have both a critical and a dialogical focus, resulting in generative, conversational situations. Reflection that integrates multiple textual practices – *multitextual* – produces artifacts that beg for interpretation. Through dialogic, collaborative reflection, reflective practice can be made real, as in evidentiary, observable, and (tangible McGarry, 2021), highlighting maker voices.

My essay, in word and image, begins by articulating the ways I used reflection before coming to know reflective practice through a multitextual approach (McGarry, 2019a, 2019b). Then I show how a multitextual, artful approach to reflective practice influenced my teaching practice with a focus on inclusivity of student experiences. And, lastly, I reveal learning over time, inclusive of student voices and revealed through their own reflective artifact making. By practicing reflection differently, students generated new knowledge of embodied and empowered inclusivity from within their individual, known experiences.

Figure 1

Learning to see but the lens cap is still on, McGarry (2019), mixed media multitextual reflection journal, 11 x 8.5 in.



Reflection, Same Old

Discovering a new horizon for reflection meant critiquing my practice. As a student, my experience with reflective practice had always been through words constructed in course writing assignments. Completed writing responses earned course credit but the reflective writing was rarely, if ever, discussed, critiqued, or given feedback. When I became an educator, I copied the modeled practice I came to know as a standard academic exercise, whereby I supplied prompts and students wrote reflective responses.

My educator reflective practice, however, lacked inclusion. Utilizing the same old standard reflective exercises, meant I was telling students how to think and in the process, silencing their interpretive voices: turning voices off and suppressing different ways of coming into knowing. I decided to scrap the standard exercises and find a new model. Researching intently into reflection, a new model took shape based on how I came to define reflection as “the embodied practice of awareness” (McGarry & Harkness, 2020, p. 14). If, for example, I embody something, I imbue that idea/thing in a realized or tangible way. I also manifest that idea/thing as inclusive to how I come to know that which I embody: I become aware through practice.

This definition represented a turning point in how I approached reflection and initiated a practice I now call multitextual reflection; multitextual because I view each element within a reflective act as a *text* to be interpreted, critiqued, and discussed (McGarry, 2019b, 2021). Textual elements might include words, sounds, images, actions, etc., all contributing to the creation of interpretable, textual artifacts. I then started teaching multitextual reflection to students, finding the approach generative for critical, dialogical, group-level learning, promoting embodied awareness. This new reflective model supported the inclusion of unique student experiences and voices that expressed individual thinking through artifact creation.

Horizons of embodied awareness, McGarry, 2020, mixed media multitextual reflection journal,
11 x 8.5 in.



Teaching students how to reflect using multitextual reflective practices meant I needed to be explicit and teach *for* artful reflection. I began adding workshop sessions into methods

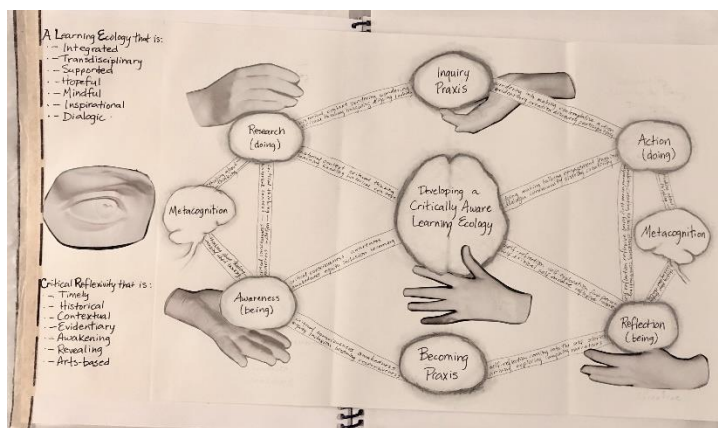
courses, focusing on amplifying student voices – a vital element for enriching the dialogic tapestry and shaping learning experiences toward group knowing to embody inclusivity.

Students highlighted their voices by completing course readings and illustrating them in journals. I wanted to slow down reflective actions and deemphasize ticking boxes for course credit. Rather than prescribing student engagement with course reading material, I endeavored to learn what they experienced in the active process of reading and reflecting. I wanted to know a) what they noticed (Livio et al., 2019) while navigating course content, b) what resonated or challenged them, and c) how they chose to interpret meaning through multitextual means (McGarry, 2021).

Students were encouraged to make meaning by creating reflective responses, not as artworks but as mindful, metacognitive artifacts showing their thinking about their thinking. By emphasizing *artifact creation* over *artwork making*, I intended to diminish fine art preciousness for open reflective spaces *in* and *on/about* time (Schön, 1991). I designed and modeled reflective practice within critical, dialogic spaces where we could inhabit processes of knowing centered on multitextual approaches for actionable reflexivity – where we saw ourselves within the act of making reflection real.

Figure 3

Modeling reflective/reflexive praxis, McGarry, 2018, mixed media multitextual reflection journal, 11 x 17 in.



New Knowing Guiding New Learning

By including student voices, experiences, and identities into our praxis, I tapped into new revelations about myself as an artful teacher. Rather than *telling* students how to learn course material, I learned to appreciate them *showing* me their learning. I started to recognize their individual abilities for interpretation. I saw individual expressions and noticed the different voices coming through student reflective practices; I came to appreciate reflection as an agentic, co-creative process (Beetham, 2019). The revelatory nature of our classroom interactions reinforced a need for being present, for listening and experiencing student declarations of learning. I needed to slow down, to see, to feel, to hear, to recognize and notice the praxis being created.

Intentional noticing through word and image is the evidence generated from building a different reflective practice with students. Student voices further demonstrate my commitment to inclusive reflection¹:

MaKayla

I appreciated being able to take the main ideas of an article and place them into a more understandable and accessible style of notes. Including the references on the right side of the page also allowed me to reference back to the article and key pages where my ideas originally developed.



Kelly

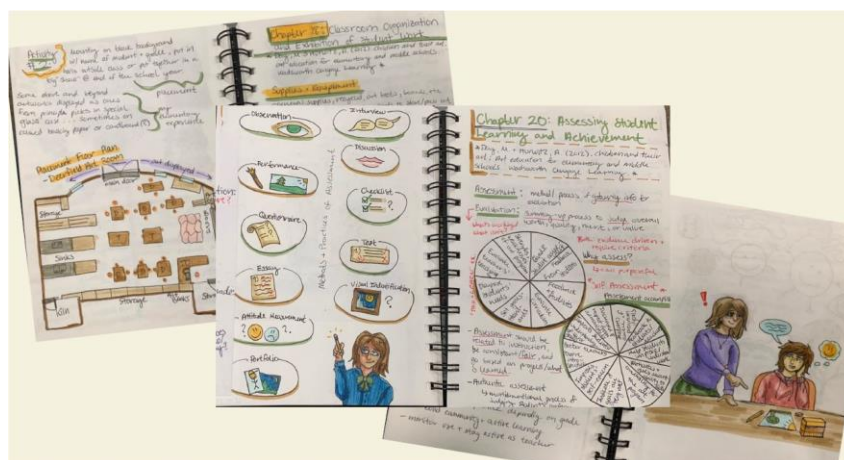
The multi-reflection journals are a part of me now. They are a window into my brain...The journals explore my own identity and emotions as new art educator.



Katelyn

I experimented with adding more visuals, such as charts,

tables, and added-in pull down tabs...these helped me to remember the material far better than just writing it down.



Another student, Jeffrey, spoke directly to interpretation as a co-creation of knowing, saying the interpretable texts connected “everyone around us because even though every interpretation is unique, they still stem from a single origin...connecting everyone no matter race, gender, or political belief, we are all connected” in the experience.

Conclusion

These testimonials may be anecdotal, yet they signify beneficial outcomes for multitextual reflection as an inclusive classroom practice. When I witness students expressing agency over their learning, I grow as an educator because I see students use their experiences, their voices, as inclusive evidence in these reflective actions. I also believe and contend that when student voices are heard, recognized, and celebrated, these actions promote embodied learning experiences that amplify every voice. Moreover, I am not *giving* space for student voices to permeate; students become intrinsically empowered to reveal their embodied selves through multitextual reflection. Reflective practice as I have outlined above takes time to develop, time for trust to mature, and time for awareness to flourish. Our relational, reflective, and critically dialogic practices, built over time, promote inclusivity and agency by showing how student voices matter when we summon embodied awareness.

¹All student voices were generated as course reflection papers used with permission granted by course participants.

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