Special Education through the lens of A/r/tography: An exploration of developing identity

by

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Abstract

Teacher education programs have focused primarily on specific curriculum, content delivery and assessment strategies. Relatively little time has been spent on either inclusive practices or on teacher identity development. Identity development is often left to an individual teacher to investigate at the point in their career when they determine it is personally relevant either through professional development or further education. In this paper I use an a/r/tographical methodology to evaluate, destabilize, re-imagine my identities (artist/researcher/teacher) as an inclusive educator. Using self-portraiture, a visual research journal, art projects based on Ministry of Education Designations and a series of narrative explorations I examine my biases and expectations, both for myself and my students. Using the lenses of artist, researcher, and teacher I re-examine my practice as an inclusive educator, discarding assumptions, experiences and theories that I have internalized but that do not support inclusion. The practice of a/r/tography has allowed me to integrate my multiple roles and intentionally build inclusion into the core of all of them in order to continue becoming inclusive throughout my career as an educator.

Keywords: inclusion, teacher, educator, a/r/tography, arts based research, identity development
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Personal Context

I never wanted to be a teacher, it had never even crossed my mind. I fell into it almost by accident, would have grabbed something to keep from falling if I could have. I only went into the elementary school because they needed a mom to make vegetable soup with my daughter’s class. And then they needed help with pancakes, green eggs and ham, and later in the year, rice crispy treats. It was fun but it was never going to be my job. I was an artist, a mom, a volunteer, but I was not a teacher. I never played teacher as a kid, I rarely even babysat, and I only became a camp counsellor so that I could lifeguard on the ocean in the summer sun. But, the kindergarten students were funny, endearing, chatty, curious, and endlessly fascinating and I began to wonder what older students would be like. I volunteered in three high school classes at two schools and was as surprised as anyone that I enjoyed being in the classroom so much. I stumbled through my bachelor of education without ever considering myself a teacher. I was too busy creating lesson plans, exemplars, PowerPoints, and more rice crispy treats for my own kids. My secondary art education degree prepared me to explore the purpose of art, the techniques and processes, the history and the movements and how to make art relevant to students. My identity was not a subject I had time to explore. I never considered how to prepare myself, what my teacher identity meant to me, or how to reconcile the many hats I wore each day.

Then I spent my first several years of teaching as a teacher-on-call, exploring many subjects, different schools, every grade level, and encountering hundreds of diverse individuals who all share the same identity, teacher. I barely had time to make art and I was rarely called to teach it. I felt my identity as an artist slipping, but without my own class or school, my teacher identity did not yet fit. I was a professional chameleon shifting between teaching science 10 on
Tuesday and French kindergarten on Wednesday. It was taking a toll on me so I decided to switch my focus and return to school to get my Master of Special Education. I took the Level B Assessment course and almost immediately got a temporary contract as a part-time learning resource teacher who knew next to nothing about the job she had been given. As soon as the questions began I had to make decisions that I did not have time to research, take a stand on issues I did not feel prepared to side with, be someone I did not know how to be. I had to ask so many questions of so many people that who I became as a special educator evolved as a grab bag of other peoples’ responses. I felt that my students deserved a more centered educator to guide and help them. In order to integrate my identities as an artist, a researcher and a special education teacher I needed a methodology suited to self-study, to reflection and to the convergence of the multiple viewpoints that intersect within me.

**A/R/Tography**

I chose to engage with a/r/tography as my methodology. A/r/tography developed on the west coast of British Columbia, Canada, at the University of British Columbia. Professors Rita Irwin and Alex de Cosson in the Faculty of Education, Curriculum and Pedagogy, were the editors of a book in 2004 called *a/r/tography: Rendering Self Through Arts-Based Living Inquiry*. It was a first look at this type of arts-based research which had the participants consider their multiple identities as artists, researchers, and teachers through both writing and an active art practice. The art and writing fed each other and move in a continuous loop to reinforce, negate, re-state and re-align the multiple perspectives that exist within the a/r/tographer to explore an issue more deeply and from multiple vantage points (Irwin, n.d.). This inquiry type investigation has the participants in a constant state of “becoming,” where there is no known end point at the outset of research, there is only curiosity, rigorous reflection, and endless wonder. The work of
Irwin and de Cosson (2004), positions a/r/tography as a research methodology that “hyphenates, bridges, slashes, and creates other forms of thirdness that provide the space for exploration, translation, and understanding in deeper and more enhanced ways of knowing” (p. 30). The qualities that I hope to embody as a special educator are similar to those put forth by Louise Berman (1999) when she wrote, years earlier, of teachers as poets, a parallel literary art form. She suggested five key qualities in a teacher, that they would “a) give voice to the unspoken, b) befriend mystery, c) connect(ing) heart/mind conversations, d) bear(ing) witness, and e) delight(ing) in surprises” (p. 18). Though a/r/tography has considered the role of the educator as central to creating conditions for both educator and students to thrive, there has not yet been a great deal of exploration into inclusive teacher identity development. I believe this is due in part to the way that a/r/tography is in its early days, but also due to the limited number of researchers who find themselves in the intersection between special education and the world of art. This is the intersection that I find myself in most often. My job at school is split between these two departments, my professional interests align there, and my personal art practice has always inquired into the idea of relationality, the self and the other. As a result, I see this methodology as immensely strengthening to myself in each of these roles and to my continued “becoming” as an inclusive education teacher. A/r/tography offers me a way to engage and reflect through my art practice that builds my identity and refines my role as a special educator, as well as allowing me the opportunity to use words to create a mirroring form of expression that solidifies my understanding of my trajectory as an educator. I believe that a/r/tography has the potential to disrupt my preconceptions, challenge my assumptions, build new strength through convergence of my multiple identities and contribute new understanding to my practice as a special educator.
Integration of Identities

Special education came out of a need to develop evidence based programs to increase the academic achievement of students who learn differently. Cook & Schirmer (2005) state that we have “substantial and compelling evidence of effective practices developed by special educators for students with disabilities” (p. 202). We have developed countless reading and writing interventions that target specific lagging skills in students of all ages. We work on phonemes with our youngest students, cloze reading, decoding strategies, and both fiction and non-fiction comprehension development strategies for students of all ages. We focus on speech and language pathology with utmost attention, providing direct access to specialists to ensure students develop their language skills to their full potential. What teacher education programs do not spend a great deal of time on is developing inclusive teacher identity. Eick, (2009) says, “(t)eacher identity formation serves as a touchstone for teachers, a foundation for making professional decisions and guiding classroom teaching behavior” (p. 179). A teacher is the primary influence in the classroom as a model of behaviour, attitude, expectation and empathy. Each teacher brings unique perspectives, knowledge, and experiences to bear in the classroom as either conscious or unconscious influences on their students. Special educators bring their insight to teachers and contribute to a whole school culture of education. It becomes very important to examine the messages that are being relayed from special educators, to classroom teachers, to students.

My intention in this research is to build my inclusive teacher identity in the intersection of special education and the arts using a/r/tography as my methodology. By engaging with a/r/tography I hope to rebuild and redefine my inclusive teacher identity as well as to understand my multiple roles as artist, researcher, and special education teacher. Arts based methodologies are just beginning to hint at the potential for deeper understanding of our world and ourselves.
than we have become accustomed to in the age of science. As quantitative methodologies have made room for qualitative methodologies, qualitative methodologies are expanding to hold space for more and more open ended questions about the multiple experiences of being. Watrin (1999) said it well, “(c)reating art, like qualitative research, is a problem-solving process, a combination of thinking and sensing intuitively that leads to insight” (p. 95). The epistemology of a/r/tography looks to discovery and disruption of relationships, identities, and previously held beliefs based on subjects that have been unseen or taken for granted as already fully known. A/r/tography welcomes anti-positivist knowledge that is gained indirectly through art practice instead of direct questions that map a predicted outcome. This methodology seeks to broaden our conception of previous ontological certainties to include an increasingly nominalist focus. A/r/tography demands volunteerist agency and embraces the rhizomatic nature of relationships, thought, and creative practice to recognize unexpected pathways and uncover ways to know differently. I think that a/r/tography is ideally suited to questions about special education. As an artist it is my job to look carefully, to disrupt or challenge what is accepted and what is not, and to find ways of communicating visual information to an audience. As a researcher, it is my duty to examine my positionality, the history of an issue, what has been said and by whom, and to discover the positive and negative impacts of the issue and my research within it. And finally, as a special education teacher, I can make art, study, research, and empathize with my students, but I will never experience the embodied cognition (Merleau-Ponty, 1964) of having a diagnosis that impacts my ability to be successful without intervention. I am “other” in that part of my work and need to remember that what I think I know, will always be incomplete. A practice of a/r/tography may not build a bridge to “knowing” but it reminds me that there is a hidden view to which I am not privy, that must be respected through my art and writing.
Research Questions

In the last two decades research is beginning to emerge that addresses the intersection of art education and special education. I have not found any work that directly links a/r/tography to inclusive teacher identity development, but there are certainly arts-based researchers looking into where art and disability intersect in schools. Strengthening my convictions to pursue this topic is the acknowledgement that all teachers make curricular decisions according to the attitudes they have about how to work with and what to expect from students with disabilities. These decisions then influence the content they chose to emphasize, the purpose of their instruction for these students, and their expectations about student ability and behaviour (Manjack, 2011, p. 36).

Knowing that the teacher sets the tone and expectations in a classroom has me determined to examine my own practices as an artist, researcher, and special education teacher in order that I am working in the best interests of my students. Taking the time to examine my own beliefs and reflect on the influences that have shaped me, as well as the conscious and unconscious biases that I hold, will help ensure that all of my practices are informed, aligned, and working thoughtfully towards balance and betterment. Internalizing the practice of a/r/tography will also serve to give me the tools and experience to bring into conversations with colleagues, to model living inquiry for my students, and to be able to speak to the liminal spaces we all inhabit between knowing and not knowing. Durham (2010) says, “(a)s teachers become excited about teaching with and through the arts, they gain more knowledge and insight into both themselves and their students and students respond positively to that change” (p. 60).
My questions are:

1. How can a/r/tography be used to examine and destabilize my understanding of my role in inclusive education?

2. How can a/r/tography influence the trajectory of my inclusive teacher identity?

Towards these ends, my intention is to develop several methods of data collection. I will be using an informal visual research journal/sketchbook for both writing and image collection. Four pieces of art work will be produced using a creative limitation that echoes a British Columbia Ministry of Education special education designation. I will create a series of self-portraits that explore my inclusive teacher identity and I will compile a written series of narratives exploring what could be in special education using the book *Einstein’s Dreams* by Alan Lightman (1993) as the guiding structure for my writing. These practices will help me to understand the limitations and strengths of each, and hopefully serve to refine my identity as an inclusive educator through a/r/tography in order to enrich my teaching practices.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

Inclusive teacher identity development is a complex, relational, and very personal journey. Each teacher brings their unique history, culture, point of view, biases and beliefs about what being an inclusive teacher looks like, sounds like, and means for the day to day running of their classroom. The development of a teacher begins long before their university training. It begins as soon as they enter school and see their own teachers model the behaviours and attitudes that define their teacher identity and relationship to inclusion. I intend to examine the way that teachers have been prepared to guide inclusive classrooms of diverse students with exceptional needs. With an eye to exploring inclusion, I begin with a look at pre-service teacher identity development. Then I will discuss in-service teacher identity development and the role that professional development plays in building identity. I will examine what influences inclusive identity development. I will look at key learning moments in constructing inclusive teacher identity and try to uncover how identity breakthroughs are achieved, and finally I will describe the gap that this research intends to fill.

Pre-Service Identity Development

Becoming a teacher is no small responsibility. It requires a novice individual to confidently embody teacher characteristics, model teacher behaviours, enact teacher roles, and guide classes of diverse learners. Many of today’s teachers are educated in post-degree programs (PDP’s). This type of PDP requires a completed bachelor’s degree prior to entering what is most often a 12 month intensive program that addresses a specific teaching subject area. PDPs usually include just one or two mandatory generalist lecture and seminar course on inclusive education. These accelerated PDP’s allow individuals one single year, and as little as 10 weeks on
practicum, to transition from student to teacher. Time for reflection and consideration of our own positionality in relation to inclusion is not a central part of most teacher education programs. Assessment strategies, language learning, lesson planning, and writing about the evolution of education itself are at the forefront of this intense year. Ahonen, Pyhältö, Pietarinen, & Soini, (2015) found that,

The importance of adopting research-based practices is emphasised in the literature of teaching; however, in our study, student teachers perceived practical pedagogical tips and knowledge to be more central. This confirms previous findings suggesting that student teachers face difficulties in constructing a meaningful and coherent professional belief system during their studies (p. 160).

The intensity of the study and the compression of multiple theoretical areas of focus made constructing a central belief system or teacher identity difficult. Pre-service teachers craved a relational dialogue between themselves, students, and mentor teachers in order to begin forming their teacher identities (Ahonen et al., 2015). The result of not feeling themselves to be teachers in their pre-service training, is that when confronted by teaching for the first time, new teachers fell back on re-enacting the examples of their own teachers, rather than being able to implement their recently acquired knowledge about what a teacher should do, say, expect, and be.

Influencing this developing identity, Gormally (2016) notes that, “depending on their learning histories, instructors may not have memories of role models to leverage as they develop teacher identities” (p. 179). This quote suggests that in the absence of, or perhaps even in spite of, early examples of inclusion in the classroom, some teachers rely entirely on their pre-service teacher education to prepare them to enact inclusive practices. Without good role models in their early years or time in university to piece together their new identity, the weight of the new role and all
the responsibilities it includes, can be overwhelming. Buchanan (2015) found striking differences in the metaphors that new teachers used to describe their roles compared with the metaphors that pre-service teachers chose. In almost all cases, after being on the job for a short time, new teachers described their roles in far less positive ways.

When Taylor and Ringladen (2012) surveyed teacher candidates about their attitudes to inclusion in the classroom they found that after one mandatory class on inclusion new teachers did not feel adequately prepared. They determined that “pre-service teachers’ attitudes toward students with disabilities should be appraised throughout their program, and not just in one or two courses, to ensure these future teachers are educated in accepting as true that all students deserve the chance to succeed” (p. 17). Though theoretical opportunities to learn about inclusion are indeed found to help to prepare pre-service teachers (Taylor & Ringladen, 2012), Forlin and Chambers (2011) argue that what would have greater positive impact on teacher preparedness is more practicum exposure to students with special needs and the opportunity to adapt and modify curriculum for them in real world scenarios. Ahonen et al. (2015), remark that in fact, (t)he rarity of active learning experienced by students, poses the question of the ability of teacher education to foster students’ active agency during their studies and by doing that construct a beneficial ground for teachers to continue their professional development and create meaningful learning environments for themselves and their pupils in the school” (p. 160).

More targeted support could be beneficial in this transition between student and teacher identities to ensure continued positive growth of inclusionary beliefs and practices.
In-Service Identity Development

As new teachers are confronted with the reality of inclusive teaching, Buchanan (2015) reminds us that they are still “learners” (p. 45) and suggests that they be afforded more consideration by district professional development programs. This “un-readiness” for the reality of teaching has been felt so powerfully that some researchers have devoted their careers to creating professional development initiatives to make up for it. Benedict, Brownell, Park, Bettini, & Lauterbach, (2014), created professional development curricula to enhance the practice of special educators. They acknowledge that all teachers in all districts cannot access these or similar resources and so they recommend special educators take it upon themselves to “set aside time to learn and reflect on your practice” (p. 156). With dedicated time for learning and reflection, excellent special educators “continually strive to go beyond the boundaries of their knowledge, repeatedly and deliberately practicing new ideas and skills to improve their practice” (Benedict et al., 2014, p. 152). The reliance on special education teachers to educate themselves and craft time and methods for their own identity development is no doubt good hearted, but ultimately leaves a great deal up to circumstance. All students, especially students with special needs, deserve teachers who have preparation, efficacy, and agency on their side. The need for teachers to be mindful of their influence in the classroom dates back decades. Ayers (1988), reminds us that in light of their power positions and ability to influence the lives of vulnerable students, teachers have a greater responsibility to operate with integrity and be more self-aware than the average individual. The need to examine how our beliefs influence our behaviour in the classroom as we lead, model, direct, expect, organize, support, and even choose our resources, needs to be considered, lest we perpetuate outdated ideals that do not foster inclusion.
Inclusive Teacher Identity Development

Without a doubt, new teachers spend years developing their teacher identities and Benedict et al. (2014) suggested that special educators do this in a largely self-directed fashion. We spend time each year learning new curricula, strategies, and skills as the needs arise with the new class. But we do not focus on ourselves, believing that the key to success in our inclusive teacher identities lies solely in the facts we know and the strategies we can employ. Confirming, however, the need to spend more time inquiring into our own belief systems, understanding our identities, and relating our personal to our professional selves, Forlin and Chambers (2011) write, “(t)he role of the teacher is now affirmed as being a critical determinant in the success or otherwise of the practice of inclusive education” (p. 17). Who we are and what we believe about inclusive education and our role in it is clearly relevant to the success of our students. Yet we receive little training into how or why we might investigate ourselves. Settlage, Southerland, Smith and Ceglje (2009) consider identity development “as a trajectory that an individual constructs from experiences in her lived worlds, allowing her to be recognized as a certain type of person” (p. 179). If indeed our identities are shaped over time by the influences and experiences around us, it seems clear that educators might want to take charge of their own evolution in order to be identified as the type of person who exemplifies the ideals of inclusive education. As special educators we are always working on behalf of individuals who are “other” than us. They have difficulties we likely do not share and we must do our best to ensure that we scaffold and challenge them, empathise with but never coddle them, push them, but not to frustration. The expectations we have for them and ourselves as special educators must be examined so that we are able to see our students and ourselves as vital learners working together to improve. Lee (2010) studied early childhood educators and found that in order to be
empathetic with students who are “other” either by virtue of culture, language, or learning disabilities, “teachers have to reflect on what beliefs and values they have, what personal experiences have figured into their views about themselves, others, and the world, what kind of attitudes, biases, and prejudices they hold about diversity and culture, and the nature of their relationships with others” (p. 25).

**Key Learning Experiences for Identity Development**

Though much is known about the way that teachers perceive their identities at different points in their careers, little action has been taken to bring flow to this process from pre-service to in-service teaching. Perhaps these key learning experiences that spur inclusive teacher identity development are best addressed individually, when a teacher is ready to begin a search for understanding on their own, rather than in a mandated course of study. The research by Ahonen et al. (2015),

identified two ways in which the key learning experiences emerged: the experience resulted from internally and intentionally orchestrated student behaviour such as actively seeking and organising opportunities to learn, and from externally orchestrated and regulated activities in which the student was involved. The latter one typically resulted in assimilative learning where new elements were inserted into an existing knowledge base, while the former was characterised by more profound changes in student professional worldviews and identity (p. 160).

If the most profound changes occur when an individual seeks out new knowledge and new understanding to enrich their own practice, then this trajectory could be presented to all teachers for consideration. By framing the idea that at some point in their careers, teachers will feel ready to focus on their inclusive teacher identity development, perhaps the culture of teaching will be
able to make room for this evolution. If teachers perceive their own agency and expect that self-study and reflection will be in the best interest of their students then they might be able to justify the investment of time and energy, when they are ready, to develop their inclusive teacher identity further using a method that best suits their practice.

**Gaps in Identity Development**

There are a wealth of studies that reflect on teacher identity development and the attitudes of pre-service and in-service teachers towards inclusion. However, it must be noted that the question has not yet been addressed using an a/r/tographical methodology. Very little is known about the way that inclusive teacher identity might be developed through art based practices and none through a/r/tography. Buchanan’s (2015) investigation into the metaphors teachers choose to give their practice of teaching is one of few studies that use creative methods to access the lived experience of teacher identity. His study, however, is only looking for a snapshot perception of a role. His research did not specify inclusionary practice, nor did it ask further questions about how that identity came to be or to find out what the next steps might be to bring about positive change in an individual’s inclusive teaching practice. My research explores my inclusive teacher identity development over time, how it developed, how it continues to develop and what the relations and lived experiences are that influence my always “becoming” identity. The interactions, assumptions, and expectations that contribute to teacher identity are all questioned, problematized and considered from multiple perspectives in order to build a stronger identity from the best attributes, attempting to leave behind values that do not serve inclusive teacher identity. It is this intersection of inclusive teacher identity development and a/r/tography methodology that has not been fully explored yet that I hope will be rich, cross-fertilized soil in
which to continue to grow my practice, and perhaps influence the agency of other teachers to
examine and grown their practices as well.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

A/r/tography and Inclusive Education

My exploration of special educator as a role and identity is the subject of my research questions.

1. How can a/r/tography be used to examine and destabilize my understanding of my role in inclusive education?

2. How can a/r/tography influence the trajectory of my inclusive teacher identity?

I have chosen to engage with a/r/tography as a method of self-study in order to explore, challenge and reconceptualise my practices as an artist, researcher, and teacher with a focus on inclusive education. The epistemology of a/r/tography is anti-positivist as it explores, creates, and is always willing to discover something unexpected. A/r/tography goes so far as to welcome disruption in thought or previous knowledge as it finds nuance within generality and uncovers new perspectives and possibilities. A/r/tography’s ontology is nominalist where knowledge is located in the space between what is known and what is not known, what is, and what could be. In the words of poet and scholar Carl Leggo, “a/r/tography leans into the oblique, enamored with prepositions and all the places that haven’t been mapped and colonized and named and claimed” (p. 4). A/r/tography views agency as volunteerist in the infinite “rhizomatic” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) pathways that may be taken and the infinite branches of potential that are yet unknown and unexpected. The method wants to be surprised by the infinite wealth of possible relationships to our subject, to our identities and to the art and writing practices we engage with. Leavy notes, “(a)/r/tography invites us to actively, subjectively, and wholly engage with our work and the work of others from within” (p. 6). These qualities make a/r/tography an ideal methodology to investigate my own position in relation to inclusive education.
Participants

As this is a self-study I will be the only participant in this research. I am an artist, having been a potter, painter, printmaker and fibre artist. I trained first as artist, then as a secondary art teacher and now as a special educator. I am new to research but was steeped in a/r/tography while working towards my B.Ed. at the University of British Columbia and remain captivated by it. I am a new teacher, having taught for five years. I have found my assignment different each year and so feel myself to have been a new teacher at the start of each of those years. I am a woman, a mother, a white cis person in her middle years who is eager to make my life and career vital, charged with curiosity and imbued with creativity in all aspects. I have chosen a/r/tography in the hope that it will provide a deep, richly textured account of highly personalized phenomena. Carter, Beare, Belliveau, & Irwin (2011) suggest that “(a)rtography is conceptualized as a living practice in which one’s life becomes a site for inquiry. This signifies that attention to memory, identity, reflection, meditation, interpretation and representation enable the a/r/tographer to expose a way of living in provocative ways” (p. 27). This arts-based methodology makes personal experience into data, brings humanity to research, and is ideally suited to self-study. The very personal connection between the researcher and the research impacts the audience, possibly allowing them to question their own relationship to the subject and consider anew their way of knowing the world.

Data Collection

For the purpose of exploring the intersection of a/r/tography and inclusive education I will be creating four bodies of work that weave together. These bodies of work will not be consecutive but concurrent. I want to move between projects in the same fluid way that I move
between identities, allowing the borderlands to converge and overlap, highlighting complexity, confrontation, and empathy.

1. I will create a series of painted self-portraits to explore my role and identity as a special educator.

2. I will work on a series of art pieces exploring several limitations that echo British Columbia Ministry of Education special education designations. These pieces may involve drawing, painting, printmaking, mixed media, and sculpture.

3. I will keep a less formal daily visual research journal/sketchbook to chronicle my reflections around my tripartite identities as artist, researcher, and inclusion teacher, as well as to collect impressions, thoughts, and other ideas to explore further.

4. I will compile a written series of narratives exploring what could be in special education. I will use the book *Einstein’s Dreams* by Alan Lightman (1993), as the guiding structure for my writing. In this book, Lightman explores various potential realities dreamed up by Albert Einstein as he worked out the theory of relativity. In my writing I will imagine various potential outcomes for myself in special education.

Lasczik-Cutcher & Irwin (2012) write of *a/r/tography* producing knowledge based in affect through “somaatically and relationally experienced vibrations, perceptions, and energies that flow, drift, and emerge in, through, and with (in this case) the acts of painting” (p. 117) and that these “compositions of affect resonate with compositions in paint and the very performance of painting, as we conceptualize(d) our lived experience of becoming through actions, affects, and aesthetic engagements” (Lasczik-Cutcher & Irwin, 2017, p. 117). In this light, *a/r/tography* is uniquely suited to reveal knowledge that lies on the periphery of thought. Through lived inquiry, art practice and empathy for a subject, ephemera becomes tangible.
Interpretation

Irwin (2004) says,

(a)r t is the visual reorganization of experience that renders complex the apparently simple or simplifies the apparently complex. Research is the enhancement of meaning revealed through ongoing interpretations of complex relationships that are continually created, recreated, and transformed. Teaching is performative knowing in meaningful relationships with learners (p. 31).

In light of these definitions of my roles, what can a/r/tography reveal about my current knowing/not knowing that I can discover and present? In order to be worthwhile, Barone and Eisner (2012) require arts-based research needs to meet several criteria, “incisiveness, concision, coherence, generativity, social significance, and evocation” (p. 148). The work needs to address the heart of an issue, be relatable on a broader level, be important to people, and evoke a feeling that connects the audience to the research, “self” to “other.” The unique insight of a/r/tography “allows researchers to potently consider how data is apprehended, comprehended, and generated in, with, and through image, objects, reflections, interpretations, and actions, and further, how such experiences are rendered” (Lasczik-Cutcher & Irwin, 2017, p. 116). A/r/tographers identify a focus, travel their ideas through process and imagination, finally translating their discoveries for the audience. I plan to code my writing to look for themes that emerge. I will also examine both the art practice and art products looking for similar and unique themes. Some issues worth noting are the special care that needs to be taken in analyzing and interpreting a/r/tographic research. Since the method does not hypothesise about what will be found, it is important to tread carefully and let the results speak for themselves. As well, as this is a self-study and does not
have collaboration to mediate the results through dialogue, it will be crucial to empathise with myself as rigorously as I would be inclined to do with others.

**Applications**

Through a/r/tography I want to explore, integrate, trouble, and expand my concept of both my role and my identity. Each aspect of what I “know” is in need of examination. The understandings I have about what special education is/is not, who it is for/not for, and what my job is/is not, are heavily influence by three things, my upbringing, the teachings passed on through conversations with more experienced teachers, and my own trial-and-error. These pieces of advice, recommendations, assumptions, experiences, and anecdotes are informed by spheres of influence as diverse as the people who offer to help me. Without implying that the transfer of information is flawed, I hope to use a/r/tography to weave together my roles and identities to emerge with a strengthened core of beliefs and understandings that will guide me in daily decision making. It is this core that I wish to unsettle, re-imagine, and to build stronger, so that in each day, and each interaction, I come with a capacity for empathy, the curiosity to see from another perspective, and the ability to gauge and value the outcomes of the choices that I make with an eye on my tripartite identity. In the words of Sullivan (2012), I want to become “an astute researcher, capable of illuminations of new meanings, new visions of possibility, new questions” (p. 43).

**Limitations**

The limitations of my research are twofold. First, in the perception of what is and what is not valuable research. The methodology that I have selected seeks to illuminate the unknown and unseen but cannot predict what will be found. The difficulty of using a/r/tography has been described as a “promise without a guarantee” (Carter et al., 2011). Since the unfolding of
a/r/tography often takes an unanticipated “rhizomatic” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) pathway to discovery, I must be aware that what I find may not fit my expectations but only serve to spark new questions. Second, my own ability to be reflective within this research is another limitation. Since I am both the subject and the researcher I will rely heavily on my ability to find distance between these roles and reflect honestly on what I may find.

**Significance**

A/r/tography is growing and being tested in diverse contexts by researchers around the globe. It is my hope that my research using this methodology will contribute another example of a/r/tography to enrich this community of practice. Using this method I commit to being present and seeing special education through fresh eyes, while also unseeing aspects of special education that I have previously accepted or dismissed as “known.” Through this research I hope to reinforce the ability of a/r/tographers to work with unexplored possibilities and go in new directions with subjects that may have previously been explored by other research methodologies. A/r/tography allows for revision, re-searching, and reimagining a subject to discover deeper connection and reveal nuance and detail previously inaccessible by other research methods. Irwin (2004) writes of artist-researcher-teachers who “embrace a métissage existence that integrates knowing, doing, and making, an existence that desires an aesthetic experience found in an elegance of flow between intellect, feeling, and practice” (p. 29). Métissage means the inter-breeding of one thing, or identity, and another. In this space of confrontation or “becoming” between things, Irwin explores the possibility of rich cross fertilization of ideas, unique insights, and questions arising between fixed points. A/r/tography looks even further than a border between two things, seeking to explore the convergence between three identities, thus resisting hierarchy between two ideas and integrating three parts of
ourselves through knowing (research), doing (teaching), and making (art practice) (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004). I hope that becoming a/r/tographical will infuse my practices, roles and identities with the curiosity of one who is comfortable “becoming,” never fixed on what is known and what is not, but endlessly welcoming of other views and ways of knowing that allow for empathy with all my students.
Chapter 4: Findings and Results of the Self-Portrait Series

I set out to produce four distinct data sets in exploration of my research questions,

1. How can a/r/tography be used to examine and destabilize my understanding of my role in special education?

2. How can a/r/tography influence the trajectory of my inclusive teacher identity?

Together I hoped the self-portraits, visual research journal, designation based art projects, and narrative writing would allow me to examine and destabilize my understanding of my role in special education and to positively influence my growth as an inclusive educator. I wondered if these artistic practices would reveal unconscious biases and beliefs that underpinned who I was as an educator. The ability to see the umbrella narrative that fuelled my actions and attitudes in the classroom allowed me to problematize and dissect which beliefs needed to be weeded out and which beliefs needed to be nurtured to increase my capacity to serve my students as a reflective, inclusive educator. All of the projects included artistry or art making as well as writing about the process or experience associated with the artistry. Each project revealed something about myself in a different way. A/r/tography allowed me to view myself from multiple perspectives and to acknowledge myself as a multi-faceted, complex set of associations and priorities, as an artist, a researcher, and an inclusive educator. In order to make sense of what I found, I began looking at each body of work separately. In each of the next four chapters I will examine one of the artistic bodies of work to determine if they are able to reveal my strengths and challenges as an inclusive educator.

Self-Portrait 1

Producing a series of self-portraits revealed more about myself over the course of a school year than I realized was possible. They became a very chronological log of attitudes I
held and events that occurred over the course of this year. I began each painting with a static image of myself, either a current selfie or an existing photo.
The first self-portrait, started at the end of the last school year, was based on a selfie that I took on the first day of painting. I wanted an image of end of the year burnout, but I had not imagined that it would look this cold. It shows the most run-down, rigid version of myself. Realizing that this hard face greets my students each day in June stopped me from painting for several days. I took a break for nearly a week before I decided to trust that this was the image I needed to paint. I struggled not to flatter myself or paint out the frustration and brittleness that had visibly settled on me by the end of the school year. I battled with my identity as a woman, taught to please, but clearly not pleased. I battled with my conception of myself as capable of managing a complex caseload with this image that unmasks me, clearly showing the strain of the year. I found the image embarrassing. My children and friends openly remarked that it was unhappy and questioned about my intentions in painting it. I considered these questions and began to worry about what the rest of my audience would think of me. I was sure they would see that I was frightened of all that I did not know, and that my lack of knowledge had me shut down and struggling to cope. I felt it showed me failing as an educator, definitely not thriving as an inclusion specialist. It did not look like the cheerful, exuberant teachers all across Instagram, and the comparison hurt. The forceful jaw clenching in the painting was an obvious sign that I could not guarantee students a good year. In looking at the completed image, I hoped that the research I was doing would leave me with tools to strengthen myself and ensure the end of the next school year would be warm and welcoming instead of drained of joy. Despite my teacher identity taking a hit over this image, my identity as an artist was buoyed. The artist in me was happy that I had persevered through my ego to produce an image that I was pleased with in terms of both authenticity and technique. Those aspects were the silver linings and the things that kept my
artist identity painting, and gave me the confidence to push on to the next three paintings in the series.
Self-Portrait 2

Self-portrait number 2 was based on a photo of me chopping wood just after I graduated from art school in 2003. I combined it with a photo of a marsh trail in the town where I live now, a found images of a butterfly net, and the Ministry of Education category designation letters. An aspect of surrealism enters with the floating letters and the transformation of the axe into a butterfly net. This is an action painting, showing me in pursuit of information. My identity as a researcher was highlighted in this image. During the time I painted this image, I was eagerly reading articles and challenging myself to find my personal “blind spots” in regards to inclusion. My search for information, and my desire for certainty are clear to me in this second self-portrait. In hunting with a butterfly net, the image of butterflies pinned to a board for study hovers just out of consciousness. The idea that I could capture a designation, pin it down and study it to the point of “knowing” is as impossible as finding designations floating around above a marsh.

Knowing an individual student, and being able support them, is much more complicated than knowing what their designation represents. For me, this image pits symbolic understanding against embodied knowledge and reminds me to ground myself in time spent with students learning from them what they need and not relying entirely on the wealth of articles available online. There is a connection possible through teaching actual students that cannot be replaced with researching comparable subjects. My teacher identity found solace in knowing that time spent in the classroom was as important to my inclusive identity as the research that fed my practice. The balance between my identities becomes as relevant as the need to stay centered on the path in the marsh. I needed to find balance between my identities, and within my practice as an inclusive educator, so I did not find myself in brackish water up to my waist, floundering and failing my students.
Self-Portrait 3

The third self-portrait has me in the infinite state of “becoming.” The image I used for this picture was from my International Student ID from 2001. It was the first time I was living away from all my family and friends, truly on my own. Similarly, during the painting of the third self-portrait, I was again pushing out on my own. Up until this point I had been an inclusive educator with a personal practice based on the beliefs presented to me by colleagues that I work
with. Then I chose to set out on my own journey, determined to make discoveries unique to me. A more authentic and integrated version of myself began to emerge. Where before I was a patchwork of other peoples’ expectations and traditions with only little bits of me peeking through, I began emerging as a new entity. My face starts to come forward from the center of the canvas. It appeared faceted, like a cut stone. These parts or facets represented the time, refinement, and conscious choice I had invested to turn myself from raw material into something more reflective, each angle and facet revealing my resolution to go forward with intention and presence. The colours that surround me are warm, earthy versions of primary colours. The facets break up the division between subject and background integrating them so that they become part of each other. Similarly, as I transformed, my boundaries became less distinct between the identities of artist, researcher, and inclusive educator. I was more able to exist comfortably as all things at once. It was here in the fertile liminal spaces where, in the worlds of Sameshima & Irwin (2008) I could “welcome and embrace interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary learning in the multifarious rhizomatic pathways of pedagogic experience” (p.11)
Self-Portrait 4

The final self-portrait was based again on a selfie taken purposely at the start of the painting, the pose echoing the first self-portrait. The immediacy of the reference image mattered as a way of record keeping on my journey towards inclusivity. I wanted to see if my perceptions had shifted from one year to the next and if it was visible on my face. This final image showed an entirely different side of me than the first self-portrait. In this last painting I appeared relaxed
and happy, open and warm. Despite the continued pressures, deadlines, and daily surprises at school, my outlook had drastically altered between the first and last self-portraits. Some of this apparent positivity could be due to the different times of year that these were painted in and of course I was free to present any image of myself that I chose to. I purposely painted the first self-portrait to show myself at the end of the school year, a time renowned for being stressful for the majority of teachers. I also purposely chose to represent, in this last image, a version of myself that contrasted the first one. Even so, it seemed to me that there was a quiet confidence in this last version of myself that was not evident in any of the earlier self-portraits. It strikes me that the first and last portraits are “being” images that focus solely on my facial expression as a window to my state of mind, while the 2nd and 3rd portraits are “doing” images focused on activity, the 2nd “seeking” and the 3rd “transforming.” This final image of me “being” has much more possibility implied in my face than the first one did. I no longer bore my role as an inclusive educator with gritted teeth but approach it with curiosity and care, heart and mind open to teach and to learn and to include more of what frightened me at the end of last year. This image was much easier to view and to show to others, but it was not simply painted to flatter. During this process I came to greater peace and found less to worry about in trying to please multiple audiences. I do not think I would be content, or indeed able, to paint myself as falsely confident for the sake of the superficially positive opinions of others. I think this self-portrait shows willingness to accept myself and a desire to build my capacity to extend that acceptance to other people and engage with subjects that I am not yet familiar.
Chapter 5: Findings and Results of the Visual Research Journal

In order to make sense of my visual research journal I coded it based on a list of words that related to themes that emerged from the images, as well as words that were naturally relevant to my multiple a/r/tographic identities, the liminal in-between spaces, and my search for a more unified inclusive identity as an educator. I decided on these words after the journal was complete in order to keep myself from using the words as a focus or criteria for beginning each page. My intention was to let the journal evolve without an imposed or expected outcome in order for it to be a more organic representation of my self-discovery. A/r/tography looks for unplanned connections “A/r/tographers live and work in the spaces of dynamic currere. They are situated in liminal spaces between the identities of being an artist, researcher, and teacher/educator” (Sameshima & Irwin, 2008, p. 7). To honour and encourage this I let each page grow out of the need to communicate ideas and feelings that came from being present in my day to day life as an artist, researcher, and teacher. Nine themes are discussed here. Each of these themes appeared in more than 50% of all the pages that I completed. The remaining 13 themes that appeared in fewer than 50% of the journal pages are included in the appendix along with a list of which pages they appeared on.
PLAN

PLAN

but Prepare to find good things in the unexpected

changing course & responding to needs is as important as making a plan in the first place
Teacher, Liminal & Disruption

The 3 most prevalent themes that emerged from my research journal were Teacher, Liminal, and Disruption. These themes are not surprising given that my teacher identity has been the one that is most closely scrutinized during this process of growth and change. Liminal and Disruption are also unsurprising as my methodology has me directly examining the liminal spaces and working hard to disrupt unconscious patterns and habits that negatively inform my inclusive teaching.

Transformation, Complexity & Self

The 3 next most prevalent themes that came out of my journal were Transformation, Complexity, and Self. These three words were encouraging to me as my hope was that a/r/tography would help me to transform my beliefs and understandings of myself and the complex tapestry of my many roles and identities. Working through this journal has given me the
space to dig into the complexity of my multiple associations and identities, to acknowledge the complexity as well as examine it in the hopes of bringing unity to my sense of self as an inclusive educator. I do feel that a transformation has begun within me. My level of comfort with myself as someone who is continuing to “become” and who can speak to the complex web of teacher, mother, woman, artist, researcher, and my other identities has increased dramatically, as has my ability to sit with others who are grappling with their own emergence as inclusive educators.

**Inclusion, Uncertainty & Becoming**

The final 3 words that were revealed to me as significant by the research journal were *Inclusion, Uncertainty, and Becoming*. My focus for the last several years has been inclusion but my practice as an educator was built on the certainty that others held. Without having explored the subject for myself, I relied on asking questions of people with more experience in learning
resource than myself. My focus on inclusion was on how to memorize existing procedures and replicate the educational practice of others who knew more than I did. There were many moments of feeling like these solutions did not fit me as an educator, or indeed, did not fit the individual students that I hoped to help. My visual research journal, in coordination with my other forms of research throughout this process, has pushed me from relying on the certainty of others to face my own uncertainty and take steps to address it. I do not know all the answers, but I have made peace with the uncertainty of my role as an inclusive educator and am comfortable “becoming.” I understand my multiple roles better and have spent sufficient time in research that seeking has become integrated into my identity that helps me make sense of myself when I am faced with uncertainty. I found this journal to be more daunting than it should have been. Trying to keep the input authentic, raw and uncensored was one of my biggest challenges. I was often overly concerned with my audience and with creating something attractive. My self-consciousness hindered my progress and my ability to make connections in a way that I thought I had carefully planned to avoid simply by including this informal research journal in my methodology. The daily battle between self-awareness and self-consciousness haunted this journal. I also had forefront in my mind, images of well-known visual journals from art history. Research journals of famous artists kept creeping into the back of my mind having me comparing my process to the processes of other artists.
I had to stop letting my expectations interfere with my output. I will never be Picasso and so my research journal should not be a replica of his. My journal was for my education only, not an imaginary audience. These reconciliations were pivotal for me as an inclusive educator. I began to consider if this self-consciousness was similar to the way my students feel when they are working towards different outcomes than their classmates. It was distinctly uncomfortable for me to take a path different from one that was easily recognized as successful, even though I have the benefit of age and experience. Struggling to work in my research journal made clear to me the importance of demonstrating multiple strategies and examples when introducing projects to students and reminding them that their work is not meant to replicate an exemplar. Stressing critical and creative thinking is already a focus for my art classes when discussing core competencies with my students, but now I see how vital it is for me to include a diversity of
examples in all academic areas as well. In an art class, I show between 10 and 20 variations of each project to demonstrate the breadth of possibility. I try to stress to students that their projects will be different from the exemplars and from their friends’ projects. However, when working in an academic class, my exemplars tend to be fewer and share more similarities. When I hand out different versions of assignments to meet a variety of student needs, I have tried to keep this differentiation almost a secret from the class. It never fails though that at least one student will come to me concerned that I have given them the wrong worksheet or criteria sheet. They want the same version of success that everyone else has, and they are willing to take on criteria that do not suit them in order to be sure they will not be somehow “less”. In the same way that I struggled to see my journal as successful if it did not include shopping lists and mug marks, as well as ending up to look like a beautiful coffee table book, my students need to know that none of those criteria matter if the criteria themselves become an obstacle instead of a tool. In the future, I will spend more time developing a diversity of exemplars and templates for all students to choose from. I will try to spend more time discussing the big picture and how important it is to avoid comparing ourselves to others as a way to gauge our own success. Finally, I will remind myself to honour my experiences, research, and intuition instead of comparing my journey and practice to other inclusive educators that I admire.
 Same but different

symbol & reality
communication of ideas
general & specific

DIFFERENTIATION
what has value?
what can we dish?
IDENTITY

Page 14

Page 15
Coding my visual research journal proved to me that it was valuable to examine my practice using a/r/tography. The journal was a fertile space to explore frustrations, imagine possibilities, and gain some perspective on what I expect of myself, my colleagues, and my students. Seeing the evidence in my research journal helped me to solidify some connections that I had not yet put together and also helped to point me toward changes that need to be made in the way I conceptualize my role as an inclusive educator. I realized how high my expectations were for myself. I expected myself to have the skills and ability to deal with many complex situations and problems that were new to me without having the experience of more seasoned educators. I expected that I would not take work situations personally but found the journal a good outlet for frustrations. Looking at the journal also gave me time to acknowledge my humanity and that of my colleagues and students. We are all “becoming” and deserve support, dignity and grace.
Chapter 6: Findings and Results of the Designation Projects

These four projects were based on the British Columbia Ministry of Education Special Education designations. The designations, also called categories, which the MoE approves are assigned to students based on their assessed needs in a variety of domains. MoE designations may apply to physical, intellectual, or behaviour and mental health domains. Some of these designations come with funding to the schools and some do not, but all categories, once granted, afford students an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and a case manager to liaise with the classroom teacher and the education assistants to help identified students to live up to their potential. Designations can become a shorthand way of referring to the general needs that are shared by students in each category. I wondered if completing projects through a designation lens could provide insight into my biases and assumptions about students who struggle in ways typical of a particular designation. Working through the projects revealed a great deal about my assumptions of what was realistic for both me and my students to accomplish. I was dismayed to discover that I was so wrong so many times in what I thought I understood about various physical and neurological differences that a learner might be diagnosed with. In reflecting on my childhood as a learner who picked subjects up easily and across domains, I often found myself struggling to identify with the challenges my students encountered and predict the best ways to support them. Extra time and fewer questions are employed so universally that I wanted to see if I could identify any more specific adaptations that would benefit a student in a particular category. I hoped the process would help me confront and accept how much of an outsider I am in the experience of struggling at school and also remind me to be present with students’ in their challenges rather than assign them general adaptations. These projects had me humbled more often than not. The first big understanding that came when designing the projects was that it was
nearly impossible to generalize about a category knowing that each student would be so different. My research does not include actual students. My intention was to examine my own understanding. However, without actual student info to draw from, I could only hypothesise about attitudes, preferences, and details within a designation. A designation does not experience things and resultantly, these projects are distantly removed from the unique reality of any actual student. I believe their value lies in the way they remind me how far removed the short hand of a MoE designation is from understanding the needs of an actual student.

**Drawing Proportions with Keith Haring**

In the first project I set up a scenario where I imagined I was a student with a Q designation (BCMoE, 2016, p. 47-52) with slow processing speed and ADHD. The project I attempted with this set of learning challenges was a small group proportions activity based on the work of Keith Haring. Students are put in groups of four and each student is given a quarter of one shared image. The task is to use a grid structure to enlarge their section of the image so that together the group creates a bigger version of the original that they were given. Each of their sections should fit together to create a larger whole image.
How I achieved this designation:

1. TV on to a movie.

2. My favourite Podcast playing.

3. Timer set on my phone to go off every 1.5 minutes.

4. Instructions to follow any distraction to the limit rather than naturally refocusing on the project. Distractions were: texting, an itch on my ankle (had to take off my slipper and sock), had to get a drink of water, purposely left my eraser in my bedroom and had to go get it, checked my email, Instagram, Whatsapp, Facebook, etc.

In order to give myself a weakness in working memory I purposely disregarded two instructions:

1. I did not use a ruler to get accurate proportions. The teacher only spoke about it once and I imagined that I didn’t remember why I needed to use it.

2. I also used the incorrect ratio frame twice. I imagined that this was another instruction that could easily be forgotten or overlooked.

As a result, my end product is proportionally incorrect, eyeballed instead of measured, and would not fit with the 3 other images made by my hypothetical group members. The project was frustrating and being off task so often had me in a constant state of transitioning in or out of working. Staying on task under these conditions was such a challenge that I had little energy left to spend on my work. I never settled into a flow state and was ultimately disappointed by feeling that I had worked hard but had results that did not reflect my efforts. I was surprised by how many strategies I had to put in place to defeat my natural inclination to focus and follow instructions. This exercise made clear to me how many adaptations may be necessary to have in place in order for a student to overcome similar conditions to find success.
Collage Inferences with Adam Hale

The second project I attempted in this series was a collage based on the work of contemporary British collage artist Adam Hale with an imagined student with a K designation (BCMoE, 2016, p. 41-43). Adam frequently contrasts portraits cut from magazines and newspapers with a wide variety of other images that he collages coming out of his subjects’ heads. In this way he creates visual representations of possible thought processes being revealed. Students are asked to use a large version of their own school photo (provided) as a basis for a similar collage that prompts the viewer to consider what meaning is being made by the combination of related images and the way they are emerging from the head. Students are encouraged to go beyond “things I like”, and try to infer a theme, message, emotion, or feeling.

How I approximated a Category K designation:

1. Imagined that I struggled to understand written criteria and had to work on the advice of friends who also struggled to understand the instructions (asked people who didn’t know what the project was, what I should do next based on them looking at exemplars).

How I approximated having a receptive language delay:

1. Disregarded verbal instructions of friends.
How I reduced craftsmanship:

1. Cutting with my non-dominant hand.
2. Applying glue without looking closely.
3. Did not consider aesthetics or meaning when cutting open the head, just copied an example.

Expected Adaptations:

1. One on one check for understanding. Teacher repeats instructions and has a conversation with the student to see if the project is clear.
2. A written checklist of criteria is provided for the class on the whiteboard.
3. Student is given fewer criteria. Only 3 images are needed instead of 5+.
4. Standards for craftsmanship are related to students of younger chronological age to allow for less skilled cutting and pasting.

This project had mixed success after approximating the designation. I felt like the degree of satisfaction would depend on the investment of the individual student. Despite the collage communicating only the most basic expression of things I like, rather than expressing a more abstract idea or feeling, the result was still visually similar to the exemplars. The potential for humor in the end result was a major motivator, especially when I began asking people for their input. Rather than focusing on the criteria, crowd-sourcing ideas allowed me to be social and to please my friends instead of worrying about criteria that I didn’t understand. I felt successful in my connections with others, even as I missed aspects of the project that could have been possible with more focused adult support. It made me consider the way that collaborative art practices can build community, and reminded me that the product of art does not always have to be the focus, the process of creation is also something valuable to increase connections with self and others.
Coil Pot Building

In this project students attempt to build a coil pot and learn about historical construction techniques for making clay vessels. The students are taught coil building techniques and introduced to this method of construction in vessels throughout history. Students use a mid-fire white clay, forks for scoring and vinegar to join pieces together. They roll out a flat base and then build any hollow shape to a maximum height of 12 inches. These pieces will be glazed and students are encouraged to consider the purpose of their vessel as they construct them. For my research I tried to construct a coil vessel while focusing on the challenges that might arise as a student with a G designation, Autism Spectrum Disorder (BCMoE, 2016, P. 85-90).

How I achieved this designation:

1. Object to touching the clay based on sensory considerations. *Reconsidered the arbitrary nature of this decision.*

2. Refuse to stop making pinch pots and try the coil building method. *Reconsidered as this seemed an equally likely and unlikely possibility.*

3. Insist on painting instead of doing clay. *Certainly possible but not necessarily even a consideration.*

4. Burst into tears and hide under a table. *Could happen but also maybe not.*

5. Just do the project without objections or adaptations. *Equally likely.*

This project was not possible. I did build a coil pot, but as I tried to pick out traits that would make it possible for me to identify with the struggle of a student on the spectrum, I realized what an impossibility it was. Every time I thought up a new parameter to impose on myself or the project, I realized it was a trait associated with a specific student and was not widely shared among students with a G designation. There were no generalities that I could apply to myself that
would inform a set of challenges to overcome. Without using examples that were specific to certain students, the wide range of characteristics of individuals who operate across the entire spectrum of experience became impossible to navigate. I was disappointed and thought of leaving this project out of the research, but as my intention was to use these projects to examine and destabilize my role as an inclusive educator, I realized what a revelation this coil pot project had been. Seeing my expectation crash into reality was embarrassing and unpleasant but a wonderful indicator of the value of using a/r/tography to dig into complex human interactions and forced me to consider the assumptions I make and how they impact the way I see students with a G designation in the future.
In this project students choose a famous image that they want to replicate in order to practice techniques and skills without worrying about composition. I tried to imagine giving this project to a student with a B designation (BCMoE, 2016, p. 74-78). In my class, I provide 15-20 images as suggestions as to what sort of images will be successful first paintings. Students are also given time to explore several art sites online and encouraged to bring in personal images to use as well. Imagining that a partially sighted student would have additional difficulties in replicating an existing painting, I chose for myself “Garrowby Hill,” a painting by David
Hockney from 1998 that has bold shapes and bright expressive colours. It seemed like a subject that would allow for maximum success even with a vision impairment.

How I achieved Category B designation:

1. Taped four layers of plastic over my glasses.

Expected Adaptations:

1. A bold, high contrast painting was chosen as the reference image to copy.
2. Dark pencil lines drawn on the canvas to help orient to the image.
3. Canvas secured on a dark background.
4. Reference image was enlarged on a computer screen.
Painting was immediately frustrating. Many additional vision issues became obvious that I had not predicted beyond the complexity of the reference image. One unexpected vision challenge that I did not foresee was straining to see the paint on my palette. Initially, I put far too much paint on my palette. It was a waste to see what was left when I was done. Then, I could not tell if the paint on the palette was dry or wet. I frequently ended up with too much or too little paint on my brush. I also had a reduced ability to regulate the water I added to my acrylics and often found my paint too wet when I rinsed my brushes in the water cup. There was very little finesse in my brush strokes. Where I should have had generous paint to blend up against a neighbour colour, it was either too dry to mix, or transparent and thinned with too much water, rather than thick and opaque. The small brush that I tried to use for the blue lines between fields didn’t hold enough water and ran out sooner than anticipated leaving jerky lines instead of the fluid lines I intended. I had trouble seeing if my brush had gotten clean in the rinse water. This meant several muddy colours where they should have been bright and clean.

Painting this felt futile. I knew I was missing nuance and detail. However, it may have turned out better than it would have been, as when I chose this image for my experiment I saw the reference image plainly and must have retained some of that knowledge even when painting with my obscured vision. What I had seen clearly, coupled with my existing knowledge of painting, allowed me to persevere, when a student might have far less reason to continue. Attempting to focus with my poor vision also left me with a headache and a feeling of weariness at having to work so hard to see all afternoon. Enlarging the image on the computer screen helped partially, but I then had another difficulty of finding my place again when I focused back on my painting. It was no easy process shifting my focus back and forth. Another possibility exists though, that a student with a B designation would have vastly different expectations than I
did. They would be accustomed to seeing differently and so their perception of success may not align with mine at all, and they may not experience the fatigue and eye strain that bothered me. Ultimately, there was so much more involved in trying to adapt a painting project for a partially sighted student than I had even considered at the outset of this project. I am glad that I worked through it and had this struggle to see what a limited understanding I have of what I presumed would be the easiest designation to relate to.
Chapter 7: Findings and Results of Einstein’s Dreams: Inclusion Imagined Through Narrative

Using the short book *Einstein’s Dreams* by Alan Lightman as my guide, I began to write about hypothetical educational environments from the perspectives of multiple imagined stakeholders. This project came from a desire to envision alternative conditions for inclusive education without the commitment to concrete changes and policy in B.C. Allowing myself to consider schooling through several fictional scenarios gave me the freedom to pose “what if..?” questions and to trouble my understanding of what is working and what is not working for me as an inclusive educator, in relation to the actual environment that I practice in. The poetic narratives in Lightman’s *Einstein’s Dreams* also gave me latitude to create fictional individuals and to imagine how they might feel and be impacted by alternate dimensions of inclusive educational practice. I felt strongly that the value in having relatable characters explore these worlds would help me to identify the way my own biases were aligned or challenged in each hypothetical situation. I wondered if I would be able to see other systems or practices from multiple points of view, and if the collection of stories and characters would reveal my biases to me in the places where the stories overlapped. My writing was solely informed by generalizations about my own experiences working as a learning resource teacher in British Columbia and not by any actual people or events outside of my imagination.

I wrote about four distinct fictional models where students came to school and encountered different parameters for educating them. As well as students, 100% of the stories include both teachers and certified education assistants. 50% of the stories include learning resource teachers as key elements, one story had no LRTs, and the last one mentions how they were being phased out and reassigned as classroom teachers. 50% of the stories included a parent
perspective. 48% of the stories that focused on an individual student, mentioned their friends at school as well. Only one of the models represented a Superintendent’s point of view. 15 students appeared in the stories, 40% were female and 60% were male, 40% were in grade 8 or above and 60% were in grade 7 or below.

Model 1

The first narrative was about a system without Psycho-Educational Assessments or Individual Education Plans for any students. The story takes place during the transition away from our current system and towards the hypothetical one. When coding this story for positive and negative phrases used by the characters, it came up with an even split. 50% of the time the characters were pleased and 50% of the time the characters found faults about the new system without testing or IEPs. All three of the students in this model were in high school, 2 of 3 were male. There were no parents included in their story but all the characters mentioned their friends at school. The character of the Superintendent had zero positive phrases. She was plagued with doubts. “The superintendent was afraid that this plan would destroy her district. All those extra resources cost a great deal of money. So many professional development days would have to be used to help teachers get up to speed. Learning resource teachers would have to be reassigned to classrooms as entire LR departments were dissolved.” Two of the students found more to like in the new system and enjoyed the freedom to assign themselves the level or method of assistance they need. They liked being able to choose which adaptations worked best for them in each subject and as a result became more aware of how they liked to learn. The third student was less successful. “Brody doesn’t know what he needs. He does know what he likes, and it isn’t reading. He spends all of his silent reading time, from grade 5 to grade 8, sorting things at his desk and asking to go to the washroom or get water.” Instead of finding ways to do well, Brody
finds ways to avoid tasks he finds difficult, and avoids the teacher noticing him fall behind. In coding this passage I found myself identifying with the Superintendent who was full of fears about how long it would take to determine if the new system worked, what to do with all the redundant learning resource teachers, and wondering how the teachers would cope with the new system. I saw my bias revealed by the students in this story. No matter which model existed, there would likely be a minority of students who struggle and a majority who simply adapt to the changes and continue to meet expectations.

**Model 2**

In the second model, students wrote their own IEP goals rather than having them written by learning resource teachers. All 5 characters in this passage were in elementary school. 3 of them were girls and 2 were boys. When reflecting on this method of IEP development, 63% of the phrases were coded as negative, while 37% were positive comments. Friends were mentioned 40% of the time and no parent character or comments were included. Teachers, CEAs and learning resource teachers were involved in IEP development and implementation but their roles were drastically reduced from the system I currently work in. The teachers in this model struggled to keep track of the variety of needs their students had come up with and ended up posting lists for students to check off themselves after they had taken care of their IEP duties. Instead of writing goals, the LRTs “read through all the student made goals and vetoed only the most unlikely of the contributions. ‘No, your goal cannot be to walk your neighbour’s dog every week. We need to think of a goal to improve your multiplication.’” The students had varied degrees of success with making their own goals. The youngest students, Olivia and Justin, lacked the understanding to make sensible goals and the motivation to stick to them when they fancied doing something else. Melody, a slightly older girl, liked the system immensely. She felt she had
control of her goals and it worked for her. Cole, however, liked making choices but could not understand what made one choice better than another. Cole sometimes “chose his favourite activities over and over again because he had gotten quite good at them, good enough to help others which his teacher praised him for. He helped his friends so much that most days he didn’t finish his own work, but he was good at helping and liked being chosen to run things to the office or fetch things for the teacher. Cole felt very successful… [h]e couldn’t understand why spelling was more important than helping people.” Another student, Bree, had access to many strategies to keep her on task and on track with her assignments. She liked her desk tools and timers but her focus was now on the tools instead of her classwork. This passage had me connecting with the frustration that I feel when despite good intentions and hard work, strategies are not successful for students. Like the teacher and LRT in this story, I sometimes find myself scrambling to keep track of strategies and ways to integrate them seamlessly into curriculum time. These harried times initially made me consider whether I was good fit in my role as an inclusive educator. I think having students take on the responsibility for writing their own IEPs is unlikely but exploring the ramifications has me examining my current adaptations checklist more closely.

Model 3

In the third model there was a small school operating within the larger school. The small school was the learning resource department, but it operated as a classroom where all students go with their classes throughout their early education. There were two students in this story, two brothers. One brother was in elementary school and one at high school. Their parents were included and the younger brother mentioned his friends. This story was found to include 84% positive phrases about the model and only 16% negative phrases, based on the opinions of all the
characters. Having all classes visit the learning resource clinic regularly in elementary school gave the LRTs more time with all students, getting to know them and becoming familiar faces. It also gave teachers time to collaborate and observe the strengths and challenges of each student individually and each class as a group. As student needs were observed, resources and tools were allocated, results determined and then testing provided to those who qualified. The narratives in this model were 27% more positive than any of the other stories. I saw the positivity stemming from relationships that were stronger due to the integration of the learning resource department into all classes. For example, “Noah didn’t want to go to the small school initially. He wanted to stay in the big class like he had at his old school. He quickly found that he really liked the teachers in the small school and began to make friends with other students who also got reading help at the same time as him. He soon forgot his initial hesitation and going to small school was just part of his routine.” In this school-within-a-school model, the teachers and LRTs have a chance to regularly work together, collaborating and observing during their small school visits. The students and LRTs have a chance to get to know each other better as well. I often find classroom teachers ask me to observe or assess a student that I have never met. The students are not comfortable with me, a near stranger, and they often ask me if they are in trouble. The exploration of this model reminded me how important it is to be present in classrooms, at school wide events, and in the hallways so that I create more opportunities for relationship building within any system.

**Model 4**

The final model was based on the idea of individualized learning through projects with mastery of concepts as the goal. In this model, students were arranged by subject, not age. In each subject room, students would observe examples of project work, based on the outcomes for
that subject, before they were encouraged to research their own topic. Many examples at many
different levels of ability were presented to encourage exploration and personalization of project
work. Some smaller workshopping groups were arranged for students to help each other with
researching, editing, and refining their work. There were 5 students in this story, 2 girls and 3
boys. 3 students in elementary and 2 students in high school. Parents were included but none of
the 5 students mentioned friends. There were no learning resource teachers mentioned in this
narrative, but there were CEAs in the classrooms helping students. The characters were 57% positive
in the phrases that indicated their opinion about the model. The absence of LRTs in this
narrative did not allow me to comment from their perspective. However, reading back over the
stories of these students, it seemed clear to me what an incredibly complex task it would be for a
classroom teacher to maintain unique support for each student in order to keep them on track,
especially if any of the students had academic, physical or cognitive needs that required
additional adaptations. The teacher in this story contacted a set of parents but could not get them
to support the program. Without an LRT to assist the classroom teacher in assessing and
suggesting adaptations for students who were not making gains, classroom teachers were left on
their own to problem solve as concerns came up. What was clear in the narrative was how
individualized expectations for everyone left students on their own most of the time. “There were
a lot of students working on very different things in the civilizations room and the teacher needed
more time to finish up with the others before she could spend time with Elaina one on one.”
Students such as Elaina were working on unique outcomes in different rooms for each subject
with different groups of people. The high school aged students were much more able to work in
this system, the elementary aged students though had a harder time in this model. Though it
might provide richness to have multi-age groups in this model, it left students without a core
group of chronologically similar peers to move forward with. I wonder how the lack of consistent peers could affect student connection overall. A group or partner project would have to be very carefully managed in order for all the participants to work effectively together and there would need to be close monitoring to ensure students met all necessary outcomes.

These narrative explorations of possible models of inclusive education were the most troubling for me out of the 4 bodies of work I produced. Every narrative choice that I made while writing meant that I did not choose a thousand other possibilities. The things I focused on tell as much about me as the things and characters that I chose to write about. I want to be sure going forward as an inclusive educator that I am focusing on the right things and not simply getting lost in fascinating details. In my practice I need to spend more time in the reflection phase rather than the production phase of curriculum events so that I can more clearly see which aspects are insignificant details, and which aspects are key understandings that I could build on. I will work harder to fully consider additional voices and perspectives in each situation. I look forward to spending more time distilling the key elements from an event or subject in order to advocate for them to remain while leaving arbitrary details behind. Another unexpected revelation in this project was related to the process rather than to the product. I compared my writing to that of Lightman. In the other 3 bodies of work I had confidence built on years of experience painting and drawing and teaching. In this foray into creative writing as research, I could not rely on previous writing experiences or strengths to keep me pushing forward. I found myself doing loads of laundry, unloading the dishwasher and checking my email just moments after resolving to write about the models and, finally, to sit down and write this chapter on my findings. I think this demonstrates the power of strength based teaching, because although all parts of this research were challenging, the writing, where I found the least strength, was definitely the most
difficult. In order to overcome my hesitation, I gave myself a great deal of positive self-talk to reassure myself that the goal of this exercise was to explore ideas and not to publish a beautiful book. My internal motivation and life experience gave me the tools I needed to continue working on a project that was difficult, despite it not suiting my strengths. In the future I will spend more time looking for student strengths, building on them, and using those strengths to increase their confidence as learners.
Chapter 8: Conclusions

Summary

The purpose of my research was to disrupt my previously held assumptions at the intersection of my identities and attempt to discover any biases that were not serving my foundation as an inclusive educator. In looking at research on teacher identity development it was clear that programs for educating educators were neither addressing the shift from student to teacher identity, nor providing a solid foundation for teachers to develop inclusive beliefs for their practices (Gormally, 2016). There was a consistent acknowledgement in these articles that becoming a certified teacher did not equate to the very complex reconfiguration of beliefs needed to have “teacher” as a central tenant of one’s identity, and that no consistent pathway for this transformation was built into teacher education programs (Ahonen et al. 2015). New teachers were largely left to their own devices to transition from thinking of themselves as students, to re-enacting previous examples of teachers, to being teachers themselves. They were left to search out answers on their own while immersed in their teaching practice. Whether or not an individual ever chose to take additional coursework, professional development opportunities, or spend time in reflection, was up to them at the point in their career that they deemed it appropriate (Benedict et al., 2014). The added imperative to also live and work with inclusion at the forefront of one’s teaching identity required even more remediation as bachelor programs were consistently found to offer only a brief introduction to the idea of inclusive education (Taylor & Ringladen, 2012). The research indicated that prospective teachers felt under prepared to teach in inclusive classrooms and had difficulty viewing themselves as capable to do a quality job with the generalist training that they received (Ahonen et al., 2015). I was curious to see what impact a/r/tography might have if it was applied to examining my own inclusive teacher identity. I was
introduced to a/r/tography while in my secondary art teacher education program at the University of British Columbia. This relatively recent addition to qualitative research developed to center around concurrent art and writing practices focused through the three lenses of artist, researcher, and teacher. I was privileged to hear Professor Rita Irwin speak to my Bachelor of Education cohort and, soon after, I had an opportunity to try it out in a language and literacy class. I was struggling to see myself as a teacher after such an intensive PDP. I had not yet gathered my own experience or immersed myself in the research sufficiently to be able to live my identities through my practice as an inclusive educator. In order to make sense of this rapid transition between student and teacher, a classmate, Gunita Gupta, and I put together a zine, *Pulse: The Heart Issue* (2014), to chronicle our becoming teacher identity. She was a prospective English teacher and I an almost art teacher, so it made sense to combine our preferred mediums and collaborate on a tiny magazine to try to capture the huge shift in our own identities. Using an anthropomorphised anatomical heart as our character, we wrote poetry and drew fantastical images of our “becoming” as it impacted our own hearts. A/r/tography stuck with me and the zine remains one of my treasured possessions from that fragile, uncertain time in my life.
According to Avramidis and Norwich (2002), “teachers’ beliefs have a considerable impact on teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion which, in turn, are translated into practice” (p.140). The understanding that a teacher was “a critical determinant” (p. 17) in the success of inclusion was shared by Forlin and Chambers, (2011). This idea, presented to our cohort at Vancouver Island University in our very first class, sparked the framework for my exploration into the nature of my beliefs on inclusion. In combination with a/r/tography, my chosen methodology, I began to explore these questions:

1. How can a/r/tography be used to examine and destabilize my understanding of my role in inclusive education?

2. How can a/r/tography influence the trajectory of my inclusive teacher identity?
Since I had found my initial, brief immersion in this methodology to be generative and nourishing to all my identities, and to draw them closer together, it made sense to me to expand its potential in this research.

**Discussion**

In order to examine my relationship with inclusion I chose four a/r/tographical projects to push my thinking beyond the concrete and into the periphery of my understanding of myself as an inclusive educator. I looked at myself, quite literally from all angles, in a series of 4 self-portraits done over 7 months, to see what might be revealed through colour, style, inferences and even the source material I chose. The self-portraits showed a journey from fear to calm, through searching and fragmenting before coming together to reveal a new version of myself, changed through the process of self-examination. I also delved into a visual research journal to catch daily reflections of how I understood my roles and how those roles conflicted and fit together at times. The journal became a source of solace on days when I felt frustrated and a place to discover more about what I believed and wished for on my journey towards a more integrated, inclusive identity. In addition to providing material to code and analyze, the visual research journal gave me an outlet and a connection to my artist identity that had been neglected for years while I focused on gathering my teacher identity around me more securely. A/r/tography also provided a method for me to try to identify with some of the educational struggles my students face. I completed four art projects as if I had four different Ministry of Education Special Education designations. Since I spend the bulk of my day suggesting and providing solutions and strategies for situations that I have never experienced, I felt I ought to expend some energy trying to walk a mile in a few hypothetical students’ shoes. The designation projects showed me several blind spots in my thought process as I worked through them. They had me re-evaluate the key
outcomes of several assignments as I came crashing up against my own expectations. These projects were humbling and reminded me to spend time with my students, working together to find our way instead of prescribing good ideas from behind my desk. Finally, using Einstein’s *Dreams* for inspiration, I wrote narrative models about what the lives of imagined students and educators would feel like if inclusive education and learning resource departments were restructured in four different ways. The models showed what I thought was possible through the eyes of many other versions of myself. In each story there was success and failure depending on the point of view that was taken. The same way that the current system works and hiccups at times, for different people and purposes, there were no perfect solutions, only the willingness to help and be helped that had the potential to turn every individual story from failure into success. The greatest lesson for me in this writing was that my willingness to seek answers, transform my thinking and to continue “become” inclusive was not a fixed point that I was working towards. No perfect system existed outside of myself that made inclusion possible, inclusion was ever reinventing itself within me.

**Limitations**

There were two main limitations of my self-study. First, the “promise without a guarantee” (Carter et al., 2011) of undertaking a/r/tographical research when the outcome of dedicating oneself to the process forestalls making any prediction about what the results will be. The second limitation was how reliant I was on being fully aware of my own thinking during all parts of research, analysis, and writing. I had to be completely present in the a/r/tographical research phase, but I also had to be equally present and self-aware in the coding and analysis of that same research. In analyzing myself, I settled into uncovering biases and working to disturb ingrained patterns of my own thoughts and beliefs to make space for new ways of knowing my
roles. My singularity was unavoidable as I created and analyzed from the same perspective, though I tried to view myself through the various lenses of artist, researcher, teacher and inclusive educator. Additionally, this research was limited to a finite period of time. It provides only a brief window into my identities as they developed during this stage of my career with a focus on inclusive identity across the overlapping territories of artist, researcher, and teacher.

**Implications and recommendations**

After working through this process I was able to reflect on what had been most fruitful for me and what might be helpful to others. Using a/r/tography brought my identities closer together and started to dissolve the barriers between them. I have always used visual methods to think through problems but I found during this research that I had been making a conscious effort to keep my artist identity separate from my teacher and researcher identities. I saw that I had believed there was a necessary distinction between these roles and that “thinking like an artist” did not have a place in the more academic spaces of education. Through this research I now see that this was not a productive division within my view of what was, and was not, acceptable to include in my practice as an inclusive educator. In acknowledging this, and beginning to shift my understanding away from discrete identities and towards Irwin’s métissage (2004) of territories in between those identities as opportunities to see and create new ways of knowing, I believe I have made it possible to think of myself through the lens of inclusion. All parts of my identity have been included and this has brought me a centered sense of self that was not available before. I think that this affords me the grace to extend my inclusive practice farther out and to honour greater diversity than I was previously capable of.

I recognized the value that this time of self-study had brought into my role as inclusive educator and felt that it allowed me to focus on what was lacking in my practice, in order to
become more proactive in making choices based on inclusion. I believe that this process of identity reconciliation could be possible for other educators, should they feel the need arise and grant themselves the time to work through a similar process. I would highly recommend such an investigation, although I would not prescribe the same conditions and projects to another educator. Through this research I now see how important it is to give yourself permission to find your own way and not to set expectations of your results that are based on the criteria of another individual. Working towards goals set by another researcher could situate your outcomes in relation to theirs rather than providing the a/r/tographic freedom to explore the rhizomatic connections and the liminal spaces that will inevitably be unique to your own needs (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Undertaking such rigorous self-examination required certain willingness and an acknowledged personal need to delve into ways of knowing that could shift my practices. Hesitation or reluctance to commit fully to the projects, processes, or reflection would have left this research empty of meaning. In suggesting this methodology for another researcher, my recommendation is to consider thoroughly whether they are willing to move through the uncomfortable process of not being able to predict the outcome when they embark on the adventure of a/r/tography. I do not believe that this course of study would be as generative were it to be prescribed. In my view it needs to be embraced and welcomed by one who is fully ready to engage with it.

**Suggestions for Further Research**

A/r/tography has opened the door to knowing more fully why I operate the way that I do. Based on this experience using a/r/tography to trouble inclusive teacher identity development, I predict that I will revisit a/r/tography as my career progresses. I have seen a/r/tography demonstrate its power to uncover different ways of knowing and its ability to speak to the heart
of education. Based on the insight I gained into the nature of my daily interactions in school through my visual research journal, I would like to explore the way that school culture might influence the beliefs and attitudes of educators towards inclusion. How we determine who is responsible for each student, each assessment, the communication that coordinates services, and if we can own our roles with optimism. I was surprised when my research journal revealed the burdens and obstacles that weighed me down as I tried to navigate a course toward inclusion.

**Conclusion**

My research set out to bridge the many gaps between my identities that kept me fractured as an individual and as an inclusive educator. In order to find my way forward I used a/r/tography to wander the territory between these seemingly separate roles. Rather than moving directionally “forward” a/r/tography had me linger in between these discrete identities, dissolving the distance between them until the borders could be renegotiated, overlapped and overlooked. As suggested by Garoian (2010), I was thinking in the periphery, letting the unseen become seen rather than picking a visible target and hunting it. Resisting the urge to follow a prediction based on what I already “know” had me observing rather than acting in order to let what needed to be seen materialize for study. This approach allowed me to merge my artist, researcher, and teacher identities and to integrate inclusive practice by making space for them all to hold hands together in a strong center. In answer to my first research question, through each image and piece of writing I crafted as part of this research I revealed myself more completely and came to understand instances and situations in ways that I had not previously been able to connect with as they related to my inclusive identity. My assumptions appeared and my practices were indeed destabilized. I was forced to see how haphazardly I had put together my expectations for myself and my students. Without this process there would not have been an
opportunity to examine my understanding of my role in inclusive education. I believe these insights would have gone unseen, the artifacts would not have been produced and the process of analysis would have been absent. In answer to my second research question, I believe a/r/tography has pushed my practice beyond complacency. As I go forward in my career and in my life, my multiple identities no longer fight for time and dominance, each one has earned a place of equal value and a right to be heard. I will no doubt need to remind myself from time to time, but I will never need to teach myself the same lesson again. I welcomed inclusion in through a/r/tography and it lives within me now to be tended so that it can continue to grow. As I influence the students who come through my classroom, I want to encourage their own complex, unique identities so they are not afraid of difference and look for ways to include each other in the space between us all.
References


## Appendix A

### Coding of Visual Research Journal Data

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