

UNDERSTANDING THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF GRADUATE
COUNSELING STUDENTS ENGAGED IN THERAPEUTIC EXPRESSIVE
ARTS-BASED ACTIVITIES

A Dissertation
by
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ABSTRACT

UNDERSTANDING THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF GRADUATE COUNSELING STUDENTS ENGAGED IN THERAPEUTIC EXPRESSIVE ARTS- BASED ACTIVITIES (December 2012)

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This study focuses on how graduate counseling students experience therapeutic expressive arts-based activities. Participation in expressive arts-based activities (EABA) for graduate counseling students is intended to give students an understanding of how clients may experience EABA in therapy. It is in this experiential format of learning that students often express finding a personal therapeutic quality in addition to the academic understanding of EABA. However, there lacks in descriptive literature *how* graduate counseling students experience EABA. Research in this area is important for expressive arts therapy educators because the understanding of how graduate counseling students experience EABA informs pedagogy. Conversely, there currently lacks explicit expressive arts therapy pedagogy for this field of study. Counselor education and specific training in the expressive arts would benefit greatly from a systematic and detailed exploration of students' experiences with EABA, contributing nuances and contextualized understanding to the field of expressive arts therapy pedagogy. In addition, by bridging primarily philosophical and theoretical descriptions of expressive arts with other theories derived from experimental research, flow and event theories respectively, these combined theories hold relevance as a pedagogical tool for educating students in EABA.

This study also relates to higher education pedagogy and educational leadership opportunities in general. The findings from this study discuss the relationship between teacher and student *and* teaching and learning. This knowledge informs educational leaders about the multiple pedagogical practices that foster knowledge making.

To gain a better understanding of graduate counseling students' learning processes in expressive arts education, this study pursues both a primary and secondary research question.

1. How do graduate counseling students describe their experience with expressive arts-based activities? 2. How do flow and event theories align or misalign with students' expressed experiences with EABA in the classroom setting? The research project examines relevant literature against observations of two classes and personal interviews with students and faculty. Using a/r/tographic methodology, this qualitative study explored how graduate counseling students experienced EABA. A/r/tographic methods were presented through artistic interludes that emerged from reflections in the form of a collaged cloth journal.

Three major themes emerged from data analysis: sense of self in learning, physicality, and EABA as pedagogy. Findings indicate that students experienced competing emotions, positionality, affect, and integration from their experiences in EABA. Findings also indicate the teacher and student relationship weighed heavily in students' academic success.

Implications and recommendations for educational administrators are presented. Limitations and suggestions for further research are identified.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband David, who has given his time to clean the house, wash dishes, and willingly watch all the football, basketball, baseball games, and two Olympics throughout the past four years in order for me to focus on my studies. When I was tired and wanted to quit, he encouraged me to continue, to look forward to the completion of my work and new career options. Thank you Dave.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my two grown daughters, Sara and Jessie, and my granddaughter, Lucy. The completion of this dissertation is a reminder that women can hold endless possibilities in their lives. They can attain their goals. My education serves not as a standard for their lives, but as a model of perseverance in using God-given talents and abilities. The doctoral degree was my goal. Thank you Sara and Jessie for listening to me ramble on about my topic and all the obstacles I had to face throughout this endeavor. Thank you Lucy for letting me stay with you when you were an infant so that I could be close to the university. I was able to enjoy the pleasures of being a Nana while balancing the academic world. I was blessed by your presence. Lucy, dream big in life and go after your dreams! I am graced to witness your life unfold.

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Dr. Sally Atkins, you have been a mentor in my life for over five years. You have inspired me, mentored me in my role as an expressive arts therapist, and blessed me with your kindness and humbleness. My personal and professional life will never be the same because of your influence on me. As I continue to grow as a therapist and educator, I will always remember you as one who believed in me all along this educational journey. Thank you my dear friend.

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between teaching and counseling and to be alert to finding my place in this world. You gave me permission to let the colors of my artistic imagination speak out and reveal themselves in class. Thank you for your appreciation of nontraditional ways of knowing. It was an honor to have shared the educational path with you.

Finally, I need to thank my cohort, my brothers and sisters in this educational journey. Placed together divinely and graced by each other's strengths, we carried each other through the tough times and celebrated together our joys.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

As a past graduate of a community counseling program, I earned post-graduate certification in expressive arts therapy. The counseling program was presented in a traditional format while the pedagogy of expressive arts therapy provided an experiential component to most classes. In the expressive arts therapy certificate program within the counselor education program, classes included time for academic knowledge of the subject matter and a time for experiential expressive arts-based activities (EABA). This mix of traditional instruction and EABA created an intertwining of two divergent modes of learning. However, when I participated in EABA as a student in the program, I experienced therapeutic insight while gaining academic knowledge. I wondered how this experiential format of EABA affected fellow students. Did other students experience a therapeutic result from their participation within the educational process of expressive arts therapy like I did? This curiosity in knowing *if* fellow students experienced therapeutic insight fueled my interest to investigate the phenomenon. As a teacher and a counselor, I wondered how students would describe the meaning that EABA held within the educational learning environment. Furthermore, as a researcher, I wondered about the extent to which students' descriptions of EABA in their learning environment aligned with or somehow departed from theories that explained EABA in therapeutic settings. Beginning from these theories, I hoped to find a theory that I thought had explanatory potential.

Purpose of Study

Atkins and Williams (2007) describe expressive arts therapy as an “interdisciplinary, integrative, arts-based approach to counseling and psychotherapy” (p.1). Expressive arts therapy includes varying therapeutic modalities as an arts-based method for clients to gain insight and knowledge about themselves and their world. Expressive arts therapy is quite different from traditional methods of psychotherapy because it offers clients an alternative experiential way of knowing themselves. Although there is time for traditional talk therapy within expressive arts therapy, art making plays an active role in uncovering and reflecting upon information, emotions, and experiences. This therapeutic approach also offers a voice and a container for traumatic experiences that are often too intense to put into spoken words. Connecting to embodied memories can be accomplished through such sensory-rich art forms as poetry, drama, painting, poetry, music, and dance. In expressive arts therapy, imagination and expression play an important part in the process that can result in insights and solutions. These elements can bring healing and transformation to the individual (Atkins & Williams, 2007; Knill, 1999, 2005; Levine, 1992, 1999, 2009; McNiff, 2009; Rogers, 1999).

The field of expressive arts therapy is less than 50 years old. Stemming from traditional psychotherapy roots (Freud & Strachey, 1912; Hillman, 1975, 1977, 1978; Jung, 1953; Moreno, 1973; Rogers, 1951, 1977; Winnicott, 1969, 1971), expressive arts therapy emerged as a recognized form of therapy in the early 1970’s through the work of such scholars as Shaun McNiff (1976) and Paolo Knill (McNiff & Knill, 1975; see especially McNiff, 2009, for historical development). Over the past 30 years, Natalie Rogers (1999), Stephen Levine (1992, 1999, 2005, 2009), Bruce Moon (1990, 1997, 2001, 2007), Cathy Malchiodi (2003, 2005), Keith Davis and Sally Atkins (2004), Sally Atkins and Lesley

Duggins Williams (2007), have contributed their theoretical perspectives to this expanding field (McNiff, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 2009; McNiff & Knill, 1975). Stemming from multiple backgrounds such as philosophy, art therapy, artistic psychology, and person-centered psychotherapy, these pioneers believed that bringing the arts into therapy created a powerful healing combination (McNiff, 2009; Malchiodi, 2005). Today, even as expressive arts therapy has grown tremendously, these pioneer scholars continue to re-examine the field of expressive arts and encourage students and therapists to test theory and explore new methodologies (McNiff, 2009). McNiff (1998, 2009) encourages researchers to cross disciplines, exploring questions through both qualitative and quantitative lenses so that those in expressive arts therapy can better understand *how* the arts contribute to emotional healing. Levine (2009) calls for constant exploration, stating that the field “is forever beginning” (p. xi). Malchiodi (2005) adds that there is still much to learn about how expressive arts work therapeutically.

Historically, much of the early writings on expressive arts therapy were theory-based (Knill, 1999; Levine, 1999, 2005; Malchiodi, 2005; McNiff, 1981, 1992, 2009; Rogers, 1999). Today, the majority of research in expressive arts and creative arts therapies involves studies of how subjects/clients have benefited from EABA in therapy (Chabon & Lee-Wilkerson, 2006; Heenan, 2006; Huss, 2007; Keeling & Bermudez, 2006; Reynolds & Hean Lim, 2007; Weishaar, K. 1999). Even as the expressive arts therapy field has grown through empirical research, there remains a lack of descriptive evidence as to *how* EABA works, specifically in regards to teaching graduate counseling students.

The lack of existing literature as to how EABA is experienced by graduate counseling students caused me to design the current study, which sought to explore the experience of

EABA from the perspective graduate counseling students and their faculty themselves. Additionally, I also sought to look into experimental sciences that could support philosophical expressive art theories mentioned earlier. In particular, I was curious if event theory (Shipley, 2008) and flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996, 1997) could help explain the phenomenon that I wished to understand.

Research Statement

It is in the pedagogical process of training graduate counseling students and specifically with the use of EABA in expressive arts therapy classes that this study was situated. As an interpretive study, I observed, interviewed, and systematically reflected upon graduate counseling students attending classes in an expressive arts therapy graduate certification program at a mid-size university in the southeastern United States. I was engaged in this work in order to better understand how students and faculty perceive the influence that EABA has on their learning experience. Further, I utilized event theory (Shipley, 2008) and flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996, 1997) as two interpretive frameworks for analyzing graduate counseling students' experiences in EABA. My primary research question was: How do graduate counseling students describe their experience with expressive arts-based activities? The secondary research question is: How do flow and event theories align or misalign with students' expressed experiences with EABA in the classroom setting?

Approaches to Study

My interest was to understand *how* graduate counseling students describe their experience with EABA as part of a formal learning process. I was curious as to what processes within the expressive arts therapy classroom setting fostered conditions whereby

counseling students drew personal and educational insight. As part of a pilot project in 2009, I interviewed several graduate counseling students and two expressive art therapy instructors on this topic. The participants felt that there were multiple influences within their classes that fostered both personal and educational insight. As a result of this preliminary project, I was left with questions about the ways in which personal and educational insight occurred.

I used a/r/tography as my methodology for this study. A/r/tography is an embodied arts-based methodology that involves an attentiveness to “the sensual, tactile, and unsaid aspects of artist/researcher/teachers’ lives” (Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2005, p. 899). A/r/tography invited the a(rtist), r(esearcher), t(eacher) in me to theorize and understand phenomena through aesthetics (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Springgay, 2008; Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2005). The process integrated artistic ways of knowing *as* inquiry (Allen, 2005). In the triadic role of a(rtist), r(esearcher), t(eacher), I took a participatory position for meaning making, rupturing traditional ways of inquiry by incorporating a *third space* in research. Pinar (2004) defines this *third space* as a space that connects “knowing, doing, and making” (p.9). Aristotle (1941) had a similar view of knowledge construction, using the terms observing (theoria), acting (praxis), and making (poiesis) as its components.

A/r/tography lent itself to expressive arts therapy as both methods are similar in nature, unfolding knowledge and insight through creative endeavors. I saw expressive arts therapy as a/r/tographic in many ways, ways where clients are researchers, artists, and teachers by discovering building insight into their own lives. A/r/tography also surfaced as the most appropriate methodology for this study because it not only connected me to the research problem but also honored my ways of knowing and being as an artist, a current researcher, and as an educator for over 25 years.

In addition to the methodology of a/r/tography, I used event theory (Shipley, 2008) and flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996, 1997) as two interpretive frameworks for analysis. Both flow theory and event theory are based on understanding how the human being navigates through encounters in life. I decided these two theories were important and meaningful to my research design in relation to my data, not just as a framework for analysis but also as a unit of analysis that I studied. Flow theory pertains to encounters with work and leisure skills and the balance of skills to challenges (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Flow theory also speaks to how individuals incorporate contentment and happiness in life (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Event theory pertains to how individuals navigate through daily encounters (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Daily encounters can be repetitive in nature or they can be new encounters where individuals draw upon past similar experiences to inform them as to how to move through the new encounter successfully. Event theory also offers understanding as to how individuals parse incoming information through their senses, how they embody information for current and later use, namely personal insight or meaning making (Hanson & Hanson, 1996, Neisser, 1976, Shipley, 2008). Integrating these diverse theories (expressive arts therapy theories, flow theory, and event theory) richly informed expressive arts therapy pedagogy.

Significance

Expressive arts therapy is an emerging field which offers clients alternative approaches to therapy. Educational programs are increasing to train expressive arts therapists (see www.IEATA.org). It is important for faculty to understand *how* students are experiencing EABA in order to better prepare students for the field. Currently, there lacks

specific research concerning graduate counseling students' expressed experiences with EABA.

The goal of this study was to provide a contextualized view of EABA from graduate counseling students' perspectives and to examine participants' beliefs and behaviors in light of two theories not brought into dialogue with expressive arts theory; event and flow theories. The objective was to expand and begin theorizing expressive arts therapy pedagogy. Therapists can use the students' expressed experiences and relate them to how clients may be experiencing therapy. Finally, higher education in general may find that the outcomes from this study benefit education pedagogy for areas of study that include helping fields, teacher education, and educational leadership programs. These fields can touch upon the embodiment of relationships between teacher and student *and* teaching and learning, relationships that will affect individuals' abilities to connect to others in profound ways (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Zembylas, 2007).

This study sought to understand graduate counseling students' expressed experiences in EABA as a pedagogical process for expressive arts therapy. Knowing how students experienced EABA will inform pedagogy, offering a broader understanding of best practices to use with graduate counseling students. In addition, incorporating experimental sciences of flow and event theories into a predominately philosophical perspective of expressive arts theory will create a more deeply theorized and diverse perspective of pedagogy in counselor education

This study uses the traditional five chapter structure. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to this research project, presents the research questions, and provides the significance for this study. Chapter 2 includes a comprehensive review of literature that

holds relevance for how graduate counseling students experience expressive arts-based activities within an educational program. Literature that helps explain flow and event theories is included. Additionally, Chapter 2 presents the conceptual framework for the study. In Chapter 3 the research methodology and the process for data collection and analysis are explained. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study. In Chapter 5 the findings are discussed. Limitations, implications, and suggestions for further research are also addressed in this final chapter.

DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

1. **Expressive Arts Therapy** is an “interdisciplinary, integrative, arts-based approach to counseling and psychotherapy” (Atkins & Williams, 2007, p.1).
2. **Expressive Arts-Based Activities (EABA)** are arts-informed activities that clients/students use to find insight.
3. **Embodied Learning Theory** explains the process “Affirming that our bodies, our feelings, our personal histories are part of the pedagogical process that affects learning (Zembylas, 2007).
4. **Event Theory** is a model for understanding how the mind processes incoming information to navigate individuals through encounters in life (Shipley, 2008).
5. **Flow Theory:** The “effortless actions individuals feel” in work and leisure, bringing personal satisfaction (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 2).

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Introduction

In this chapter, I review four broad categories of research, each of which holds relevance for the study's description in the methods chapter to follow. The four broad categories of literature reviewed include literature on therapeutic space, expressive arts therapy theory, flow theory and event theory.

The first literature review presents the counseling and the therapeutic space that counselors hold for clients. This review reflects the impact that the therapeutic space had on the success for the clients' healing processes (Rogers, 1951; Winnicott, 1971). This understanding is important because counselor educators often provide experiences in the educational setting. How the counselor educator creates the learning space for EABA and how the therapist creates the therapeutic space for EABA in practice may be extremely similar in regards to the therapeutic power found in both settings. This pedagogical approach is unique. A review of literature that examines the therapeutic space sheds light on how counselor educators create that space to broaden graduate counseling students' experientials with EABA.

The second area of review considers the philosophy and theory of expressive arts. As stated earlier, the field of expressive arts therapy is emerging. There are a variety of theories on why expressive arts therapy works, but little literature exists about *how* it works in connection to processes. Reviewing expressive arts therapy theory provided a base for

understanding while also exposing the gap that exists in regards to how graduate counseling students and faculty perceive the influence that EABA has on their learning experience.

The third area of review engages flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996, 1997) and considers what theorists have collectively described as *being in the flow* of activity. This area of research emerged as I became interested in examining literature related to the dynamics of engagement such as what I experienced when I participated in EABA as a student. Specifically, Flow theory is a topic that surfaces in some expressive arts academic conversations as an attempt to explain the process that occurs during EABA with counseling students or clients. This theory has been developed through experimental research designs, with findings being applied to work and leisure structures found in life (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996, 1997). The literature by Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1996, 1997) captured my attention as a unit of study, literature that broadened my understanding on engagement and provided me with a framework for analysis. Flow theory also extended what we know from studies and discussion about theory to the field of expressive arts therapy theory and specifically to its potential insights for explaining aspects of what graduate counseling students experience when engaged in EABA. This theory could begin to bolster efforts on expressive arts pedagogy.

The fourth area reviewed describes event theory (Shipley, 2008) and offers a second lens from primarily empirically based, neuroscience research. This research applies to all of life's encounters, revealing how the brain processes incoming information, parses that information from past experiences or requires more incoming information. The mind then informs the mind and body how to navigate through the encounter successfully (Hanson &

Hanson, 1996, Neisser, 1976). Review of event theory research brings could possible explain how EABA.

Taken together, these four categories of review: therapeutic space theories, expressive arts therapy theories, flow theory, and event theory, point to a number of convergences between expressive arts theory and empirical science research. These convergences do not create a new theory per se, but they provide a grounding for further theorizing EABA and the processes and practice by which it is taught. In reviewing flow theory, there is research that explains through causative accounts, the process of *being in the flow* in regards to EABA. Event theory utilizes advanced Magnetic Resonance Imagery (MRI) technology and shows evidence of how the brain functions when individuals navigate through new and unfamiliar events or encounters. This knowledge serves as a pivotal empirical lens for beginning to understand particular processes at work with EABA, not only during the therapeutic encounter but also during the educational encounter. The literature review of contextualized counseling theories and expressive arts therapy theories with noncontextualized flow and event theories help to build a conceptual framework for the research questions guiding this study.

Literature on Therapeutic Space

Psychotherapists treat emotional and mental disorders. Psychotherapy usually takes place in the privacy of the therapist's office where clients seek personal insight to their struggles (Freud & Strachey 1912; Jung, 1953; Rogers, 1951). It is therefore important that the therapist works diligently to ensure that outsiders cannot access what is being said from within the physical place and that no one will interrupt the space while the therapist and client are working together. Dealing with the physical space provides the groundwork for

success in therapy, but there are more components that must be integrated into this space to create the right environment for personal growth to occur.

There is a second *space* that clients encounter during the session. Winnicott (1971) describes this space as the relationship that is created between therapist and client. He calls it a *holding environment* or psychological space. *Holding* the space refers to the therapist's ability to contain the issues, focus on what the client has to say, and observe the emotional state of the client. It is a space where the therapist listens critically to the client and looks for underlying issues (Winnicott, 1971).

The therapeutic space also refers to holding a sense of acceptance and respect with clients who are vulnerable and struggling. Clients are not belittled or shamed. Rather, they are held in utmost positive regard (Rogers, 1951). Rogers (1951) claims that the therapeutic space is a learning environment where individuals learn about themselves and find insight and knowledge to help them navigate through life. Rogers (1977) feels that the role of the therapist is to listen, believing that clients are capable of finding their own solutions and healing themselves. Levine (1999) describes this space as a delivery room where the therapist waits for the client's soul to emerge. Estrella (2005) expresses the expressive arts therapeutic setting as the "therapeutic encounter" (p.183) where clients *encounter* themselves, their struggles, and the arts.

The American Counseling Association (2005) requires therapists and counselors adhere to five counseling principles. The five principles consist of: nonmaleficence which is a conviction to bring no harm to the client. Beneficence is the duty to go good to both the individual and for all involved in counseling. Fidelity incorporates trust and respect and the duty to be truthful and to honor others, their rights and their responsibilities. Justice is the

duty to treat all clients fairly. Finally, autonomy is the duty to ensure clients' right in making their own decisions. By incorporating these five counseling principles into a therapeutic session, clients are provided with a safe and supportive environment to begin to express their struggles.

These views of the therapeutic space are practiced and upheld by expressive arts therapists (Levine, 2005; McNiff, 2009; Rogers, 1999). Atkins and Williams (2007) claim this space as "the beginning of a time and space that is special, set apart from the routine tasks and concerns of day to day life" a place that offers "safety and support, both physically and psychologically" (p. 22). Kossak (2009) refers to this therapeutic connection between therapist and client as "therapeutic attunement." Robbins (1998) labels it "therapeutic presence." Whether the therapeutic space is an office or in a school storage closet, the expressive arts therapist deliberately works at establishing a safe holding environment where clients are respected. When these conditions are attained, the therapeutic alliance can be established.

Counselor educators also model these same principles in graduate counseling programs. By counselor educators modeling these principles, graduate students are exposed to the benefit of being on the receiving end of these principles and can understand the importance of incorporating them into their own counseling practice. Furthermore, McNiff (1986) believes that it is critical for a counselor educator to be attuned to the students' level of involvement in EABA. In a graduate counseling program, expressive arts-based activities can expose emotions and trauma in students. As stated earlier, EABA in an educational setting is similar to what clients experience in a counseling session. Sometimes the learning space for counseling students holds the potential to be therapeutic, blurring the boundary

between therapeutic and educational experiences. It may be a space that waivers between remaining strictly educational and crossing into being therapeutic in nature. I have evidenced this porous nature of EABA in my own experiences in EABA as a graduate student, and I continue to hear graduate students speak of the same experience. McNiff (1986) addresses these identical thoughts and reminds counselor educators to be attuned to this possibility and be ready to care for students' academic and personal welfare at the same time. He explains that the boundary between the counselor educator's therapeutic and educational roles with students as "being fine and delicate" (p.226), claiming that this role "demands exceptional personal abilities and emotional determination and strength" (p.226). The therapeutic space is a critical element to the success of therapy and so is the learning space which incorporates EABA in training graduate counseling students.

Although the counselor educator strives to keep EABA strictly an experiential learning activity, students may be entangled by their student role trying to advance their educational knowledge while experiencing their own embodied emotion-filled personal struggles and challenges. When these two paths cross, there may be an entanglement that cannot be easily divided. Students may walk away having gained both educational and personal insight. In this study I sought to better understand this phenomenon. There is no known research in the area of how graduate counseling students experience expressive arts-based activities. Perhaps EABA offers more than we currently understand or has more power than we realize. These are the unknowns that this study hopes to better understand so that expressive arts therapy pedagogy can emerge with a richer, better understood practice.

Expressive Arts Therapy Theory

The field of expressive arts therapy is less than 50 years old. The formation of expressive arts theory evolved from the work of early scholars (see McNiff for historical development, 2009) who continue to forge theory through their experiences with the arts in therapeutic practices. Each scholar (Atkins, 2002; Knill, 1999; Kossak, 2009; Levine, 1992, 1999, 2005, 2009; McNiff, 1986, 1992, 2004, 2009; Malchiodi, 2003, 2005; Moon, 1990, 1997, 2001; Rogers, 1999) developed their own theory through their unique educational background, as well as their personal and professional experiences with the expressive arts therapy. Collectively, these theorists share common ground in regards to theory, but they also bring their unique perspective, providing multiple perspectives for expressive arts theory.

Rogers (1999) follows her father's literature on therapeutic space (Rogers, 1951), as a psychologist in the Person-Centered Psychotherapy model, but integrates the arts to "let go, to express, and to release" (p.115) with her clients. She believes that by using art in therapy, individuals create symbols and metaphor, connecting the unconscious mind to the conscious mind. Rogers (1999) believes that through examining the symbols and seeing metaphor, one gains insight and self-awareness for healing. Rogers (1999) describes the therapeutic process as enabling art to creatively foster form, thereby creating links to the soul. When interweaving art methods, clients find multiple metaphors to reclaim their inner power and strength and tackle their goals.

There are two major healing elements that Rogers (1999) claims takes place in expressive arts. First, individuals find solutions and possibilities in the creative act with the arts. Second, there is growth and insight when clients look at their image and seek meaning.

Rogers (1999) reports that the body can find the correct art form to communicate inner feelings, serving as the catalyst to heal one emotionally. In a sense, this is a form of being embodied in the arts and using that embodiment towards identifying emotional pain, where it is located in the body, and allowing the pain to surface through art making so that the conscious mind begins to heal.

Knill (1999), a physicist, musician, and expressive arts therapist, writes extensively about expressive arts. He speaks of the language of the imagination. Knill (1999) calls expressive arts “soul nourishment” (p.38). From this standpoint, he looks at expressive arts therapy as a place for the imagination to decenter and distance oneself from the reality of the world and aesthetically probe into the psyche. Decentering is a way to move clients from the reality of their current situation and place them in an environment where imagination and playfulness emerge as catalysts for gaining insight to finding solutions.

Knill (1999) uses art-making activities that are considered *low skill/high sensitivity*. By incorporating activities that require low skills in creating art, anxiety is minimized. In EABA, individuals do not need great art making skills. High sensitivity refers to the potential of the art form to express the complexity of human experience. Listening, touching, smelling, and seeing are always involved, and the senses are stirred through imagination and playful creativity.

Knill (1999) employs the word *crystallization* to describe the ability of making art that brings forth insight. Both the process and the artwork speak to clients, giving witness to their suffering and offering methods for finding or crystallizing solutions. The crystallized form becomes a change agent for the client to act upon. Therefore, clients are experts of

their own suffering and experts in finding their own clarity. Crystallization helps to form solutions.

The opportunity for “harvesting” or “bridging” (Knill, 2005, p.151) deals with collecting messages from imagery and extracting insight, placing solutions and possibilities back into the reality of everyday life. In other words, what clients observe in their art making fuels the action to find solutions in life. The stage of harvesting prepares clients to re-enter the world with their challenges, taking their insights and solutions that were gained from the therapeutic session.

Both crystallization and harvesting are important elements for graduate counseling students and instructors to understand and experience. At this point in therapy clients begin to process their experiences, and personal growth and insight can emerge. In expressive arts pedagogy, students need to understand this critical stage. It is through EABA and the harvesting that students come to know first-hand the power that the arts have on both clients and themselves. Here again, there is an entangled process of expressive arts therapy that students experience, and there is little research into how graduate counseling students experience expressive arts-based activities.

Levine (2005) works through a historical lens when considering the power of expressive arts. He focuses on traditional and ancient practices of healing in so far as they involve both a physical and a psychological dimension. In an effort to acknowledge ancient ways of understanding, Levine (2005) brings together Greek philosophic views of body and soul. Levine also validates early forms of rituals and ceremony that connected the mind, body and soul, as therapeutic. Today, expressive arts therapists carry on forms of ritual and ceremony within their practices.

Levine (2005) points out that *being in the world* and having consciousness means that one is experiencing and reflecting upon living in the world. One process to finding insight is to create and to re-create reactions to living. Art then becomes a symbolic entity, event, an encounter for expression. It is also reflected upon by others who view the artwork. Levine (2005) goes further in his thinking with concepts related to Aristotle's view on *knowing*. Aristotle (1941) identified three kinds of knowing: knowing by observing (*theoria*), knowing by doing or acting (*praxis*), and knowing by making (*poiesis*). This becomes Levine's (2005) format for the basic understanding of expressive arts therapy. *Poiesis*, giving shape to matter from one's own ideas, provides insight, understanding, and catharsis. When clients desire to enter into a chaotic experience of working with materials (clay, paints, or charcoal), clients begin to create order out of chaos. In a sense, *poiesis* does not come from the mind as much as it comes by being open or receptive to what comes forth in the art-making experience. *Poiesis* involves a letting go of control, surrendering resistance to the experience and being open to what art form emerges.

The experience of being open to a level of chaos, choosing materials and creating an art form, to some degree replicates the chaos of living in the world where individuals examine possibilities and seek solutions. It is in this context that Levine (2005) feels there is a space and a time for creativity in a state of "confusion and powerlessness" (p.43). Levine (2005) believes that the time in chaos also invites inventiveness which fosters resourcefulness and insight. It is in this moment, away from reality, that the human spirit can come face-to-face with pain and hurt. It is an encounter where clients recognize that the soul and mind have emotionally disconnected from one another. From Levine's (2005)

perspective, art provides space for allowing the unconscious mind to manifest itself and emerge from the art-making experience with deeper awareness of self.

McNiff (1986, 1992, 2004, 2009) believes that art comes as a catalyst to clients in pain. The art comes not to hurt them, but to offer transformation from inner resources. This philosophical stance pushes the edges of traditional talk therapy methods and gives permission to explore the unconscious mind through the arts in a way that allows the psyche to speak forth in a non-traditional fashion. By offering intermodal experiences in EABA, individuals gain insight from a multitude of voices coming from their art.

McNiff (2009) offers expressive arts therapy theory as an additional resource when traditional methods fail in therapy. Because traditional talk therapy draws mainly upon the left analytical brain, somatic memories and emotions are disregarded. In expressive arts therapy, the therapist taps into the right brain sensory forms of expression where emotions can be reached. McNiff (2009) believes that art is the language of the soul, offering access to struggles, conflicts and pain. When images are made, they are emancipatory and empowering. From McNiff's (2009) perspective, images are viewed as benevolent forces.

Kossak (2009) refers to the term *attunement* within EABA as “an intense process of deep listening, kinesthetic awareness, and deep attention to what is occurring in the moment” (p. 15). He claims that attunement encourages play and spontaneity, mixing these elements with risk-taking and experimentation. The term, *entrainment* is used throughout his work as a description of a natural merging, a flow of energies between self and materials. Entrain means to link, as in a series of entities, elements, objects or processes. Examples of entrainment would be two individuals engaged in a deep conversation or athletes in sync with one another on the basketball court. Entrainment in EABA would include individuals

working alongside each other, hearing the same music, sharing materials, and engaging in the art-making space as a collective whole. This term can also refer to an individual working in the therapeutic space and being attuned to the music, textures and colors of materials, and the self-embodiment of creating art while being in sync with natural rhythms of space and self.

Kossak (2009) notes that working in EABA, participants can be chaotic states, causing individuals to feel uncomfortable or self-conscious about their interactions in their current environment. This chaotic state occurs when somatic and emotional feelings converge with mental states. In this state, individuals have difficulty navigating through EABA because they cannot decenter from reality and center on the task at hand. This difficulty can arise throughout the entire session or periodically within the session.

When individuals are unsure about their sense of self, EABA can become an intimidating or uncomfortable situation. Individuals may become frustrated in not knowing how to navigate through EABA. They might even resist the activity. Kossak (2009) believes that some individuals prefer to stay in this state of uncertainty rather than move through EABA. This action prevents the occurrence of personal growth to occur. In other words, staying in reality and resisting the flow of art making, individuals are unable to move toward seeking knowledge. Kossak (2009) describes the inability for an individual to tolerate uncertainty that could bring about insight as negative capability. Negative capability is opposite to Levine's (2005) statement of "tolerating breakdown" (p.43) and being in a "state of confusion and powerlessness" (p.43), a state that is necessary to work through in successful therapy. Kossak (2009) reports that negative capability or a period of uncertainty, is a perfect state to create new possibilities. This state offers the imagination to find possibilities and solution. By pushing through the encounter, individuals can listen to what

their “inner creative impulse is trying to communicate” (p.17). It is here, that insight is attained.

Atkins and Williams (2007) bring a unique approach to expressive arts theory. Their theory is entangled with counseling, expressive arts theory, expressive arts therapy educational development, and their own Appalachian Approach. This theoretical approach involves several distinguishing features which are reflective of the Appalachian region and its indigenous culture. The first feature is the importance of graduate counseling students developing their own personal theory grounded in existing psychological and philosophical theory. By integrating existing theories with a personal relationship with art making, graduate counseling students learn first-hand from EABA experiences. This feature of the Appalachian Approach fosters personal theories from an integration of literature on therapeutic space, expressive arts theory, and theory from students’ experiential knowledge.

Atkins and Williams (2007) believe the natural world serves as a model and metaphor for the process of creativity. The rural Appalachian setting for Atkins (2002) offers the belief that wisdom for well-being can be learned from the cyclical nature of reality as revealed in nature’s cycles (climate cycles, sun and moon cycles, and the seasonal cycle of the physical landscape of mountains and rivers). The value of insight that can be attained from a connection to nature is something that is available to all people. Davis and Atkins (2004) offer opportunities for graduate counseling students to participate with nature in expressive arts classes and offer ecotherapy classes within the Appalachian Approach so that students experience the interconnection humans have to nature and the sense of well-being that comes from this connection. As future therapists, students’ own connection to nature will strengthen their belief in the wisdom one can learn from nature.

Because the Appalachian region is rich in Native American culture, the Appalachian Approach embraces this relationship. The people, their beliefs, their rituals, and their wisdom, are ways of knowing that are different from traditional Western European ways. Participating in ancient nontraditional ways of knowing helps graduate counseling students consider alternative methods when working through struggles and challenges in their lives as well as when they work with future clients (Atkins & Williams, 2007; Atkins, 2002).

The Appalachian Approach also incorporates the use of the imagination as a way to be creative in solving personal challenges. The use of imagination is a key element for individuals seeking solutions for themselves. The use of dreams is a source for the unconscious mind to inform the individual of possible solutions. Dreamwork is honored in the Appalachian Approach as a way to access information that may be blocked from the conscious mind (Atkins & Williams, 2007). In the Appalachian Approach, graduate counseling students are encouraged to incorporate their dreams and imagination in EABA as a source for insight.

The final distinguishing feature about the Appalachian Approach is the importance of community. Atkins and Williams (2007) describe the value of community as a societal bond that brings structure and order to a group. Community also shares a common bond, a bond of “respect and presence in which each person is enlarged and enhanced” (p. 6). Creating and maintaining community with graduate counseling students and art making reinforces the same bonding that should exist between client and therapist, art and individual, and therapeutic groups as supportive connections that fosters growth.

In the Appalachian Approach, the body, intuitive wisdom, and emotions are valid ways of knowing. Honoring these ways of knowing, offers individuals a new way of

understanding themselves. By incorporating different EABA, individuals can tap into new ways of knowing, based on a more depth oriented process of uncovering multiple sources of insight.

Atkins and Williams (2007) have much to take note of in regards to the educational pedagogy of graduate counseling students in expressive arts therapy coursework. They stress the need for creating and maintaining community with graduate counseling students through expressive art making opportunities that support both personal and professional growth. Atkins and Williams (2007) believe that this connective community creates strong bonds among students, forming deeper relationships which strengthen and support the educational journey of the student.

In conclusion, Natalie Rogers (1999), Knill (1999), Levine (2005), McNiff (1998, 2009), have offered the field of expressive arts therapy insight into a variety of practices stemming from early civilizations, the arts, and psychology. Although rich in theory and valid assumptions, there still is a lack of descriptive evidence of how insight, personal and intellectual growth are achieved through EABA. Kossak (2009) presents a solid understanding on attunement and misattunement that can be applied to graduate counseling students' attempts to engage in EABA. Like a counselor, the counselor educator carefully encourages students to push through EABA even when they may feel some resistance, to explore that resistance, and to trust the process. These experiences teach students about their own issues with EABA but also, how to work with clients who experience resistance. Kossak (2009) adds some insight into expressive arts theory by his interest in the study of entrainment. Kossak's (2009) theory of attunement/misattunement offers an additional explanation to Knill's (1999) decentering as it applies to how individuals process EABA and

gain insight. Atkins (2002) and Atkins and Williams (2007), whose theory is strongly based in her Appalachian Approach to expressive arts pedagogy, provides an entanglement of working with clients and working with graduate counseling students. The features of the Appalachian Approach theory provides a solid view to what elements are critical for creating a community of learners in expressive arts theory programs.

Flow Theory

Moving from philosophical and theoretical perspectives to research that stems from neurological fields, flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1996, 1997) offers an empirical understanding of six characteristics that occur when individuals are in state of *flow*, a term occasionally mentioned in expressive arts conversation. Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1996, 1997) describes being in flow as a period of time where individuals face goals and possess the skills to reach their goals. Second, working with a task, individuals are able to have immediate feedback on their progress which helps to guide them in future actions within their activity. Being able to make adjustments along the way, individuals have the inner skills to navigate successfully in reaching their goals. In a sense, individuals become their own judge of their work. This reduces stress and anxiety because there are no outside sources to give feedback. Third, being in flow, individuals find contentment when they are matching their abilities with their challenges. Finding contentment with one's ability creates a playfulness and motivation to continue within the activity as individuals are challenged and capable of meeting their challenges. Fourth, engagement in an activity where skills match challenges becomes arousing, keeping individuals engaged and focused in the activity. Fifth, when individuals are in flow they are not distracted by outside influences. Individuals become so engaged in the activity that time, sounds, and even self-consciousness become distorted.

Finally, there is no worry of failure. They know they will succeed (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996, 1997). When a person's entire being is stretched in the embodiment of the body and mind, whatever one does becomes worth doing. Living becomes its own justification. In the focusing of physical and psychic energy, life finds balance and contentment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996, 1997). It is in this state of flow that one can find personal growth through engagement with challenges in life.

Csikszentmihalyi (1997) acknowledges playful tension occurring between skills and challenges. Tension arises when individuals are caught between arousal and control in their activity. There is an arousal that stems from being intrigued with the emerging outcome and a satisfaction from being in control of the outcome. The two forces lure individuals to continue in their work, being comfortable with their tensions. This tension may also be present in EABA.

In conclusion, the context of EABA does not entirely correlate with Csikszentmihalyi's (1997) characteristics. His description lacks the acknowledgment of the power of the arts to expose human emotion. On the other hand, Kossak's (2009) description of entrainment and attunement relate more solidly in regards to how individuals process EABA. Kossak's (2009) explanation as to how resistance to attunement (not being in the flow) is a client's way to oppose finding truth.

Event Theory

Crossing into the field of neurosciences provides a broader view of how the mind and body work with expressive arts therapy. Since expressive arts therapy is so embodied with the senses and perception, event theory may provide additional connections that could support expressive arts theory in ways that the field has missed before. This section is

important for pedagogy as it may influence the educational practices of expressive arts therapy programs.

Shipley (2008), professor in the Department of Psychology at Temple University, defines *event* as “anything that happens, or is *contemplated* as happening; an incident, occurrence” (p.3). Shipley uses the term *perception* as the process involved when trying to understand an event or to make sense of an event. Perception, or the taking in of information, is considered predominately visual. However, perception encompasses all mental spheres since events are multisensory or multimodal. What individuals perceive visually encompasses more than a fixed view. A person’s eyes take in motion, actions, interaction, and emotions, somatically and cognitively. This description of perception is similar to the multimodal or intermodal use of a variety of visual or performing art making activities which connect the mind to the body somatically. The event of art making forces the entire brain, the analytical, the creative, the sensual, and the emotional sides, to work together. Additionally, the event of art making creates a salient experience that brings about insight and knowledge.

When individuals experience an event or an encounter, their minds take in the experience at one point in time and process the experience at another point in time. Putting events to memory or embodying memories is imperative for cognitive action to occur (Shipley, 2008). Within this processing, the perception of the experience is blended with cognitive thinking. Perception and cognition blur together, making detection of the beginning and ending of one action unclear. This cycling back and forth between intake (perception) and processing (cognition) is known as a perceptual cycle (Hanson & Hanson, 1996). Within this cyclical pattern, information comes in from the environment through

perception. A cognitive recall from past similar objects or events is processed and the knowledge (insight or meaning) directs future information (Neisser, 1976). At this point, if the incoming information fails to agree with what one expects, then the brain will allocate to pick up more details. There is a sense of *ebb* and *flow* within perception that takes in information, and the brain pauses to process and guide the next step before moving into the flow of the activity again. When the brain pauses to process, it may only need a split second before indicating that an individual may proceed. Sometimes the brain may desire more time (minutes, hours, or days) to reflect upon an experience before taking further action.

Researchers in the field of events and segmentation, Tversky, Zacks, and Hard (2008), report that the world offers individuals multiple sensations which the mind perceives. Life is experienced as a series of events or encounters. Events involve objects in places and time where language, either spoken or thought, is used. If individuals continually took in information throughout the day, the mind would be overwhelmed. There would be no time to process, react or reflect upon life. Without the opportunity to reflect or process incoming information, our brain would be unable to learn from mistakes or to stay away from danger. Tversky et al. (2008) report that the mind hierarchically structures the domains that are critical to living. These domains include language, objects, events, and scenes. The four domains are experienced as meaningful, organized, related, and distinct from a whole experience. By comparing the structure of an event across all these domains, the mind can be instructive. In order to process, for example, the events of a day, the mind breaks up the day into smaller chunks or parts so that what is created is a stream of events (Schwan & Garsoffky, 2008; Zacks & Swallow, 2007). This stream of information is automatically partitioned into segments or bound events. By segmenting or partitioning events into a

stream of events, the mind can begin to process and make sense of living (Tversky et al., 2008; Schwan & Garsoffky, 2008).

Segmenting events, either unconsciously in the mind or with intention, fosters a framework of time to interpret information and to make meaning (Schwan & Garsoffky, 2008). This framework acts as a guide for the evaluation of a current event using the information to gauge the next event. Intentionally segmenting art-based activities (events or experiential) occurs within intermodal activities in expressive arts where students are exposed to multiple art-based activities. However, within the series of activities there may be minute breaks or longer transitions which allow for reflection.

Segmenting arts-based activities, or creating an ebb space, allows the brain to parse previous information and gain insight before moving back into the flow of the next arts-based activity. In other words, segmenting expressive arts-based activities allows time for the brain to sort through information and draw insight before moving onto the next activity. In addition, I believe that an event of art making may provide segmenting or ebb and flow periods between separate EABA and within each activity. Examples of segmentation can include such decisions as choosing which color to use, changing paintbrushes, cleaning the brushes, or painting strokes on the canvas. In this fashion, expressive arts-based activities may allow the mind to parse incoming information which will then guide the next steps in creating artwork. In addition to the EABA being created in an expressive arts therapy class, students and the instructor follow the creative activity by talking and harvesting further insight into the class session. Segmenting daily activities by parsing incoming information and trying to navigate through unknown territories, maps out the elements of an encounter in life and in expressive arts therapy. Event theory may more accurately explain EABA than

flow theory. Flow theory falls short in explaining how individuals attempt to navigate through new events or encounter. EABA is not about the need to acquire more skills to handle an encounter, but to parse the information one has learned from the past and incorporate that information into a change element.

While events are filled with information, they can be filled with different levels of density in the sense that each event can hold either salient, rich information or very little information (Schwan & Garsoffky, 2008). For example, an event of washing dishes may hold little information and, therefore, is remembered just as a chore within the day. Conversely, an event of attending a World Series baseball game contains multi-sensory rich experiences filled with smells, visuals, music, movement, and tastes, thus making the experience of the baseball game memorable and insightful. Schwan and Garsoffky's explanation addresses how encounters with EABA are filled with time for art-making activities and within each activity there are separate encounters with materials, tools, momentary decision making, creating, imagining, and playing.

Schwan and Garsoffky (2008) have found that detailed minute accounts of events create a *fine-grained* segmentation, indicating clear and precise information being stored. Because of higher density or salient material, a broader amount of information can be extracted from the event. In fact, in a research environment where a group was shown a movie in slow-motion, observers were able to extract much more information from the scenes than if the film went at a regular speed. The viewers were able to take in more details (colors, objects, sounds, conversation, emotion, movement, etc.) (Schwan & Garsoffky, 2008). By taking in more information in detail, a richer, more salient experience was provided, evoking deeper memories insights (Newtson, 1973). *Coarse-grained* segmentation

is described as the whole event or a summary of an event, exclusive of any detail (Schwan & Garsoffky, 2008).

It is interesting to note that when there is a high-density event filled with a sensory rich experience (fine-grained segmentation), like the details of each scene within a movie versus a summary of the movie (coarse-grained segmentation), there is interplay between inferential and perceptual processing. Inferential processing involves a top-down process of the brain, seeing the big picture and looking for the pieces that validate the larger picture. Schwan and Garsoffky (2008) explain that top-down process refers to the brain's action from the frontal lobe to the occipital lobe. Perceptual processing involves a bottom-up method for the brain by looking at the clues, the smaller pieces and trying to put the clues together to create the larger picture (Schwan & Garsoffky, 2008). The bottom-up method begins in the occipital lobe and works up toward the frontal lobe. Through the use of fine-grained segments (giving details from sensory input) and coarse-grained segments (giving summaries), perceptual and inferential processing occurs in a top-down method and a bottom-up method. By the brain incorporating these two methods, inferential and perceptual, greater insight is revealed and deeper meaning is made (Schwan & Garsoffky, 2008; Tversky et al. 2008).

Knowledge about inferential and perceptual processes also relates to what may happen in expressive arts based activities. However, expressive arts activities provide an additional neural path. Not only a top-down and bottom-up brain functioning takes place, but also an interplay of left (analytical) to right (sensory, emotive) brain processing takes place. In this manner, the entire brain is activated for processing and extracting insight.

Providing intentional segmentation within intermodal EABA offers great benefits for the mind to parse through information that has come from the activity of creating art. Intentional segmenting may also be beneficial within the expressive arts therapy class to allow students an uninterrupted time frame to create art without interference from the instructor or others who are in the same room. This uninterrupted time allows for the student or client to be in a flow with the art making activity. Their minds will naturally ebb and flow as the individuals think, process the art making, and then proceed to complete their work of art. In expressive arts-based activities, individuals have the opportunity to allow the mind time to process perceptually, inferentially, and to incorporate both the left and right hemisphere of the brain. Additionally, by providing salient art-making experiences (providing an abundance of materials within visual arts, music, and performing arts) more opportunities are created for extracting insight (Newtson & Rindner, 1979). This result occurs because of multiple intermodal events found in EABA. The event of each art-making experience is considered fine-grained segmentation with finer-grained segmentation occurring within each EABA experience. An example of this would be a collage making experience where individuals select magazine pictures, tissue paper, tear or cut their paper, glue, position, and so on. Following the collage activity, individuals may be guided to build a clay container. Then they may be instructed to go out into nature and gather items to fill the container. Upon returning, they may be instructed to write in their journals about their gathering experience. The day can go on with more activities. The entire EABA session becomes the summary of the smaller events of the total time, which is coarse-grained segmentation. These two kinds of segmentations link together a stream of events within the time frame for the expressive arts class.

The description of Hanson and Hanson's (1996) perceptual cycle, as it relates to event theory, offers a description that may be similar to how expressive arts students navigate through arts-based activities. In comparison, Csikszentmihalyi's (1997) theory of flow also holds some similarity to how graduate counseling students experience EABA. The perceptual cycle takes into consideration knowledge from past experiences as the method to inform current needs. The lack of past knowledge requires more information to be gathered from the current environment. In the case of expressive arts students in a classroom, they might watch other students or test their choices of art media on a small scale before proceeding with the activity. Gallese (2001) reports that mirror neurons in the brain are activated when individuals are engaged in the environment. When individuals are in proximity to sounds, actions, and visuals, mirror neurons ignite and fire off. This reaction creates sympathetic responses in people which cause individuals to be responsive to their environment. This responsiveness may occur in movements with the body replicating the tone of the music or unconsciously selecting colors to create art that is influenced by the surroundings. This responsiveness may be very fluid. Furthermore, when students are faced with a familiar activity or one that is not too much out of their comfort zone, indicating that some previous knowledge is known about the activity, they approach the activity without hesitation. These students know the territory of the art making medium. They know how to use the tools and they know what they can expect from the art medium. They show confidence and direction. I view this as an experience where individuals perceive the activity to be manageable based on their past experience as it relates to event theory. There is no need for the brain to allocate further information. This perceptual cycle continues to be

employed throughout the art making experience as the activities move forward to completion.

Conclusion

This literature review took up four areas of interest and relevance; theory regarding therapeutic space, expressive arts therapy theory, flow theory, and event theory. Literature from two philosophical theories and literature from two experimental theories were presented, providing a broad scope of knowledge. By presenting these two diverse theoretical perspectives, I was able to better ground this study.

Existing expressive arts theories hold a diverse descriptive perspective. My study used these diverse theories as a guide to search for missing elements within expressive arts theory. However, many of these theories are philosophical in nature (McNiff, 2009; Knill, 1999; Levine, 2005, 2009). Kossak (2009) grounded his theory with the use of attunement research. Atkins (2002) and Atkins and Williams (2007) drew upon multiple psychotherapeutic concepts, but added an Appalachian Approach as a framework for educating graduate counseling students in Appalachia. The Appalachian Approach held a strong connectivity to nature as a powerful metaphoric tool in working with clients and students. I was most interested in Kossak's (2009) attunement research and saw how this view held value, especially when working in a learning environment.

Flow theory suggested that there is a flow period found in all activities. This theory included conversation in regards to navigating through an activity when one lacks skills to match the challenge (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996, 1997). This theory shares similar knowledge to being in a flow period in expressive arts based activities. However, all the characteristics of this theory may not be evidenced throughout EABA. Additionally, the

focus of flow theory is more about finding contentment when matching skills to the challenge which is not the focus in EABA. Although expressive arts activities incorporate low skill/high sensitivity activities so the art making experience is successful, this theory did not hold the closest similarity to what graduate counseling students are experiencing in EABA.

In event theory, the literature review suggested interplay within events, where individuals search their memory for similar experiences in relation to the new event. Individuals find themselves hoping for information which will guide them through the new event. The brain parses memory and if there is none or no memory that can aid in navigating through a new event, the mind allocates for more incoming information (Hanson & Hanson, 1996; Neisser, 1976). In expressive arts activities, this explanation may also be accomplished by watching others at work or by what Kossak (2009) sees as mirror neurons, copying what others are doing, blending into the tone of the environment and the actions of others. According to event theory, gaining insight or personal and intellectual growth comes by perceptual and inferential processing (Schwan & Garsoffky, 2008; Tversky et al., 2008). Using the arts add a left and right brain action. The entire brain is activated including the senses and emotions.

Conceptual Framework

In this study, I sought to understand how graduate counseling students describe their experience with EABA. Six broad concepts intertwined to guide the research design and the interpretation of data in this research study: social constructivism, counseling therapeutic space theory, expressive arts therapy theory, flow theory, event theory, and my own academic experience as a past graduate counseling student.

The first dimension of this guiding framework for this study was constructivism. Constructivism served as an epistemological framework, holding the view that reality is constructed from social experiences (Creswell, 2009). Additionally, cultural, historical, and social contexts influence how individuals construct their reality, causing reality to shift over time and even across culture (Glesne, 2006). As a researcher working within this epistemological view, I focused my study on the social influence of each class and how each student constructed their reality of their learning experience. I also understood that my experiences as a graduate student and my reflections upon my art making during this study served as a means for data interpretation.

The second framework was literature on therapeutic space. Literature on therapeutic space provided both a background and a philosophical foundation for this study as it relates to expressive arts therapy and pedagogy.

The third framework was expressive arts therapy theory. Expressive art therapy theory emerged from individuals such as Knill (2005, 2009), Levine (1992, 1999, 2005, 2009), McNiff (1986, 1992, 2004, 2009), and Natalie Rogers, (1999). A framework of expressive arts therapy theory provided the philosophical foundation for understanding how graduate counseling students experienced EABA,

The fourth framework stemmed from flow theory. Flow theory provided an empirical framework for this study by providing an understanding of how individuals experience work and leisure (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996, 1997). This theory was important for understanding how individuals operate when in flow in the context of EABA.

The fifth framework was event theory. Event theory offered this study an experimental research view into EABA. Event researchers offered knowledge about

encounters and how individuals navigate through social interactions such as within a learning environment (Hanson & Hanson, 1996; Newton & Rindner, 1979; Schwan & Garoffky, 2008, Shipley, 2008; Tversky et al., 2008).

The sixth framework was my own experience as a graduate counseling student earning a certificate in expressive arts therapy. Using this framework against and with the other five frameworks broadened my understanding of students' expressed experiences. My own experience provided a place for reflection in light of the participants' reports.

The review of literature helped to create a conceptual framework that guided me through my study of how graduate counseling students experience EABA. The five main areas of the literature review provided a perspective into contextualized and noncontextualized theories and formed a multi-perspectival set of lenses for guiding the original design and methods for the study (Chapter 3), my analysis of data and responses to the research questions.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology for this research project. A/r/tography guided this qualitative study, allowing attentiveness to three identities of this researcher: the artist, the researcher, and the teacher. Following a description of a/r/tography as it relates to this research, the chapter provides a description of the research setting. Data were collected using three methods: observations, document review, and interviews. Details of how these methods were employed are provided. This chapter also discusses ethical considerations, validity methods for trustworthiness, and subjectivity. Finally, participants from this study are introduced.

Research Design

A single methodology framed this interpretive qualitative study; a/r/tography. A/r/tography is an embodied arts-based methodology that involves attentiveness to “the sensual, tactile, and unsaid aspects of artist/researcher/teacher’s lives” (Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2005, p.899). A/r/tography invited the a(rtist), r(esearcher), t(eacher) in me to theorize and understand phenomena through aesthetics (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Springgay, 2008; Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2005). I am primarily a visual thinker. I process life in a tacit method through visual metaphor and symbolism. Tacit knowing is found in the domain of art making (Courtney, 1987). A/r/tography lent itself to this way of thinking, making it an appropriate methodology for the research topic and this researcher.

A/r/tographic methods are about being in an experience with data, a physicality with what is seen, heard, and thought. I was able to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study by physically working with data. McIntyre (2004) claims the action of art making as being a “full-bodied engagement” (p. 259). My art-making action anchored the outer world of cognition with the inner world of sensory processing. Through in-depth a/r/tographic methods, I utilized my analytical lens as an artist to make sense of the phenomenon under study in conjunction with my skills and insights as a researcher.

A/r/tographic methods offered me the opportunity to work with and through the data in ways that expressive arts therapy pedagogy offers students opportunities to work through their own personal research about life through art making. The philosophies of expressive arts therapy and a/r/tography are quite similar. In one sense, they are both a form of research. The recipients of EABA research their lives through art making for better understanding of self. The researcher using a/r/tography studies a phenomenon in order to gain understanding. Therefore, because of the similarities between a/r/tographic methods and expressive arts therapy pedagogy, a/r/tography was an appropriate methodology for me; not only because of the kinship in philosophy but also, a/r/tography supports how I process information and how I prefer to communicate knowledge. As a methodological framework, a/r/tography added richness and rigor to my research by providing an appropriately alternative and expanded form for analysis through my art making (Flick, 2002).

Finally, a/r/tography encouraged me to shuffle through data with hybridity. Hybridity refers to a *third* space in research, located between empirical science and art (Hunter, Lusardi, Zunker, Jacelon, & Chandler, 2002). These researchers refer to hybridity as a space where there is an exchange between text and image. In my work, this third space sought to

engage a conversation between art and inquiry. Art making and became the rhizomatic “incubation phase” (Springgay, 2008, p. 389) where ideas began to multiply ceaselessly through art making. Patterns began to emerge and took shape (Leavy, 2009). Conclusions became clear as the artist, researcher, and teacher; the a/r/tographer, worked together and separately only to step back and periodically linger in front of the emerging art form. The process of a/r/tographic examination was to explore analytical (text) and embodied (art) as methods for understanding (Langer, 1953). More attention to my specific art-making process as analysis is taken up in Chapter 4 of this study.

The remainder of this chapter describes the specifics of the fieldwork setting and participant selection as well as the details of the methods used for collecting and analyzing data. The chapter concludes with a discussion of ethical considerations, validity, and subjectivity.

Description of Research Setting

Because I am interested in studying graduate counseling students enrolled in an expressive arts therapy class where they experience EABA, I selected to focus on two one-week intensive courses. One course was focused on dreams and nature in expressive arts therapy. The second course focused on expressive arts therapy for children and adolescents. These courses were offered through a mid-size state university located in Appalachia region in southeastern United States.

The first course I gained access to was part of the program’s May Institute and was held at an off campus location. The location was at a conference center in rural Appalachia. I gained access to study the 2011 course. Students stayed on site throughout the course. During the class students explored the relationship between the outer landscape of the natural

world in this setting and the inner landscape of the psyche. Students integrated expressive arts therapy, ecotherapy, and dreamwork through a variety of experiential group and individual arts-based activities (EABA) while they expanded their theoretical background in expressive arts therapy. This course provided a variety of art modalities that graduate counseling students participated in throughout the week and offered a rich and concentrated source of data collection opportunities for my study.

A second course that I gained access to for this study took place at an off campus non-residential location. The weeklong course engaged students in art making and discussion. This elective course consisted of current graduate counseling students and therapists who were seeking continuing education hours and/or earning a certificate in expressive art therapy. The focus of the course was for both students and therapists to learn how to work with children and adolescents in therapy. Therapists from the field joined the instructor in leading expressive arts-based activities (EABA) so that the graduate counseling students could experience EABA appropriate for children or adolescents.

Combined, the two graduate courses provided an intensive glimpse into graduate counseling students' experiences in EABA. In addition, there was opportunity to observe a variety of faculty leading both discussions and EABA. Observations and reflective writing each day throughout the week and also between the two scheduled classes provided time to organize and analyze what I heard and observed.

Gaining Access

Prior to each of the courses described above, I sent out an email to all students and faculty who were registered to attend or teach, introducing myself and providing information about what I would be doing during the class (see Appendix A and B). Additionally, I also

provided handouts at the orientation session prior to the start of the courses. In the initial email, I also informed students and faculty that I would be observing the class and sought students and faculty members to volunteer to be interviewed sometime after the courses had ended. Students and faculty could email me back for questions or talk with me in person about the interview process. Securing and scheduling interviews with participants through email created a confidential method of communication as students' and this researcher's accounts required a password. Prior to the interviews, interviewees willing to participate filled out the informed consent (see Appendix C). Engaging with nine interviewees in addition to observing two intensive classes allowed me to spend an extended period of time with each person and in each learning environment. This data-collecting experience fostered a richer view of the phenomenon under study.

Data Collection Techniques

Guided by my a/r/tographic methodology framework, I incorporated three data gathering techniques commonly used in qualitative inquiry: observation, document review, and interviews (Glesne, 2006). Each technique is discussed in more detail below in relation to its use in providing a comprehensive structure for understanding EABA as it relates to students' experiences within the graduate counseling program.

Observations.

In the two courses, I observed phenomena surrounding student teacher interactions. Because of my past participatory experiences in the expressive arts therapy program, I wanted to minimize my participant role and maximize the observer role on the participant-observer continuum (Glesne, 2006). To the extent possible, I wanted to observe the phenomena of EABA from the viewpoint of others. This decision permitted me to observe

more thoroughly while students were engaged in EABA. I participated in opening and closing activities and engaged as a non-participant and observed during EABA in large group, break-out sessions, and studio time. I did not observe small group processing time as this was a time designated for a more intimate discussion of students' experiences.

There were a variety of ways I observed throughout the courses. I observed actions, events, and processes of the entire class session as students worked together in a large group. In addition, when the class broke into smaller groups or when they were directed to work individually, I observed a group or individuals working alone.

One of the ways I recorded my observations was through a field log (field notes, memos, and double-entry notes). Using a double-entry note taking system, two sections were marked on my entry form, one providing space for observations and the second for reflections. An example of descriptive writing consisted of naming the items present in the physical space: rug (e.g., 10' x 12') and three windows. An example of reflective writing consisted of recording some aspect of the room and then immediately scanning my affective state in relation to it. Writing down my observations increasingly began a shift to becoming more reflective. This automatic response between observation and reflection was beneficial because it allowed me to attend to my own physicality within the learning space. I also became more analytical, whereby the observations caused me to ask questions and to glimpse possible connections, prompting and directing further observations. Together, descriptive observational notes and reflective notes merged and during later analysis became an important source for triangulation.

A second method for observations (and interviews as well) involved arts-informed data-collection techniques. I recorded observations of pedagogical processes and the

dynamics surrounding student teacher interactions using diagrams and sketches. Sketches were mixed with text to create interplay between text and image. Visual imagery expanded my understanding through physically working with images and art-making processes revealing new insight that may not have been possible if I stayed with only text (Jongeward, 2009). Each evening I marked sections of my notes and arts-informed markings with preliminary general codes that advanced my research. In this manner, I expedited sub-coding strategies used later in analysis.

Document review.

I gathered documents (class handouts, syllabi, online materials) prior, during, and after each course. I also invited students to bring any piece of art that was created during the course with them to the interview. The documents (journal, painting) students brought shed light on EABA in ways that enriched the interview data, expanding and deepening the conversation about their experience. These documents provided a contextual dimension for both my observations and interviews, expanding, supporting, and challenging my perceptions of the observations and interviews (Glesne, 2006).

Because my secondary research question looked to see if event and flow theories aligned or misaligned with graduate counseling students' expressed experience in EABA, I provided student participants with a checklist of characteristics of event and flow theories. Participants were asked to check off any of the characteristics they experienced in EABA (see Appendix E). The checklist served as a method for determining what participants experienced more often when participating in EABA.

Interviews.

Patton (2002) describes a variety of questions that researchers can address during interviews; questions that focus on experiences, opinions, feelings, knowledge, sensory, behavior, values, and demographic or background information. The questions I asked focused on three areas of interest. The first area focused on group expressive arts-based activities (EABA) as they pertained to an academic class experience. The second area focused on the participants' personal process of experiencing EABA. The third section aimed to be deeply reflective, generating participants' thoughts as to how EABA brought personal and academic insight (see Appendix D).

A second group of interviews was held with faculty about their process of developing the May Institute's course, creating course goals and designing EABA in support of these goals. I also desired to hear faculty approaches to counselor education within expressive arts therapy as this data would provide pedagogical processes unknown by students. There were two faculty members interviewed (see Appendix F).

Data Analysis Procedures

Experts in the field of qualitative design offer multiple ways of analyzing data (Creswell, 2009; Glesne, 2006; Wolcott, 1981). I followed Glesne's (2006) suggestion of reflecting upon data as it came in, whether data came from observations, interviews, or my artistic renderings. Using Heron's (1999) and Seeley's (1996) notion of presentational knowing, I created artistic renderings as re-presented information so that I had opportunity to gain new data from lingering "in the luminal spaces" (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 902). I also developed verbatim transcriptions of my recorded interviews so that I could examine voiced

expression of interviewees. Staying close to the data as it unfolded allowed me to reflect upon the data and allow the data to shape the research.

From the beginning of data collection through to the point where I felt the collection period had ended, I had already begun preliminary analysis as Glense (2006) suggests, coding and organizing data in light of my research questions. Additional or unexpected data surfaced, helping me to augment my initial research questions in important ways. This data was organized into sections of the learning experience, such as entering into the learning space, EABA, and faculty interactions. At the point all relevant data was coded, I began giving attention to each category and looked for themes and subthemes. This method was accomplished by highlighting emerging patterns found in transcriptions, observation notes, and my reflective journal. I then began to cut and snip sections of the transcriptions and tape them together as grounded evidence of emergent themes. Additionally, I found explanations to how students felt during EABA and I began to hypothesize by linking stories from each participant including my own experiences as a past student which provided a solid understanding of the phenomenon studied (Glesne, 2006).

One characteristic for data analysis I incorporated into this study was unique to a/r/tographic methodology. Springgay et al. (2005) refer to this approach to analysis as living inquiry. Living inquiry requires accepting an evolutionary practice in research (Springgay et al., 2005). Throughout the data collecting process, momentary breaks allowed me to untangle data and make data visible, capturing emerging themes in an artistic modality. I took on a physicality toward analysis through art making and provided a place to both hold data and re-present data as a source for analysis and synthesis. My rapid stitching throughout the cloth journal represents where I was reflecting inwardly. However, these embodied

reflections presented themselves through physical outward labor and left its markings visible (see Figures 11 - 16).

Blending several analytical techniques such as coding, organizing, and reflecting, I was able to move into interpretation by probing into what could be made of the data (Wolcott, 1994). Extending the analysis by lingering with the data gave opportunities to verbally and visually reflect, allowing for deeper insight. Placing the data within the perimeter of existing theories allowed me to capture characteristics that were shared between data and theories.

Ethical Considerations

This proposed project was reviewed by the IRB, resulting in approval to proceed with the study. In addition, I also upheld researcher standards and guidelines outlines by the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) and the Board for Licensed Professional Counselors in the state of North Carolina (NCLPC). From the first contact I made, I presented sufficient information so that participants fully understood the research study. In addition, participants needed to make an informed decision about participating in interviews before signing the consent form. Topics that were discussed prior to participants signing the consent form included; participation was voluntary, aspects of the research could affect the participant's well-being, and that participants could choose to stop their involvement as a participant at any time (Diener & Crandell, 1978). I had to make sure that risks to the subjects were minimized and that the benefits to both subject and society outweighed any potential risks (Glesne, 2006; Maxwell, 2005).

One of the most significant ethical considerations for this study was the need for me to monitor for potentially negative effects stemming from dual relationships. I knew the

faculty. I also knew some of the students. I also knew students who had graduated with me and were now therapists. During observations of the entire group, I focused on the acts and processes rather than individuals. I was aware that I had dual relationships in this setting because of former instructors, classmates, and a pilot project. Monitoring this situation, I was able to focus on the acts and processes of the study thereby minimizing potential risks.

Validity

Trustworthiness was established through triangulation of multiple data collection techniques as they attempted to counteract threats to each other and ultimately secured a valid study (Glesne, 2006). Creswell (2009) speaks of researcher's bias, referring to the subjective lens of the researcher when selecting data. The researcher may seek data that supports a theory, disregarding data that says something different. I needed to be careful about asking leading questions that could influence a particular response. Being cognoscente of the power to influence, my aim was to reduce any threat to the validity of this study. Through careful and intentional monitoring my power to influence interviews and emerging themes throughout the study, I was able to maintain the validity for this study. For example, in this study I incorporated triangulation methods such as seeking repeated themes and patterns emerging, justifying that this study was valid.

Subjectivity

Conducting qualitative research requires monitoring my subjectivity so that I do not distort information. I needed to find ways to use my subjectivity in ways that added depth and understanding to the research topic (Glesne, 2006). Glesne (2006) describes virtuous subjectivity as a criterion for doing good and right with respect to my research project. Subjectivity was monitored throughout this study from the onset of design decisions straight

through to reporting the findings that appear in the chapter to follow, helping to lend credibility and trustworthiness to the story I was able to tell (Glesne, 2006).

As a researcher, I was aware that I could not be totally objective about what I observed and heard in interviews. I am a mother, sister, daughter, woman, expressive arts therapist, and licensed professional counselor. I am an artist, teacher, and researcher. When I came into the research setting, I could not relinquish these roles. Glesne (2006) reminds me to be aware of these subjectivities when I enter a research setting, to be alert to their influence in the questions and interpretations I make.

Introduction of Participants

Before moving to Chapter 4's discussion of the study's findings, a brief introduction to each participant is offered below. By introducing the participants at this time, readers can find insight into the history which brought the participants into the expressive arts therapy class. Participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity.

In addition to the introduction to the participants in the following section, I created artistic renderings in the form of collage that I created from magazine clippings as reflection of each interviewee.¹ The creation of collages provided an opportunity to gain "mediation and meditation between... renderings" (Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2005, p. 899) from each participant through text and image. Furthermore, my intent for these reflections was not to decode or translate a visual form of data but to "build a bridge between the visual and verbal" (Collier, & Collier, 1986/1996, p. 169).

¹ Because collages were created from magazine clippings and served as data for this research study, three universities' copyright experts were contacted to qualify fair use laws. Based on the advice of these experts, I have decided to include the images in the document, concluding that their purpose and appearance fall under fair use copyright guidelines given (1) they are an educational use and are transformed into collages with new meaning (2) they draw from information pieces (from magazines), (3) they incorporate only small amounts of each image and are changed in size, and (4) they create no ill effect on the potential market of the original pieces.

Beth always enjoyed the arts. As a young woman she attended a school for the arts during her high school years. This experience left an impact on her life, one where art was projected as an exclusive right. In college, Beth studied interdisciplinary studies as an undergraduate focusing on feminist art therapy. At this point in her life she became interested in feminist theory and social justice with the belief that social justice does not always have the capacity to bring light to injustice, pain, and especially marginalized encounters. She began thinking about seeking alternative methods for expressing those experiences in the counseling field. Beth always held a feeling that art and counseling were interconnected. This realization was formed when she was an artist creating work from her own life experiences. She values art as a natural extension of language, where great meaning is held when words cannot describe a person's experience. As an artist, Beth's feminist perspective within art making provided her with an avenue in which to express herself through images and secure a cathartic understanding between self and art.



Figure 1. Collage reflecting Beth.

This collage reflects Beth's urging for self-discovery. She metaphorically ran toward opportunities to learn more about herself through EABA. In EABA she found herself face to face with her inner voices. She had to fight to let her inner voices come out, finding those voices through painting and movement.

Cindy attended the expressive arts class for personal and professional reasons. She was a graduate of the program and currently worked as a clinical mental health therapist at a shelter for survivors of abuse and sexual assault. Before she enrolled in the expressive arts therapy program she had spent some time working at a well-known artists' community in Appalachia. This experience working taught her about the power of the arts to bring personal insight and transformation. Through this experience, she gravitated toward learning more about the power of art and eventually, Cindy enrolled in the expressive arts therapy.



Figure 2. Collage reflecting Cindy.

Cindy's collage reflects working with self in relation to her clients. The yellow clay pot emerged a tree filled with sexually assaulted and abused women. She understood their oppression to a small degree through her encounter with an EABA. Her attention was drawn from her own physical pain and the reaction to having no choice participating in the Clay,

Collage, and Poetry EABA. Conversely, insight blossomed from this particular EABA, something she did not expect. She followed the insight, one EABA after another, picking up the clues in her journaling and in her dreamwork. In the end, she was grateful for the entrailing journey.

Ericka came into the expressive arts program with an undergraduate degree in psychology. During her undergraduate schooling she had the opportunity to take several movement classes where she was exposed to a professor who was accepting of each student's level of abilities and projected a non-judgmental energy to the students. Ericka felt that this teaching approach fostered more personal and professional growth than traditional teaching methods that focused on meeting high criteria. Likewise, Ericka felt that her experience in movement and the approach her instructor modeled provided catharsis in her personal life. After graduating, she was unsure as to how she wanted to enter the field. She also felt that she wanted to attain a master's degree and explored options, desiring to be part of a program that was not predominantly based in Western European counseling models. She desired a well-rounded, wellness based, client-empowered model, bringing her to the university's program. She enrolled in the master's degree in clinical mental health with a post graduate certificate in expressive arts therapy.



Figure 3. Reflection of Ericka.

Ericka's collage reflects her openness to EABA. She was ready and open to experience EABA. Blocking out others and going inside her head and body was her method for gaining insight. Additionally, when it came to listening to what others had to say about her work she was so touched by their insightful words that were shared during the witnessing experience.

Lauren held a BA in business before enrolling in the expressive arts therapy program. Her previous life was grounded in technology and business. Eventually she blended the corporate world by becoming a certified coach and working in both the corporate and counseling worlds. In the coaching position she believed that creative, resourceful people are capable of achieving their goals when they follow their own capacity of knowing what is best for them.

Lauren always had a connection to psychology and for a period of time coaching provided her with the ability to understand people and help them with their goals in life. She also found her love for art making, especially as a potter. Eventually Lauren felt that she needed to raise her level of education and skills and enrolled in a university expressive arts

therapy program. This program provided Lauren with a perfect blend of art and counseling, something that she had experienced in her own personal life as a cathartic mix.



Figure 4. Reflection of Lauren.

Lauren's collage reflects riding away from her past and heading toward EABA. It was her time to explore herself and a new career. The materials that were her standby were no longer desired. She wanted new ways to release the old self and claim her new self. She was eager to find the new Lauren through this program.

Lynn, a second year student, earned an undergraduate degree in English and wanted to become a poet. She was certain she would earn her MFA in poetry. However, a position as an editor came along which she took so she could learn some practical experience in the writing field. It was in this position that she experienced the sudden and unexpected death of a co-worker. Lynn was already in therapy for some personal issues and this incident created an immediate crisis that needed attention. In her therapy, Lynn was encouraged to participate in some body work such as yoga and group work. She was able to experience the support that came from others and support that came through alternative methods such as yoga and

the arts. Counseling also provided Lynn with the ability to reflect upon her own life and the direction she was moving toward. It was at this point in her life that Lynn felt that she wanted to become a counselor. She searched and found the university's program offering a body centered approach to counseling.



Figure 5. Reflection of Lynn.

This collage reflects Lynn's mischievous ways. When she participated in EABA, she always tried to resist EABA to meet her own satisfaction. In one respect she wanted to control her options. In another way she just wanted to be playful within the class. Lynn was drawn to journaling and painting. Her encounters with EABA found her following a trail of insight. She called this insight a shift-changing experience.

Mary considered herself a natural counselor in her younger years and after earning her BA she joined an international service organization working in a juvenile hall as an academic mentor. It was in this role that Mary witnessed the inability of co-workers to empathize with clients. Although her position was to work with suffering youth, many co-workers saw the position as working with criminals instead of viewing them as consequences of their environment. It was in this position as an academic mentor that Mary felt the

helplessness of youth. She was determined to serve the helpless by earning a graduate degree where she could make a difference in the world.

One class Mary took during her undergraduate work was in spirituality and creativity. This class opened her eyes to the possibility of incorporating the arts into counseling to bring about healing. From that point on Mary had continued to use the arts in her personal cathartic journey. Mary described that she had experienced trauma throughout her childhood and had always felt a *broken* person. She had used expressive arts to experience personal peace and develop strength and stability so that she could help others.

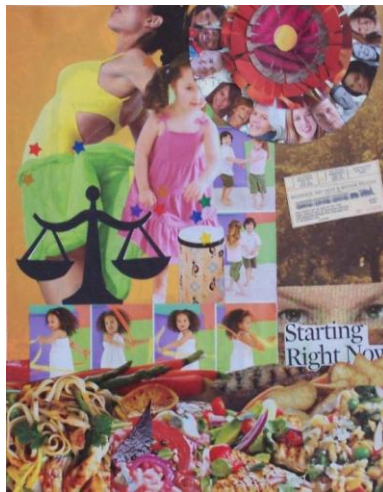


Figure 6. Reflection of Mary.

Mary was her authentic self in EABA, especially when it involved dance or movement. The collage reflects her inner child waiting anxiously to begin activities. She made the sound of the drum, the rhythm of her heart. She also found a buffet of delightful materials to use in her collage work. Fighting away logic, she forced herself to trust the process and attain insight.

Rose was an art therapist from a large metropolitan city. She held a BFA in textile and sculpture. It was her engagement with these mediums that Rose felt a cathartic process

emerging from the arts. Years later she desired to come back to the source of healing, a more authentic approach through expressive arts therapy theory. As a doctoral student in expressive arts therapy, she wanted to take a course with the Appalachian Approach because the philosophy was similar to her own personal philosophy and grounded in a holistic approach.

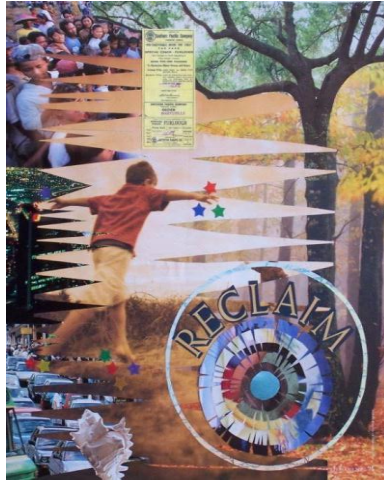


Figure 7. Reflection of Rose.

This collage of Rose reflects how she longed to be refueled and find a sense of balance. Coming from the city, she was drawn to nature's setting in the woods, something that grounded her. She wanted to reclaim herself, the girl she used to know and love. Rose wanted herself back. Throughout the week Rose reclaimed herself.

Two faculty members were interviewed in addition to the student participants. Collages were created for each faulty member, displaying their contribution to this research project. Collages are presented first, followed by a summary of their interview.

Dr. Jones

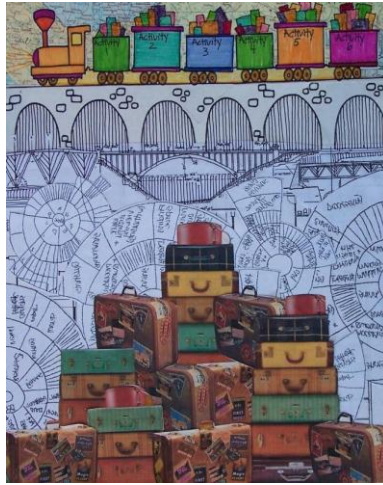


Figure 8. Reflection of Dr. Jones

This collage reflects Dr. Jones' witness to the entrainment of learning as she described her interpretation of EABA. This collage incorporated my diagrams of the EABA experience that I observed as a complicated webbing of encounters, something Dr. Jones also described. A structured rail system supports the joined cars of intermodal experiences. Emotional and historical luggage is brought by the students and placed in, with, and through every EABA. Dr. Jones was fully aware of the emotional *luggage* that arrives with each student and therefore, she facilitates with compassion and creates a holding space within the learning environment.

Dr. Smith

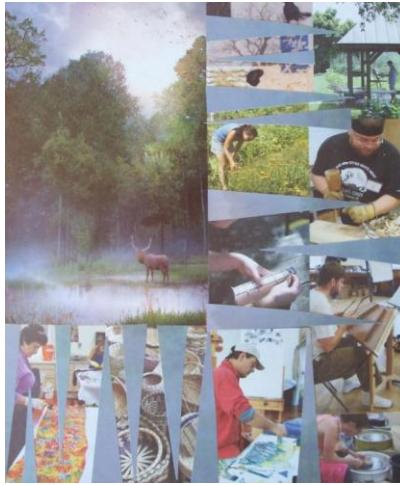


Figure 9. Reflection of Dr. Smith.

Dr. Smith. This collage reflects Dr. Smith's wisdom from years of practice and teaching. Instead of using traditional Western European teaching practices, she allowed the encounters with EABA to teach by their embodied experiences. Through methodical planning, she orchestrated the class format, arranged for guest facilitators, created, and maintained the learning space. She was a master of holding this sacred space within the classroom and witnessed what transpired as students experienced EABA. She was respectful of the healing power of EABA and her embodied learning approach valued the community of learners.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

Introduction

This a/r/tographic study sought to understand how graduate counseling students' experienced expressive arts-based activities (EABA) at a mid-size university in the Appalachian region located in southeastern United States. My primary question was: How do graduate counseling students describe their experience with expressive arts-based activities. A second research question helped focus certain aspects of the phenomenon under study, namely I asked; how do flow and event theories align or misalign with students' expressed experiences with EABA.

The literature review provided guiding perspectives from four distinct and unique fields of study: expressive arts therapy theory, literature on therapeutic space, event theory, and flow theory. Overall, these four theories offered a starting point for understanding of how graduate counseling students described their experience in EABA. Connecting key elements that were central to my research problem I was able to create a conceptual framework for the study's design and analysis of data. Expressive arts therapy theory offered a philosophical and contextual perspective about EABA and how it influenced the success in therapy such as the relationship between therapist, client, and the art making. Literature on therapeutic space offered theoretical approaches for working with clients but did not offer any understanding of how graduate counseling students experience the educational process. Incorporating both event and flow theories offered an experimental research perspective,

expressed viewpoints and observed behaviors of participants in an encounter. These two theories provided a unique insight into how the mind functions within an encounter such as being a graduate counseling student attending a new class but still lacked specific knowledge about how graduate counseling students experience EABA in a learning environment. Positioning myself with and against these literature perspectives, I was able to expand new knowledge by pushing deeper or searching for other theories such as counselor education, adult learning, experiential learning, and embodied learning theories that influenced students' experiences in EABA.

Art making and specifically a/r/tography became a crucial analytical exercise in the study by integrating my mind and body with data. In the triadic role of a(rtist), r(earcher), t(eacher) found within a/r/tography, I expanded my conventional approach to inquiry by incorporating a *third space* in research, connecting “knowing, doing, and making” (Pinar, 2004, p.9). Throughout this thematic discussion I have developed two forms of artistic inquiry. One form of artistic rendering was through a series of collages. In the introduction to participants section (beginning on p.48 of this document), I inserted collages that I created about each participant.

The second form of artistic inquiry is what I am referring to as three Artistic Interludes that were created in a handmade collaged cloth journal (text and image). The artistic interludes provided a reflective activity where my embodied emotions and memories of what I heard and observed created both an artistic process and an interpretive visual product. Three layers of the larger work are interspersed throughout this chapter's discussion of findings and are titled: *Artistic Interlude I: Circles that Make Safe Positionality* (pp. 75-77), *Artistic Interlude II: Affecting Self and Others* (pp. 91-93), and *Artistic Interlude III:*

Integrating Self (pp. 108-111). The cloth journal incorporated such materials as stamped words, cloth-transferred photographs, hand-dyed layered fabric, and rhizomatic stitching throughout the book. The completed cloth book measured 12” by 144” and is displayed by folding the fabric back and forth, exposing the ruptured raw edges. Seeking data from what lies between the layers and in the folds, I was able to find broader insight. In particular, *Artistic Interlude I* (pp. 75-77) provided an opportunity to seek understanding about the effects of positionality and how the faculty created opportunities to make safe positions of power, for example. *Artistic Interlude II* (pp. 91-93) focused on the affects EABA had on both self and others within the learning environment. *Artistic Interlude III* (pp. 108-111) was a response to the healing that comes from integrating self. Every time I worked with the cloth journal and reflected upon the data I was reminded that I needed to rupture conventional thinking and follow my rhizomatic insights. Unlike traditional analysis, these three artistic interludes provided a non-linear process of analyzing data. Decisions about the placement of these artistic interludes within the larger study were based on careful consideration of when and how they, as a woven presence, could offer readers insights into my analytical process and findings.

The remainder of this chapter presents findings directly related to the two research questions: How do graduate counseling students describe their experience with expressive arts-based activities (EABA)? How do flow theory and event theories align or misalign with students’ experiences with EABA?

The table (p. 63) displays three major themes that emerged from this study. Related subthemes and theories that surfaced as relevant to each theme are listed within this table.

Table 1. Display of Findings

Major Theme	Subtheme	Related Theory/Concept
Sense of Self in Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competing Emotions • Positionality • Middle-Way Pedagogy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event (encounter with environment from a cognitive perspective) • Expressive Arts Therapy
Physicality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art as Affect (biological) • Transmission of Affect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event (cognitive) • Flow (somatic) • Expressive Arts Therapy
EABA as Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration (cognitive, affective and environmental) • Student growth and Pedagogy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event (cognitive) • Flow (somatic) • Expressive Arts Therapy • Embodied Learning Theory

Major Theme 1: Sense of Self in Learning

Sense of Self in Learning discusses the ways in which participants felt during their learning experiences, influencing their sense of purpose in meeting the education experience generally and their initial encounters with EABA specifically. Three subthemes emerged from interviews and observations, *competing emotions*, *positionality*, and *middle-way pedagogy*. In addition, event theory provides a valid description to how participants described navigating through the learning space.

Table 2. Sense of Self in Learning

Major Theme	Subtheme	Related Theory/Concept
Sense of Self in Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competing Emotions • Positionality • Middle-Way Pedagogy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event (encounter with environment from a cognitive perspective) • Expressive Arts Therapy

Subtheme 1: Competing Emotional States. “What are we supposed to do now?”

Students arrived in the learning space, watching and listening for clues as to how to navigate successfully through the new class. A great variety of extrinsic and intrinsic factors

contributed to students' expressed sense of competing emotional states (Shipley, 2008; Kossak, 2009).

Mary described her initial feelings upon entering the first session: "I had built up the workshop in my head beforehand as being this big transformation of me feeling like I am becoming an expressive arts therapist and I did get that to some degree in the end." She was anticipatory, a normal process of the imagination. She was making speculations about her future and expecting the week's class to be a good encounter for professional growth. As the class settled in around her, Mary described herself beginning to have some doubts: "I wasn't sure how much I wanted to share of myself. I kind of wanted to be sure to project this easy-going unemotional professional personality at first." However, in the first attempt to portray a professional unemotional self, Mary suddenly found herself embarrassed and feeling awkward, exactly what she did not want to portray:

We did a couple of ice breaking activities. We had pictures of an animal totem given to us. It was sort of chaotic because people were getting settled and I bonded with the people who were sitting next to me. We all looked at our animal sticker, not knowing that we weren't supposed to look at it just yet. So when the activity started we kind of looked at each other and said, "What are we supposed to do now?"

In a short amount of time entering into the first activity Mary found herself dealing with competing emotions, from anticipation to apprehension to feeling awkward. She and a few students around her did not follow directions for the first activity and felt awkward about the predicament. Not only did Mary describe sensing her emotions, saying that she was feeling "excited, curious, anticipatory" at one point to being "embarrassed" about the

activity. She went on to say, "...but my screwing up helped us laugh about it." Mary had to deal with these emotions while still trying to appear like the "unemotional professional" she so longed to be.

Lauren was a new student but not new to the arts. As she began working within EABA she found each modality producing different emotions. For example, working with clay was a familiar activity for her so she found herself excited and anticipatory of the clay EABA which proved successful for her. However, later when Lauren moved into the painting EABA she found herself dealing with a different set of emotions:

I know clay. I can do clay. I can do collage but I've never really been a painter so I was like, "Ok, here we go." But there wasn't apprehension from "I don't want to be there," but apprehension from an anticipation standpoint. I desired to have more information about painting before I began.

When I asked for clarification, she explained that she wasn't worried that she couldn't do it but rather, she desired someone to give her a little background on how every activity would flow together. Hearing Lauren's words as she described her experiences through an emotional context revealed that like most participants in this study, emotions shifted and transitioned. Examples of Lauren's emotions shifted from anticipation of a new beginning for her to apprehension about the logistics of being a new student.

In expressive arts theory, Knill (2005) speaks of the need for EABA to be a low skill/high sensitivity activity so that clients can be successful in art making. Maintaining individuals' success in therapy is dependent on being able to handle the activities set before them. Although Lauren and Mary were graduate counseling students instead of clients, they desired to be successful in their learning environment, especially in front of other students.

Mary did not want to draw attention to herself but when she did not follow the directions, she felt embarrassed. Additionally, Lauren did not want to draw attention to herself even though the activity was low skill. Because these opening activities were low skill, the two students were willing to continue participating in their activities.

Whether individuals are clients in expressive arts therapy or students in a learning environment, most individuals desire to be successful in what they do. Event theory speaks to how individuals attempt to get through new terrain. Event theory suggests that individuals find out what is familiar to them, and test the environment (Hanson & Hanson, 1996; Kossak, 2009). New encounters cause individuals to be uncomfortable with the unknown and the unfamiliar, therefore, a mixture of emotions is appropriate to experience at this stage (Shipley, 2008). Furthermore, event theory goes on to describe how the brain reviews past experiences and if the new encounter presents unfamiliarity, the mind sends the message to look for clues in the current environment as to how they should navigate through the encounter (Hanson & Hanson, 1996).

Beth was a returning student. When she entered into the first EABA at the retreat center she was delighted to see some familiar items from the university's classroom such as pillows and musical instruments. She was also aware of the large windows exposing a view of trees and mountains that seemed to calm her nerves. These elements helped Beth feel comfortable in this new setting. She felt she knew what would be expected of her: "We're going to sit in a circle and I'm going to sit on a pillow. I saw people I knew. I was just anticipatory and excited." While these were emotions Beth experienced, she also described conflicting thoughts:

I was wondering how open I was going to be. I was feeling that movement was not my thing. I felt really shy and reserved, so I was really feeling nervous and kind of unsure like, “Do I really want to do it, especially in front of these people?”

Beth continued to describe her body’s resistance as she moved into an EABA: We were asked to act out an intention by standing in the middle of a circle, speak our name and do a movement. Yea, I was like, “This is terrible.” I did not want to do this. It was so uncomfortable for me. I was feeling panicky, like I did not want to get up and move around in front of these people.

Beth described her conflicting emotions as excitement and resistance, both being experienced cognitively and physically. All students, to varying degrees, discussed the competing emotions of anticipation, anxiety, excitement, apprehension, and resistance. The emotional states of these students coming into the learning environment and participate in introductory EABA require faculty to help students transition successfully into this learning environment. Expressive arts therapy refers to the low skill/high sensitivity in regards to working with the arts (Knill, 2005). However, the theory does not address competing emotions in regards to entering into therapy and the initial encounter with the therapist. Integrating event theory to expressive arts therapy theory offers additional perspectives which could influence expressive arts therapy pedagogy and therapists in the field.

Schwan and Garsoffky (2008), Newton (1973), Newton and Rindner (1979); and Tversky et al. (2008), all discuss how individuals process new encounters and how sensory intake informs them as to what they should do to successfully navigate through a new encounter.

Lynn, another returning student, described her emotions during the week:

“I had high hopes, so I was excited and hopeful and also a little bit resistant.” Tell me about the resistance, I ask.

I guess I was resistant because I was not familiar with the instructors and I had a movement class with Dr. Smith in the spring. I absolutely loved it and I was kind of wishing she was teaching it. But, it was all brand new people and so I was just kind of hesitant.

In addition to her resistance to a new instructor, Lynn also described her concern about being in a new physical setting, much smaller than her previous setting: “I guess I was thinking about where I was going to sit, if there’s going to be enough space, and if I’d pop someone in the head.”

Neuroscience researchers using event theory offer insight about being in new encounters which would include a new learning space with new students such as Lynn. The mind tries to ease the transition by first recalling similar experience by tapping into memory (Hanson & Hanson, 1996). Memories provided analytical and embodied insight to continue in this activity even though they currently felt uncomfortable (Neisser, 1976). Lynn participated because she trusted her past experiences in the program. In addition, by physically modeling the behaviors of others in the group, Lynn could fit into the new encounter with less emotional stress (Kossak, 2009).

Subtheme 2: Positionality. “You have the energy of the tribe with your classmates.”

The second subtheme of the major themes, Sense of Self in Learning is *positionality*. Society holds a sense of values found in each culture. The sense of values form notions of

what should be, what is not, and what is, creating what researchers call positionality (Greene, 1995). For example, positionality is formed from society's values on such areas as gender, economic status, and educational distinctions. Additionally, positionality can be formed from subjective knowledge, objective knowledge, and constructed knowledge (Knight, 2011). Positionality can also hold power or takes power away (Greene, 1995). Although I did not know what position students held when I first observed the classes, I did discover during the interviewing process that positionality influenced emotions and behavior. This paper discusses the two most explicit forms that students' expressions of positionality took; that of insider status and/or outsider status.

Insider. Students who were insiders had some benefits over outsiders. Typically, insiders have easy access to the established community. They have the ability to read non-verbal cues from the established community, characteristics found in adult learning theory (Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Lee, Kee, Ntseane, & Muhamad, 2001). With the students who attended one of two observed classes, they understood how EABA worked. They knew the faculty. They understood the program of study. These students also knew fellow classmates. Insiders were returning students and were easy to spot throughout the classes. They were the group that greeted each other eagerly during the arrival and opening of the class. Lynn, Beth, Ericka, and Mary were returning students and knew other insiders. For most insiders, they clustered together in groups chatting during breaks and spending time together late into the evening after the class ended for the day. Insiders had established friendships. Many of them shared classes where their EABA experience brought them close together emotionally. In their classes they often shared their feelings and emotions and because of that vulnerability, they formed a bond with fellow insiders and secured deep friendship among

each other. This bond seemed to compound, allowing for an even deeper sense of community.

Insiders also developed connections to faculty members because of prior shared experiences such as classes. Lauren expressed to me the power of community: “You have that energy of the tribe with your classmates. We’re all holding our own space but then we’re all holding the space for each other, too. And it creates that energy of safety and support.” Only an insider would hold that understanding of how an academic class is transformed into a *tribe* where students and faculty care for each other’s welfare. This understanding evolved from having attended prior classes, making friendships within the classes, building rapport, trust, and having a deep relationship from intimate conversations that stemmed from EABA.

Insiders also had experience with EABA. Even though others who were just beginning the program may hold experiences in the arts, insiders had both academic and personal experience with EABA. I found insiders to be more confident at the beginning of the class having friends around them. They were more relaxed and more comfortable in the learning space. Although the physical space held influence on insiders, insiders had prior relationships with both faculty and classmates.

Event theory (Shiple, 2008) provides an explanation of the phenomenon of *insider* as returning students encounter familiar expressive arts classes. Because insiders knew other students, faculty, and even the physical learning space, there was not much need for the mind to search out further cues from the environment as these elements were familiar to insiders. Flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996, 1997) supports understanding this situation as well by describing insiders as students who face the challenges of a new class but also have

the skills to meet the challenge. Because insiders are familiar with the unique learning environment found in expressive arts classes, insiders are willing to move into EABA without much resistance. Insiders were an established tribe having established classmates, a sense of community, and relationship with EABA. They held a greater understanding about the expressive arts therapy experience than outsiders.

Outsider. Adult learning theory researchers, Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Lee, Kee, Ntseane, and Muhamad (2001), report that outsiders have a heightened curiosity with the unfamiliar. These researchers also report that outsiders search for more information than insiders such as what is required from them or how should they respond to faculty members. Additionally, outsiders desire deeper knowledge because they have to catch up to topics insiders have already learned. They are just beginning to understand the topic and so they are more curious.

Outsiders were not yet connected to fellow classmates in the program. They had not yet formed a support system or relationships with fellow students. In addition, outsiders did not yet know the faculty. They had not yet experienced EABA. Although some students had educational training in the arts, they did not yet possess the understanding of what insiders knew.

Educational researcher Banks (1998) adds that outsiders have to find out what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. They have to deal with discerning everything from, for example, what is appropriate to wear for the activities to what is appropriate behavior. Most outsiders place additional pressure upon themselves to conform to looking and acting like insiders because they do not want to draw negative attention to themselves (Banks, 1998). Figuring this all out takes reflexivity and time. I am reminded of Hanson and Hanson

(1996), who claim that by recalling past similar encounters and scanning the external world for guidance, one can assimilate into a new encounter. Participants in this study, new to the expressive arts learning environment, appeared to desire to assimilate to the class as quickly as possible because they wanted to fit in, to be insiders.

Lauren was an older student, new to the program. She described her thoughts when walking the grounds of the retreat center for the first time, scanning the area and wondering how she could mix in and meet people. Lauren had to do some self-talking during this awkward period, “Go out and meet people.” By her self-talk, she was able to navigate through the clusters of students and faculty and found herself sitting down with a group of women. This group was made up of graduates of the program and they welcomed her to sit with them.

Even though Lauren – an outsider - found herself sitting with graduates – insiders - of the program, she inserted herself among them which allowed her to ask questions about the program at this university. She asked the graduates about expressive arts therapy and shared her initial experience with the arts. As Banks (1998) and Merriam et al. (2001) would suggest, she wanted to connect to insiders, gain insight about program, and to assimilate to an insider status.

For the most part, students were either an outsider or an insider. However, it was also possible for students to shift between the two positions. Bank (1998) contends that positionality is not oppositional to each other. In other words, positionality is interchangeable and fluid, sometimes being an indigenous outsider in one situation and an external insider in a different situation (Banks, 1998). An indigenous outsider would be described as a student who was part of the Expressive Arts Therapy Program but was

unfamiliar with an art modality. An example of this was found in Mary who was by definition an insider, since she was a returning student who had taken many classes in expressive arts therapy. However, she was new to some of the art modalities. Conversely, Rose, who was an outsider by being new to the program was very acquainted with many art modalities and felt like an insider when creating art. She would be defined as an external insider. Positionalities can be entangled and fluid within the expressive arts therapy program and particularly in EABA. Throughout the two classes I observed students, new and returning, who participated in break-out sessions, some of their own choosing and some required. As students shifted between EABA, they also shifted between insiderness and outsiderness, and between indigenous and external positions for every EABA they experienced.

This discussion of positionality and the complex and shifting positions students held is crucial for understanding how graduate counseling students experienced entering the learning space and navigating EABA in particular. Faculty invested in opportunities to *make safe* learning environments that engaged students productively. Providing various rituals that monitored and maximized positionality, faculty helped to control the learning environment rather than the student (Kessler, 2000).

Subtheme 3: Middle-way Pedagogy. “No one owns the circle of learning.”

The discussion above regarding Sense of self in Learning has placed emphasis on students’ subjectivity and expressed sense of both emotional and positional compartments. This third and final subtheme of Sense of Self in Learning places emphasis on how faculty members assisted graduate counseling students successfully through this period of transition. Faculty made attempts to bring together students as soon as possible, the attempt

was made more as a desire to connect students together. Corey (2004) claims that uniting a group quickly is a necessity for any successful group work to take place. Field notes recorded during observations of expressive arts courses illustrate how the faculty skillfully established a sense of community:

The faculty invited students to form a large circle with the entire class. They invited the students to participate in an ancient tradition putting forth their names into the circles and claiming space for learning to take place. The circle, standing or sitting at the beginning or end of class, was an established ritual that was repeated throughout the week's course. Witnessing this circular pattern repeated throughout the week I found students and faculty grateful for the learning opportunity. For returning students, they were well acquainted with the ritual of forming a circle as a time to connect, to decenter from the outside world, to calm down, and to claim the place as a space to grow in understanding. Even the new students quickly learned that this repeated act of encircling marked the journey into expressive arts therapy coursework. I have learned that these moments have helped students relax and decenter in preparation for EABA. In addition, I have learned that, as the group of students and faculty stood together they collectively formed a metaphor for nonpositionality. Faculty did not rise above students. Returning students were not elevated over beginners.

Hanson and Hanson (1996), Neisser (1976), and Kossak (2009) speak of the power of the mind to assess a new encounter and to inform the body as to how to adjust themselves in order to fit in to the new environment such as with EABA. During an interview, Dr. Smith

remarked about using a metaphor of a circle within her class to help all students merge into a community of learners, a new tribe. They created a circle.

The circle is a symbol of open space and is so different than a row of desks.

The circle forms a community and yet allows space for something new to come into the space. Each person that helps to create the circle has influence to the whole. No one owns the circle of learning. Everyone has an influence on the learning community. It encircles the time we're together. The circle represents the therapeutic presence for personal and professional growth. I know I never create a circle alone. I do it in company of others. It is here in the circle where we call forth from others.

During both classes, I observed that the circle making represented the merging together, the making of a cohesive community where all are influential in the learning process. Addressing this issue of positionality right from the start of class in a respectful and metaphoric method granted students the invitation to be their authentic selves in the company of fellow learners. This ritual brought everyone together, students and faculty, and make safe positionality, giving students permission to be themselves, to ask questions without fear, to attempt art-making activities without feeling embarrassed, and to have the opportunity to experience in full how expressive arts therapy works. Attempting to make safe positionality seemed crucial for students to develop their own sense of self within the learning space.

Artistic Interlude I: Circles that Help Make Safe Positionality

I stood at the studio table with an assortment of fabric trying to represent the idea of the meaning of the circle making that was observed throughout the expressive arts therapy classes. Circles represented several things during the two observed courses: being present

with each other, being connected, coming together to begin, coming together to close the day, and coming together to celebrate being in learning community. Creating circles with students and instructors represented a contained non-hierarchical community, a kinship, a tribe, and a bond that was visually and emotionally strong. I grabbed my soil-stained organza and dipped multiple-sized empty tin cans into a bleach paste. Pressing the edges of the cans onto the organza and bleaching out the stained color, I created circles to represent the vast array of encircled groups from the two classes (See Figure 10).



Figure 10. Circles of Communities.

Faculty members in the expressive arts therapy certificate program have consistently followed this same circle-making ritual. The circles may have been formed of people standing, walking around a centerpiece, or sitting in a circle on the floor or at tables arranged in a circle. The circles that evolved from the bleached organza epitomized the nature of this program, the respect for each student as one who can lend their perspective to the class. My interviews with faculty found that this opening encounter originated from a Native American influence, one where all who sit in the circle are valued equally. In another way, the circle reminded me of the “I-Thou” relationship that Buber (1970) speaks to as the therapeutic

relationship between therapist and client. This expressive arts therapy program incorporated this same respectful relationship and offered it in the form of *faculty/student*, never placing the instructors higher or more knowledgeable than students. Similar to adult learning philosophy (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999), Dr. Smith expressed that graduate counseling students' life experiences are an asset to the class, offering additional knowledge that enriches the learning experience in expressive arts therapy. Additionally, many students held knowledge in therapy, psychology, and the arts in their undergraduate degrees and work experience. In fact, I struggled with using the term *faculty* when I spoke of the instructors I observed. They were certainly faculty but they worked to diminish the power over the dynamics that the role historically carries. Faculty took the role of facilitators. They allowed the art making experience to do the teaching. As facilitators, they held the space as students participated in the art-making experience.

Skillfully presenting a centering act and incorporating the repeated ritual of circling, participants were able to center in on the whole group as one cohesive unit. Faculty provided students with a visible and visceral attempt at making safe the learning space by neutralizing any negative influence stemming from what students could not deny or erase. There existed positions which carried different power. Through the ritual of this ceremonial act, students became aware that the learning space was an activity of uniting the class. Although participants still had to deal with their competing emotions and positionality, this ritual making lowered the level of anxiety. The ritual became a ceremonial act morning, noon, and evening. Over the years, this ritual has become an expected and honored activity, a middle-way pedagogy.

Summary of Sense of Self in Learning

Three themes emerged across observations and interviews with students and faculty. The first theme, Sense of Self in Learning, provided an awareness that students experienced both competing emotions and positionality. Competing emotions rose as students entered a new learning encounter having expectations for themselves in addition to the demands of the class. Students navigated through their competing emotions by drawing upon past similar memories, looking for clues, and testing the environment. As students found a sense of how to assimilate to the learning environment, they blended into the class. Positionality situated students as insiders or outsiders in several ways. Being new to the expressive arts therapy program, being new to the class, or being new to experiencing EABA brought a positionality of outsider. Insiders consisted of students who were familiar to the program, EABA, and had established relationships. Faculty provided a visual and visceral circle-making ritual with students to make safe positionality and bring students together by controlling the environment rather than students (Kessler, 2000). Event theory offered an awareness of how students cognitively navigated through positionality (Hanson & Hanson, 1996; Neisser, 1976).

Major Theme 2: Physicality

Table 3. Physicality

Major Theme	Subtheme	Related Theory/Concept
Physicality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Art as Affect (biological)• Transmission of Affect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Event (cognitive)• Flow (somatic)• Expressive Arts Therapy

This study found that physicality was an important element of expressive arts therapy pedagogy. In this study, physicality refers to a physical state of being where individuals gain

a new awareness of self through visceral bodily experiences (Bell, 2004). Under the major theme of physicality, two subthemes emerged, *art as affect* and *transmission of affect*. The first subtheme, art as affect, describes the physicality with art materials and the art-making process. Working with art materials and the art-making process affected students in a more biological influence when they were in a creative relationship with the arts. The second subtheme, *transmission of affect*, revealed that physicality with other students, especially when students witnessed or responded to each other's art, affected students. Transmission of affect (Brennan, 2004) took place during times allocated for students to witness and respond to each other's art form. Transmission of affect was generated when students were in a personal sharing relationship with other students. Flow theory will be incorporated throughout this section as the key theory for understanding how this phenomenon occurred in the learning space.

Subtheme 1: Art as Affect. "I got into a physical trance."

O'Sullivan (2001) describes affect as something that is experienced. What is unique about affect is that it is autonomous, everyone holds their own experiences to living but yet, affect is found within a social context with the *other*, be it with other people, or with an object (Hemmings, 2005). Deleuze (1997) and Hemmings (2005) refer to affect as being an embodied, biological, and somatic experience. These theories help to introduce the embodied and biological affects that students experienced within a learning environment.

In expressive arts therapy coursework, students are given experiences creating art forms through EABA as a way to understand how the arts influence a therapeutic quality within expressive arts therapy. Within the two courses I observed, graduate counseling students were presented a series of art modalities which included experiences in visual art

and performing arts. During the creative time when students were able to create, they were able to delve into the physicality of art making. They were able to spend time physically working with art materials, musical instruments, or moving through space.

Students were also working alongside each other noticing each other's art-making process and art form. In addition, students were given opportunities to verbally and/or visually respond to each other students' art forms. Working with and responding to each other, students navigate their body in space or with physical materials in a social context. Giardini (1999) describes this state of being with *other* as a place where affect becomes the qualifying expression of concerns and drives, connecting individuals to others and creating bonds.

Mary describes her affective state upon entering the music EABA:

Physically, I felt my heart level go up and down and I was really excited. I felt myself getting excited that I tried to hold myself back...like this puppy and I had to keep myself on a leash (laughter) but I didn't because I feel music is something I really love and I don't often get an opportunity for this kind of activity. I felt myself sitting forward in my seat and just that feeling of wanting to start. I wanted to dive right in.

Mary's expressions: "hold myself back, keep myself on a leash, feeling myself sitting forward" reveals that she not only experienced emotion in her mind, she also felt her emotion physically. The physicality of drumming affected her state of mind and her body's response. Drumming was something that Mary loved to experience. She had developed skills with drumming, all of which affected her with excitement for the opportunity to play the drum during this EABA. As Mary started to drum, she described becoming so focused in the

EABA that she was unaware of what was happening to her hands during the drumming activity:

I was super-excited. Um, I felt I had this energy coursing through my body.

This energy just felt really powerful. I got into a physical trance which was like I wasn't aware of what I was doing with my hands.

Mary gained energy because she was participating in something she enjoyed which fueled more energy. She was able to face the challenge of playing the drums since she had the skills to succeed. Additionally, Mary describes herself in a trance by the physicality of drumming. All these descriptions fit what Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1996, 1997) claims to be as *in the flow*. Not only did her skills match the challenge but she was in a flow of drumming which made her unaware of what she was doing with her hands.

Like Mary, Lauren became physical while working with her journal-making project. Although Lauren struggled to get into her journal making EABA, she found enjoyment once she interacted with the art materials. It became a sensual experience. Lauren expressed her EABA experience as she tried to find the right art material:

It became really fun! I was like touching everything. I went like "Ooh." I kept picking up things and touching it even if I chose not to use it. The visual, the texture, the color, the shine was amazing. I remember there was some ribbon that sparkled and, you know, everything came to life in a new vibrant way. And it came from a physicalness, very tactile as far as touching the different things, and then using it with things that were resonating with me.

Lauren's interactions with art materials became an intimate experience. She felt excitement; even the colors were thrilling to her. Not only was she drawn to the art materials, she knew she could create a pleasing journal.

Lynn found herself so lost in her art-making experience that all she was aware of was her arm, a paintbrush and her paint. Lynn shared her experience:

It was like everything else around me, it kind of just fell away and all that was there was my arm and this paintbrush and this ugly olive green color that was really exciting at the time, you know, and there was this fluidity of movement and in this sense, it could not be wrong. It was like I'm creating this and so, it's just right.

Lynn described a feeling that she could not make a mistake with her painting. Because her art-making experience was pleasurable, she was not critiquing her work. She was enjoying the pleasure of her actions and what was unfolding before her. This is a characteristic of flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996, 1997).

Lynn's expression that she could do no wrong allowed the experience to be pleasurable. Rose had a similar reaction when working with clay. Being present within an EABA, Rose found it was easy to focus in the art-making process when working with clay:

I feel it [the clay] was serenity. I was joyful. You want to be in that emotional state for a long time. You want to always be there. You know, you're aware but you're not self-conscious. You're present and attuned but not too much. There's just this feeling of a balance so it makes it joyful. You know, it's a place where you truly lose time. You don't know how much time has passed and you don't care because you're in a good space.

Like Rose's experience working with clay, Cindy reported a similar experience when she worked with her collage:

I was at my space and I just pulled out all my things and just started picking through stuff. I think that I tend to be pretty relaxed when I'm working on something like this. My breath slows down and I'm not thinking about what's going on in my body. I mean I'm not thinking about being in pain from the sciatic nerve, and I'm not thinking about other stuff going on in my life. It's just this sort of getting lost in the process.

All these students were experiencing several characteristics of being engaged in flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996, 1997). They were engaged with EABA, focused, not aware of time, and finding pleasure in what they were doing. During this flow period, some students were aware of others around them but the physicality of working with the art materials kept them focused.

Lauren was affected by working among fellow classmates in the learning space. The physicality of working near others influenced her experience:

There were interactions, especially sound interaction among us: words, vocalization, sounds, hoots, and there were some, one in particular who was very physical with her painting where she was like "Bang, bang, bang." And actually, she was pounding on her paper and scratching at it. So there was consciousness and alertness to some of those other things going on around me. It was a very interesting combination of being in your own space and using your own energy and flow and doing that in community so that you have that influence and that interaction going on.

EABA is experienced within a social context. Therefore, there were two ways students were affected. Creating art by interacting with materials and tools provided students with intimate experience in the learning space. In addition, affect surfaced as students worked within a social context (Hemmings, 2005). Participating in EABA within a social context with others, embodies individuals with a biological and somatic experience (Deleuze, 1997; Hemmings, 2005). Lauren described the flow period when she stated in her interview that she was aware of others but yet, she was able to stay focused on her art making, “Like 70% of it [the experience], I was in my own space. Yet there was still that consciousness of 30% of it was in community.” One would not have known that Lauren was aware of others in the room where she was creating her collage. My reflective journal stated:

Lauren spoke of being in her own space. This was not a just a reference to a physical space. Rather, she is referring to a mental space, a space where she is present with herself and paying attention to her body and mind as she created her journal. As students merged into art making within EABA, students found themselves moving from the extrinsic distractions from the outside world to a more focused place of creativity. This place of creating art lured students away from the outer world. For Lauren, two hours had gone by in EABA while she worked on her journal. She was unaware of the passing of time.

Lauren was in a flow period for over two hours. Although she was moving about searching for materials and positioning her torn papers onto her board, she lost sight of others in the room. Being in flow allowed her to focus on her work and make occasional adjustments along the way. However, she moved quickly back into flow after making adjustments.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1996, 1997), describes the state of flow as being quite fluid, time where one steps back and examines their work, makes adjustments, and moves right back into creating. When participants were engaged in flow, they were balancing their level of skills with the challenge of creating art. When these two elements are balanced there is a sense of flow and of being balanced. Because their challenge matched their skill level, participants experienced pleasure. However, they also experienced differing degrees of tension which arose between being aroused by the art-making process and the need to control, an embodied arousal and a mental critique. This tension between arousal and control reminds me of Hanson and Hanson's (1996) cycling back and forth between perception and cognition. It also reminds me of flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996, 1997). The figure below (Figure 11: Csikszentmihalyi's Flow Chart) describes Csikszentmihalyi's flow theory. I adapted Massimini & Carli's (1988) figure to emphasize the tension between arousal and control as reported by participants from this study by placing two circular arrows depicting a circular agency between the two forces of control and arousal (see Figure 11).

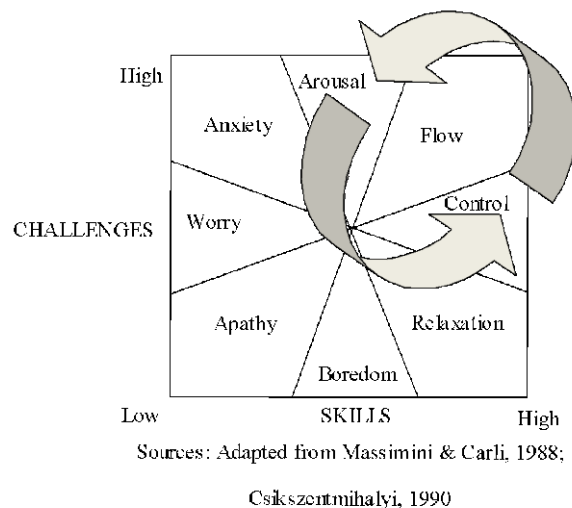


Figure 11. Csikszentmihalyi's Flow Chart, adapted from Csikszentmihalyi (1990).

When participants found themselves matching their skills with the challenges in EABA, they found themselves shifting between arousal and control. When students were in this phase, the activity fed upon itself and created its own energy. Cindy's words expressed what this state of arousal felt like. "I feel it was serenity. I was joyful. You want to be in that emotional state for a long time. You want to always be there." However, the critical mind caused participants to step out of arousal and into control, making cognitive decisions about their art and directing them to make adjustments. This back and forth moment between arousal and control became a circular agency where participants stepped in and out of flow, being aroused by their creative choices and then critiquing their work. I feel that Csikszentmihalyi's (1990, 1996, 1997) adapted chart (see Figure 11) better depicts the cycling back and forth within flow for students engaged in EABA.

However conflicting this action is, participants felt a desire to continue in their work and to reach a state where the challenge matched their skill level. In Cindy's situation, she pushed through her physical pain. Cindy described her experience:

I know there were some things that came out in this collage that spoke to the way I felt during the guided body scan and clay piece we did. My anger with the guided body scan probably brought up a lot of things. In the body scan, we weren't offered a choice to participate in it or not. So that experience reminded me of the population I work with, which are people who are survivors of abuse and sexual assault who have their ability to choose taken away and the voicelessness of that.

Cindy's description fits Kossak's (2009) term of *entrainment* and Deleuze's (1997) depiction of how the mind affects by the body. Cindy's reference to an unpleasant

experience with EABA was a result of not having a choice in the activity. Other students reported that had no problems with the body scan but for Cindy, there was a reason for her feelings. She was suffering from a sciatic nerve and was in pain the entire week of class. The guided body scan brought attention to the pain, something Cindy was trying to avoid. She inwardly released herself from the directions of the facilitator by following her internal voice. Cindy told herself to find her own path during this uncomfortable time, to take self-care and avoid focusing on her pain. She was aware of her body's physical pain and it affected her ability to think and engage fully in EABA. Furthermore, Cindy's situation caused her to think about her clients' and their lack of making their choices in life. Cindy's art-making experience connected her to the world of her clients (Giardini, 1999; Hemmings (2005) and gave her a way to visually narrate her inner struggle in relation to others (Tomkins, 1963). Hemmings (2005) describes affect as a very complex structure that serves as a self-referential aspect, adding depth to one's existence. This affect is accomplished through relationships with *others*, whether *others* are human relationships or relationships with activities such as art making (Tomkins, 1963). Cindy kept working despite her physical pain because she found a bond between her clients and her art-making process. She was in relationship with the physicality of the art materials. Additionally, she was in a relationship with her clients as well.

Art as affect revealed that art making and the art product effected individuals and others (Bell, 2004; Deleuze, 1997; Giardini, 1999; Hemmings, 2005; Sedgwick, 2003). Creating art work, whether it is a visual product or performance, physically and emotionally affects the artist and those who experience the art form. In EABA, students had physicality both with themselves and their art materials while being in flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990,

1996, 1997). Through multisensory materials, students encountered physicality and were affected by their experience. The tension that fueled the desire to continue working in EABA will be expanded upon in the third theme of this chapter, EABA, Integration, and Pedagogy.

Subtheme 2: Transmission of Affect. “That connectedness to others is just powerful.”

Transmission of affect is described as the ability for the emotions and energies of one person or group to be absorbed by and enter into another person or group (Brennan, 2004). Expressive arts therapy is about being present and connected to the space, to the art making process, and to the art product. In expressive arts therapy classes I observed an activity known as *witnessing and responding*. This activity of witnessing and responding to fellow students about their art form was a crucial part to EABA. Witnessing and responding in expressive arts therapy is designed for individuals to gain further insight from their art form through a relationship with others. The quality of relationship with others is what this theme cites as being a crucial element in EABA. Without relationship to others, the learning process is weakened. Examples of students’ descriptions below will help to describe the transmission of affect to other students within the learning environment.

Witnessing and responding to each other’s work, in addition to participating in EABA, provided a transmission of affect in many ways. Students were encouraged to share their art work with other students. Fellow students revealed additional insight to the artist through their senses and perceptions. Displaying one’s work to fellow classmates may have required some vulnerability but it also allowed students to be understood by others, initiating affect.

Ericka expressed her affects from witnessing: “I felt gratitude for people being interested in trying to feel what I felt.” She expressed further thoughts about witnessing and how this part of EABA brought her validation:

I think in a validation of personal experiences, the subjective experiences are different for everyone. We all have our own world and our own reality and so to express and also have someone to engage in that process and try to understand it, shows compassion. So this connectedness and sense of community are just powerful. To hear that someone else is really interested in your experiences, that’s not self-centered. That’s community oriented.

Not only did Ericka regard the sense of community as a powerful element in the EABA process, but she also was emotionally moved by the insight that emerged from peers. This experience deeply affected her with a greater awareness of herself:

It was very emotional for me. I feel they [witnesses] couldn’t have really known that they touched on a lot of other personal issues that flowed into that EABA experience. But for whatever reason, they did reflect back to me aspects of a lot of other personal things that were going on with me. I felt it was very emotional for me to see that. Also, it left me wondering if that’s what other people see in me. So how much are those things from the past am I carrying on outwardly?

Lynn also described how she was affected when she her group witnessed her painting:

To see that reflected back was really rewarding. I was grateful for it. My heart swelled up with openness and appreciation. I teared up a little bit when I heard it. Even now just thinking about it causes me to just breathe deeper.

When participants were willing to have their work witnessed and responded to, they risked vulnerability. They were vulnerable to the comments of others. Yet in doing so, they expressed being positively affected by the comments from peers. The process of an individual's work being witnessed in community opened their heart and mind to different perspectives, of seeing things from someone else's perspective. Viewing one's work through the eyes, voices, and actions of others taught graduate counseling students to be willing to look at life from multiple perspectives. Not only in EABA but also in the act of witnessing art, Deleuze (1997) and Hemmings (2005) describe how the mind and body experience is affected by what is produced.

Rose felt time spent in a group was a wonderful time to help process her dream. She expressed her experience:

That [group process] really enhanced my understanding of things and kind of going on with me at this point in my life. To have been warmed up enough to be fully embodied, to reflect upon it yourself but also dialogue about it with other people because in hearing your voice saying it out loud, there's something that kind of brings it back in and makes you witness yourself and hear it yourself, um, so that you can digest it yourself and do something with it.

Sharing performing or visual art work with others, peers in the class reflected from their own perspective of what they saw or felt. This is not a critique about how artistically

good the art piece is to the viewer but rather, what do others observe in the artwork that impresses upon them that the artist may not have noticed through their own eyes. In a sense, witnessing and responding created the opportunity for the mind and body to connect. The student's mind and the mind of the witness observe what the student's body created. The mind needs the actions of the body to process and understand life (Hemmings, 2005). Therefore, the embodied being understands the experience of living more deeply. The physicality of witnessing and responding brought individuals together, not only physically but also emotionally. Participating in the witnessing encounter, students had multiple opportunities to rethink, rehash, and process life with self and others.

Artistic Interlude II: Affecting Self and Others

Witnessing and responding reflects such an intimate relationship between students within the learning environment and brought learners to a deeper place of insight. Relationships between students and facilitators were deepened.

I gently and carefully placed my rotted linen fabric on top of black flannel that had been sprayed with bleach. The underneath black fabric metaphorically held their stories. The stained and rotted linen was ruptured, torn, and fragmented. Having observed the art witnessing caused me to pull out my black thread and attempt to *fix* or *repair* the scars and the tears. However, I realized that I could not make the ruptured fabric disappear. I could only hold the tears together in hopes that the fabric could function as a whole. I gave strength to where the fabric was weak or frail and attention to these weak places gave way for strength to return to the fabric.

In all of the activities in the two expressive arts classes, witnessing and responding to others was a most powerful component of EABA. Without witnessing and responding,

students would have been left hanging by themselves; hanging in their pain, hanging out their
rips and tears of life, and hanging out their hurt souls with no source for comfort or insight
outside of themselves. This would have been a reckless act to leave students unattended.
Witnessing was the *holding stitch* for students and a method of care and attention. I desired
to represent a holding stitch in my art work. Validating classmates and holding a space for
them to share, witnessing became an opportunity to emotionally and carefully create a
webbing, entangling threads of support for the student who shared their story. In my cloth
journal, I wanted these new stitches to hold and to mend the entire cloth like I saw students
doing with each other during witnessing. I felt secrets emerging from students. I saw sorrow
and frustration. I felt sadness and loneliness. I so desperately wanted to just hold everything
and anything in place. I wanted to stitch over flaws and ruptures. I wanted to cover the
student's struggles with hope. This section in my cloth collage book was a dark time for me.
However, when I viewed it a second time, I felt I needed to add a sense of hope to it based on
how students felt when their work had been validated. I grabbed my clear crystals. Crystals
provided a spark of light. They illuminated the darkness of the flannel and added life to the
ruptured and torn areas of the linen. I added *Tinkerbelle* in small capsules to show students
tinkering throughout their EABA, trying to create possibilities in their lives. I also attached
metal brads and buttons to depict the facilitators' *holding space* during this time. The metal
brads added extra support, securing the layers of fabric in place. This addition to the collage
book represented the entire witnessing experience. From darkness to validation to growth,
being validated and emotionally held was a profound journey for these students (see Figures
12 and 13).



Figure 12. *Holding Stitches.*



Figure 13. *Illuminating the Darkness.*

Summary of Physicality

Physicality causes change because of the context of being with other (Bell, 2004).

In this study, physicality was found in relationship with self, art materials and in relationship to other students. Two subthemes emerged, art as affect and witnessing and responding. The first subtheme, art as affect, brought out the physicality with working with materials,

affecting students by releasing embodied emotions through EABA. Providing EABA with sensory-rich materials, students entered into flow, finding arousal and control guiding their art-making process. The second subtheme, witnessing and responding revealed a relationship between self and other students which provided time for validation and connectedness. Both art as affect and art as witnessing and responding involved physicality between self and other and caused affect upon all who participated in EABA.

Major Theme 3: EABA as Pedagogy

Table 4. EABA as Pedagogy

Major Theme	Subtheme	Related Theory/Concept
EABA as Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration (cognitive, affective and environmental) • Student Growth and Pedagogy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event (cognitive) • Flow (somatic) • Expressive Arts Therapy • Embodied Learning Theory

The following discussion of EABA as Pedagogy section presents how two areas, integration and student growth and pedagogy, blend together in the learning space, providing students with opportunities to gain academic and personal insight. Two subthemes emerged from this study, *integration* and *student growth and pedagogy*. *Integration* discusses how cognition, affect, and the learning environments play an important role in integrating self by paying attention to internalized competing selves. Students described achieving a sense of balance and peace when they completed EABA. This sense of balance and peace arrived when the self fully integrated. The second subtheme, *student growth and pedagogy*, discusses the academic and personal growth of students. Additionally, this section looks at the faculty's execution of a learning theory and modeling the role of the expressive arts therapist within academia.

In the previous theme of *physicality*, students described the characteristics they experienced when they were involved in EABA. In addition to their descriptions, students were asked to identify characteristics they experienced in EABA through a survey. The survey contained characteristics of flow theory, entrainment theory, and event theory. All seven students responded both in their interview and in the survey that flow theory was the predominate theory experienced in EABA. Flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1996, 1997) emphasizes that individuals find pleasure in doing a task because they are able to match their skill level with the challenge. They are unaware of time because they are focused on the activity at hand. Individuals experience a shifting between arousal and control which keeps them engaged. In addition to describing a shift between arousal and control, students also reported experiencing an inner dialogue within themselves, often two competing selves struggling with each other.

Subtheme 3: Integration. “My push was stronger than my pull.”

Lauren experienced a shifting back and forth between two opposing selves, something very different than the tension between arousal and control described in flow theory:

It felt really good to do it [art making], liberating is probably a good word of doing it and then I did step into the mental piece of it when I literally stepped back at looked at it. I went, “Um, I’m not very pretty.” So, when I looked at it from an aesthetic vantage point, I stepped into some judgment around it. And then I stepped back into it. “It’s not about the product. It’s about the process.” So there was this kind of back and forth with the feeling aspect of it. Backed up from the feeling element to the thinking element, I was then

really telling myself, “Wait. That’s not what that’s about” and going back into the feeling aspect of it.

Lauren expressed feeling two opposing forces existing within herself, a feeling element and a thinking element. She was having inner dialogue from two competing selves; one voice that wanted to cognitively control her art making and another voice who wanted to let the emotional embodied voice create art without cognitive control or judgment. Each self wanted something different to occur in the art making.

Although I witnessed the students’ participation in EABA, I was not aware of the conflict going on intrinsically. Students not only experienced tension between competing selves, but they also experienced a process of negotiation between selves. Once competing selves negotiated their way through inner conflict, students experienced an integration of selves, a place where they felt joy and balance. To understand this phenomenon, I have presented three students’ journeys from competing selves to the integration of self. In the section below, Lynn, Lauren, and Beth share their personal account. Each individual’s account reveals their competing selves, negotiation, and integration as a unit.

Lynn found her competing selves in conflict.

It’s an interesting conflict that happens internally because part of me wanted to be there [in EABA]. I’ve never out-and-out not wanted to be there. I’ve always wanted to be there and I wanted to be engaging in it but then I resent engaging in it.

Lynn’s internal competing selves consisted of a voice of resistance to EABA and the other self yearned for her to engage with EABA. She admitted that she was fighting with herself and desired to enjoy the EABA process:

I know there's a part of me that's fighting enjoying myself.

Lynn persevered in EABA even when she got frustrated. Because Lynn was experienced in EABA, she knew the outcome of staying with the process was worth it. She negotiated with self and found enjoyment:

I've been through it before and I know. I mean I'm going to know how I feel in the end and I know if I just, if I surrender a little bit, I will enjoy myself.

Lynn's description of "part of me fighting myself" implies her competing selves were in conflict. There exist many theories on competing selves and inner conflict. Higgins (1987) speaks of the conflict between the actual, the ideal, ought, can, and future selves. Bazerman, Tenbrunsel, and Wade-Benzoni (1998) define these conflicting inner selves into four categories of inner conflict: what one wants to do versus what one should do, being emotional versus being rational, being impulsive versus being thoughtful, and being hot headed versus being cool headed. Freud (1912/1990) refers to this inner conflict as consisting of the ego and super ego. Finally, Jung (1969) speaks about individuals being composed of many different archetypes that were created from life's experiences. This study did not focus on how these competing selves came into existence. Rather, this study focused on how students negotiated through their competing selves and became integrated with self, bringing insight into how graduate counseling students experienced EABA

When competing selves find a united resolution, the selves have integrated into one self. Integration brings a sense of balance to individuals (Bazerman, Tenbrunsel, & Wade-Benzoni, 1998; Freud, 1990; Higgins, 1987; Jung, 1969). A metaphor for integration of self can be described as a large company that positions a chairperson over the board members. The duty of the chairperson is to look out for the good of the entire company. Board

members are responsible for their own special area and will work hard to push for their personal agenda. As in any board meeting, many voices want push for their agenda to be accepted by the chairperson. However, trying to honor every board member's request the chairperson's duty is to decide what will best benefit the company and so, the chairperson decides accordingly (Hoskins & Leseho, 1996). This metaphor serves to explain how a fully integrated self makes a decision to do what's good for the entire being. In the participant's competing selves, one authentic fully integrated self who knows the good of the self, comes forth and leads the individual towards healing and personal growth. Lauren described her process of moving toward healing and personal insight.

Lauren found herself struggling with competing selves through inner-dialogue:

I wouldn't say I was judging it. That word doesn't resonate. I mean I was critiquing it [my art] at some level but it was critiqued more from a place of "That's not expressing who I am in this moment." Yet, there was that time of "I knew it wasn't right." There was this time where I didn't know what to do about it. So there was that void of sorts to "Okay, I don't like what I'm doing. I don't like the pictures on there. I don't like the words on there but I don't know what to do about that."

Lauren's competing selves were in conflict. They did not like what was happening and so one voice was communicating with her that there needed to be a different approach within her art work. Lauren continued to describe this urging to do something different.

Before that it was hard. I kept thinking. I kept searching hard. I couldn't find anything I wanted to put on my collage so I was putting on things that didn't really resonate with me because I was focused in the old way of cutting

pictures from magazines. That was my old habit. That was what I had done before with collage. So that's why it was hard because I was trying to do something in the old way that didn't feel right anymore.

Although this competing self appeared to be criticizing self, it turned out to be a voice encouraging Lauren to change not only her way of making art but her life. Her competing selves listened to each other and her encouraging voice negotiated the outcome:

I was doing it because that was my old pattern and then it came to a point when I said, "I can't do this. I cannot do it this way, this time." And that's when I went up to the table, two or three times, trying to find something. And that's pretty interesting because probably before that I didn't even notice that table because in my head, it was informing me that collage meant only using magazine photographs. And then when I was in that state of frustration, that state of frustration of "This isn't working. It isn't expressing what I'm feeling." that I looked around and saw the table with things on it. "Let's go see what there is there." That's when I shifted.

Art comes not to hurt individuals but serves as a catalyst to bring transformation from within (Levine, 1999, 2005, 2009; McNiff, 1986, 2004, 2009; Rogers, 1999). Lauren was patient with her inner conflict. In fact, she was puzzled why the *old way* was not working anymore. She negotiated with her competing selves and tried to acknowledge their wisdom. When the old way of working no longer worked for her, she was willing to try something a new way, to be open to a new perspective. Finally, Lauren discovered what her integrated self needed. Once Lauren worked listened to the encouraging voice and was open to a new perspective, she integrated her competing selves and found balance:

It was all me. It was the second voice, the voice breaking out, maybe. You know, it was. There's a part of me that wanted to stay the old me and had put me in the box. And it was the person who had been in the box for four years. And then there's the new person which is obviously a combination of all of that. There is significance to pulling forth that which I was prior to going in that box, of re-expressing who I was before I had stopped being my true self.

Lauren's competing selves created tension and conflict. Through her art making she was able to mentally, emotionally, and even physically confront her selves, some of which had been suppressed for many years. Her art making allowed her to come face to face with these competing selves and discover powerful resources for transformation from within (Levine, 1999, 2005, 2009; McNiff, 2004, 2009; Rogers, 1999).

Like Lauren, Beth had several inner voices speak to her. In a movement EABA both a reassuring self and a restrictive self spoke to her, two competing selves:

I was fighting with myself. I was telling myself, "Everybody here is doing the same thing." I don't know the right word but that it was like a tug-of-war or a pull or push because it was like one side of me was saying, "No, don't do that, that is, don't do anything crazy. Do something really small and modest. Don't call attention to yourself." And then the other side was like, "No! You're going to go out there and do whatever you feel like what happens and it's going to be fine." I don't know what the word for that emotionally is, just like internal conflict.

It was clear that one of Beth's competing selves was pushing her to experiment within the movement EABA while the other competing self was resisting too much attention to herself. A negotiation process began between these two selves:

Why are you judging? This is not why we are here. This is not about creating masterpieces. We are here to feel other sides. It was just that whole like, pushing and pulling of trying not to judge and still another aspect of judgment. I think judgment for me is that I place it on myself of what I am going to make can't be good enough, it won't be enough.

I asked her, "Do you think your previous art training education was responsible for the judgment aspect?"

Yes, because I attended a high school for gifted art students. I decided not to pursue the visual art training into college because I couldn't handle the fine art approach, especially from an art critique stance. I think that I've learned to really judge the quality of things I've made.

The self that pushed Beth forward in EABA was the reassuring self. This time, the reassuring self, possessed a frame of reference that knew what was best for the total selves (Brownwell & Kopp, 1991).

Beth's reassuring self was honored by her chairperson and the competing selves integrated:

"We're going to find out! I don't care if you don't want to go. We're going to do it!" I had that pull and push of being in flow and stepping back from it but my push was stronger than my pull. "You're going to relax and let go! I'm here, I've arranged a week of child care and drove and paid the money."

Beth continued to express to me why she persevered through the inner struggles with competing selves, negotiating, and integration:

I know that once I do it I'm going to feel better. I am going to know more about myself. I'm going to feel more connected to the people and the place. Once you've gone through these processes you feel more connected. You're more attuned with yourself. You build deep connections to the people you have these experiences with. You know, I usually leave these experiences when I'm in an expressive arts experience, more attuned with the nuances within my own body and how the energy is in my body, and more grateful for life and everything. I need that. It helps me feel healthy.

Beth's integrated selves were at peace.

The data from these interviews revealed that while working in the flow of EABA students encountered inner dialogue with self. Within the encounter of EABA, students experienced conflict. They negotiated with self and an integrated self emerged within each student (Hoskins & Leseho, 1996; Rogers, 1999). When students worked within EABA they found insight about themselves in addition to academic knowledge. They confronted themselves through the art-making process and discovered that they began to see things from a new perspective or as Lynn stated, "A shift in perspective." Lauren used a similar statement earlier, "That's when I shifted." Within the learning environment, EABA provided graduate counseling students with opportunities to learn about expressive arts therapy. In addition to academic knowledge, students also gained personal insight through their experiences with EABA. Working with EABA, students were affected by a shift in perspective.

Art making in itself provides opportunities for soul nourishment (Knill, 2005). Students' experiences in EABA affected them by exposing and integrating their competing selves. EABA provided students with a visceral learning experience but the growth in academic and personal insight was intrinsic.

Subtheme 2: Student Growth and Pedagogy. “Something lights up in your mind and suddenly unlocks in your heart.”

In the previous section, participants shared their account of the intrinsic experience. Their experience in EABA caused competing selves to emerge. Negotiation of these competing selves occurred. For each individual, the negotiation process varied in length and intensity. This educational process was unique and complex. Many of the characteristics I had observed corresponded to characteristics found in adult learning (and experiential learning theories (Itin, 1997; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). However, these theories lacked specific qualities witnessed in the Appalachian Approach found in the learning environment.

I sat with Dr. Smith and listened to her pedagogical approach, expecting to hear more about adult learning theory or experiential learning theory since that is what I observed. Dr. Smith shared with me that she incorporated *embodied learning theory* into her pedagogical practice. Embodied pedagogy brings attention to the physicality of the body during interactions between students and teacher, trusting that individuals will learn from interactions of self *and* the environment (Probyn, 2004; Sellers-Young, 1998). Embodied pedagogy includes both embodied teaching and embodied learning. Teaching *and* learning are recognized to be relational to each other. Embodied pedagogy exists *between* teaching and learning *and* teacher and learner (Dixon & Senior, 2011). Quite different from traditional western culture, embodied learning involves the senses, perception, and

mind/body interactions. These were the characteristics I could not identify with adult learning and experiential learning theories. I now realized just how entangled learning and teaching and learners and teacher were in expressive arts therapy. Additionally, I also realized how embodied learning theory embraced the tangles of both teaching and learning as valuable spaces of possibilities (Pinar & Irwin, 2005). In many ways, this embodiment theory made me think of a/r/tography where the artist, researcher, and teacher struggle with their entangled and embodied roles and labor with their rhizomatic growth for understanding (Springgay, 2008; Springgay et al., 2005). I felt a kindred spirit between a/r/tography and embodied learning.

Understanding that this embodied approach to learning integrated senses, perception, and mind/body interactions, my reflections of what I observed proved that these characteristics were witnessed throughout both classes. The faculty honored the experiential history of the learner, the present learner, and the existential whole self of the learner (Sellers-Young, 1998). Faculty members encouraged students to be their authentic self throughout the week's course and to understand self through experimenting with possibilities. They provided a *holding space* where students were able to be their authentic selves within the community of learners and within the physical learning environment. Having a safe space, a *holding space*, students and teachers experienced what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) refer to as "matter-energy" (p. 408), energy that creates connections and affect. This concept was evident throughout the learning space.

Beth summarized how the learning space became a therapeutic space: "I think instructors are very therapeutic. They take an instructional room and create an energetic environment. They create this safe space with each other and so you leave feeling your class

was a therapeutic experience.” She felt that a good instructor has the ability to create an extraordinary space within an ordinary classroom setting. Preparing students for learning is more than providing a physical space. Creating this space for learning involves creating *matter energy* that embodies the teacher and the learner and learning and teaching through connections and affect in a way that fuels a passion to learn and experience. *Matter-energy* creates an environment between what is seen, what is invisible and what is imagined (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

Like Beth, Ericka also expressed a similar view of the faculty by saying, “Just knowing that someone is personally genuine and sincere and didn’t have an intention in mind, was what was most conducive to having a good experience.” Ericka realized that learning requires faculty members to be open to the embodied experience. This embodied learning theory affirms that our bodies, our feelings, our personal histories are part of the pedagogical process that affects learning (Zembylas, 2007). Relationship to each other in the learning space makes the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual aspects in the learning environment pedagogy. Together, embodied beings are part of the process of teaching and learning (Dixon & Senior, 2011). Reflecting back on how students felt when they entered the learning space and how faculty created purposeful opportunities to connect to others, validates Dixon and Senior’s (2011) insight into embodied learning theory.

The faculty’s abilities to create and maintain the learning space allowed students to experience art making as inquiry. Inquiry into both their personal and professional lives resulted with insight from the embodied learning process. Dr. Smith expressed that her goal for students is not to memorize *her* understanding of expressive arts therapy. Rather, she

desires that student discover how EABA affects them through their own personal encounters with EABA as the ground for understanding and knowing.

Lynn expressed how her own experiences formed her own theory about expressive arts therapy:

The thing that keeps coming back is the shift of perspective. I'm taken outside of my thought loop and my feeling loop, and my body loop and I'm put into this new situation, new posture, new medium and so I have to see something different and so it's like, I really don't have a choice because I am somewhere different and so I have to see something different. And when I see something different, everything else shifts.

Lynn's embodied experience with art making incorporated her mental, emotional, and physical self. In this respect, art making becomes an additional *matter-energy* between art materials and self and connects the teacher and learner in the learning environment

Cindy made her own discoveries about how expressive arts therapy works: "Everything builds upon what we do before and speaks to what we're going to do in the future. Even with the one expressive arts experience that wasn't good for me personally, it still spoke to the next [activity]." For Cindy, she was aware that *knowledge building* occurs even through a bad experience, building upon the past EABA and informing the next EABA. In an embodied learning environment even Cindy's sciatic nerve was 'matter-energy' which connected physicality to art materials to her art product and ultimately to her clients. In embodied learning theory, everything affects the mind, body, and emotions. I observed how the faculty provided this embodied learning space so skillfully and effortlessly. Faculty

practiced this learning approach in class and the students gained insight on how expressive arts therapy works.

The embodied learning approach in expressive arts therapy classes connected everyone and everything to each other and created *matter-energy* throughout the learning space. Lynn, who struggled during EABA, was visibly touched by her learning experience. She shared her thoughts:

It's like this metaphor that happens physically on paper or with your body or whatever. It's like this concrete object that becomes this metaphor and then it cascades into another metaphor and then it transforms into something else and there's just like this series of connections that you are following that you don't even know you're following until something lights up in your mind and suddenly unlocks in your heart. And then you make this connection to something. It's all very vague. It's like magic.

Lynn described her experience as a cascading metaphor and transformation. In one sense, this phenomenon can be described as “circuit of feelings and responses” (Hemmings, 2005, p. 552), referring to the ability for reactions to double back to us and actually increase the original intensity. In the same way, Kossak's (2009) use of the terms *links* or *entrain* describes the process of adding one connection to another and so forth which lead to insight. The process of learning through EABA while being in a social context of other learners enriches the students' awareness about themselves. Additionally, presenting EABA in the context of embodied pedagogy provides these *matter-energies* that make the connections between EABA encounters, fellow students, art materials, faculty, learning environment, and the embodied learner (Zembylas, 2007).

In conclusion, embodied pedagogy informs teaching and learning and learner and teacher, creating *matter-energy* through connections to everyone and everything present in expressive arts therapy classes. These connections between learning and teaching and teacher and learner are intrinsically and extrinsically connected, intertwined and entangled (Deleuze & Guatteri, 1987; Zembylas, 2007). Connecting the subject matter to students requires more than just knowledge of the subject. Teaching involves making an intimate space where learners feel safe to be their authentic selves, to test themselves, their ideas, and to be open to possibilities. The skillful teacher will make *matter-energy* connections and impact the learners' ability to understand the subject *and* themselves more deeply. Through embodied learning experiences graduate counseling students understood expressive arts therapy and the role of a therapist more deeply than through traditional adult learning and experiential learning theories.

Artistic Interlude III: Integrating Self and Others

In my studio I sat with this dilemma, this entanglement of tension and resistance, of conflicting inner voices and competing selves. How should I represent this condition? I pulled out my cotton and linen-soiled fabric that has tears in it. I saw the raveled edges as a rupturing of situation and a rubbing against the grain, something that was so metaphorically similar to the students I had interviewed. How could all the needs of students be met with the expressive arts program, with the art-making experiences, with new and familiar facilitators? Was this not an impossible act to provide? I stitched my frustration in red. I tore at the fabric, enlarging the small holes and exposing the blackness of the felt. I was puzzled.

However, in all of this I saw some hope. This tension of entanglement began to loosen. I had witnessed the faculty members holding the entire program in her care. They carefully selected the facilitators. They carefully planned the experiences. They had the skill to hold, simply hold the space by their presence. There was trust coming from the students, trusting the process, and trusting that the EABA would carry them safely through the course. I stitched again and embedded printed bird nests in the open *wounds* of the fabric. Faculty members held the nest for the group. They knew the nest well (learning space) and knew it would support the students and bring no harm to them. I stitched the rips together around the nests to secure the fractured seams so that the nests stayed in place.

On the front side of my soft collage book, my three bird totems were represented. These birds presented themselves to me in real life during my master's and doctoral coursework. They represented me; the cardinal is the artist, the red-tailed hawk is the researcher, and the great blue heron is the teacher. The cardinal is known for creativity and spirituality. The red-tailed hawk knows the details, and the great blue heron stands tall amid discord. This a/r/tographic researcher was entangled by the three forces in my life, resistant to one another at times and yet deeply connected to each other. They were so entangled that I don't know if they could ever separate without weakening each other. My mind, my body, and my spirit constantly created new thoughts, new ideas, and new wonders. This force became rhizomatic in me and developed without rest. And so, as I stitched the entanglement of myself and my totems, my mind was drifting in and out for hours. My hands shuffled with each stitch and the rhythm was quick as though I was trying to keep up with my thought processes on this research project. Doesn't this urge to learn, to understand, to make meaning ever stop? My stitching went on and on and on (See Figure 14).

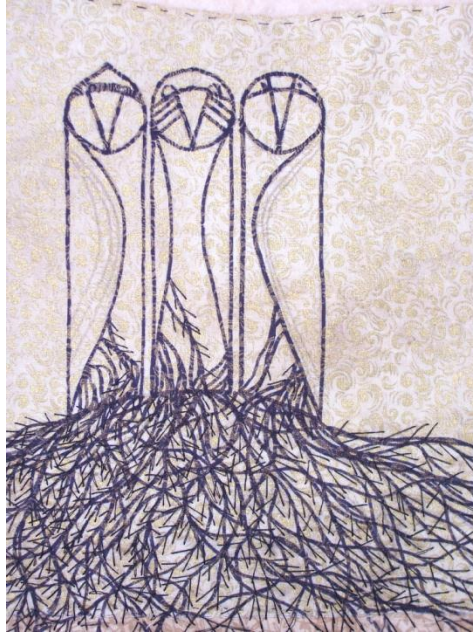


Figure 14. The Integrated and Entangled Researcher.

Stitching was a way to lose myself. The needle was threaded and knotted and I began. Unless I had to rethread the needle or replace the thread, I didn't look up. I heard the TV on and I tuned into it, but my hands still worked swiftly. There was an embodied dance that went on in me, a going in and out of altered state and consciousness. As I stitched my entangling totems with rhizomatic stitching, I felt connected to the students. As I had observed them from a distance in their EABA, I felt left out. In fact, I longed to have participated with them in their activities but I needed to write and study the students in their environment. Now, in my art space, was my time to delve into the art making process.

I saw layers emerging from my cloth book. Some of it was intended but in many places it just emerged on its own. The layering of fabric and stitches was like the multi-modal and intermodal work I witnessed. Layer upon layer of modalities and layers upon layers of EABA, students constantly created. And throughout these learning opportunities,

the faculty held the learning space (McNiff, 1986). They maintained the space with passion and presence (see Figures 15 and 16).



Figure 15. Layering.



Figure 16. Nesting the Wounds.

Summary of Chapter Four

This study sought to understand how graduate counseling students experienced expressive arts-based activities within a university's graduate expressive arts therapy program. Three major themes emerged: sense of self in learning, physicality, and integration and pedagogy.

The first major theme was Sense of Self in Learning. Three subthemes emerged as *competing emotions*, *positionality*, and *middle-way pedagogy*. The first subtheme discussed participants experiencing a variety of competing emotions from the time they entered the learning space through the end of the course. Because of the nature of expressive arts therapy, all participants claimed the learning space as being also therapeutic. Participants experienced a range of emotions from resistance to joy, from antagonism to surrender. The experiential nature of the course allowed for students experience emotions that traditional learning methods would not offer.

The second subtheme discussed the positionality, being an insider or an outsider. This study found that students were classified as an outsider if they did not have any experience with expressive arts therapy. Insiders had experience to courses, the faculty, and to EABA. These positions caused additional stress to participants to varying degree. Although many of these characteristics were clear boundaries, there existed entangled positions, such as an outsider to the program but an insider because of their personal experience as a client using expressive arts therapy in a counseling session. Insiders and outsiders were able to shift in and out of their assigned positions. Whichever position participants held, they had to know how to navigate through these positions. For many, their descriptions indicated that they relied on recalling their past (Neisser, 1976) or watching for clues from other students (Hanson & Hanson, 1996; Kossak, 2009).

The third subtheme, middle-way pedagogy, described the pedagogical practice of circles of community, a ritual that connected and make safed positionality. As described through an artistic interlude, middle-way pedagogical practices at the beginning and

throughout the learning space, make safe power and engage an embodied learning experience.

The second major theme was Physicality. Two subthemes found in physicality were *art as affect* and *transmission of affect*. The first subtheme, art and affect, discussed how students created art. This embodied experience affected the physicality of their bodies through movement, whether students were dancing or cutting a picture from a magazine (Deleuze, 1997; Hemmings, 2005). Additionally, art making affected their bodies biologically in such ways as a raising the heart rate or evoking somatic emotions (Deleuze, 1997). Students were also affected in art making as students found themselves in a flow period where they described times of being outside their body or experiencing inner dialogue (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996, 1997).

The second subtheme was transmission of affect. This subtheme discussed the cathartic relationship of being with others, working together, creating art side by side, and being present and engaged with others during witnessing and responding to other students' visual and performing art forms. Being in community offered students time for reflections and introspection from self and others and deepened their understanding of self. Because the mind needs the actions of the body to process life, physically responding to art work provides an embodied understanding and releases insight (Giardini, 1999; Hemmings, 2005; Sedgwick, 2003).

The third major theme was EABA as pedagogy. There were two subthemes that emerged from this topic: *integration* and *student growth and pedagogy*. Integration is a process of bringing inner selves into harmony (Hoskins & Leseho, 1996). Students reported having conflict between inner dialogues that brought out tension in the art-making process.

Through conflict to negotiation to integration, students worked through their inner struggle and reported that they found a sense of inner peace and harmony. This sense of inner peace emerged as inner selves integrated (Hoskins & Leseho, 1996).

Student Growth and Pedagogy emerged as a result of embodied learning pedagogy. Pedagogy is based in learning theory and practices. Embodied learning theory provided an embodied approach to learning that encompasses adult learning and experiential learning but adds attributes that makes connections to teacher and student, teaching and learning, and art and learning (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Dixon & Senior, 2011). These connections are described as *matter-energy* that produces embodied connections which affect everything in the learning space (Zembylas, 2007). The affects are produced by the movements of teachers and students, the gestures, the spaces between teacher and students, and the visible and invisible elements. Within this learning theory, everything affects everything within the course. Embodied learning theory captured the characteristics of the expressive arts therapy educators. Both teacher and students were affected by the embodied learning theory, bringing the relationship of teacher and learner and teaching and learning into a singular process.

CHAPTER 5

Analysis and Conclusion

Overview of Study

This study sought to understand how graduate counseling students described their experiences of EABA. This chapter includes a summary of findings and how they related to the research literature, analysis of the findings, suggested areas for further research, and conclusions.

This study rose from a professional interest in expressive arts therapy. As a teacher, therapist, and past student who participated in EABA, I desired to better understand the phenomenon that takes place in EABA so that this understanding can inform other educators, therapists, and graduate counseling students. This study revealed three themes that existed in students' experiences with EABA. Findings from this study will inform expressive arts pedagogy and educational practices in general.

The literature review revealed that a gap existed within expressive arts therapy theory. Much of the literature review in expressive arts therapy and counselor education stemmed from a philosophical contextual viewpoint (Atkins & Williams, 2007; Freud and Strachey, 1912; Jung, 1953, 1969; Kossak, 2009; Knill, 1999, 2005; Levine, 1992, 1999, 2005, 2009; McNiff, 1986, 1992, 2004, 2009; Rogers, 1951, 1977; Rogers, 1999). Event and flow theories provided this study a broader literature review based on noncontextual empirical and experimental learning theories, narrowing the gap in literature (Csikszentmihayli, 1990, 1996, 1997; Hanson & Hanson, 1996; Newtonson, 1973; Newtonson &

Rindner 1976; Shipley, 2008; Schwan & Garsoffky, 2008; Tversky, Zacks, & Hard, 2008; Zachs & Swallow, 2007). This study used a conceptual framework incorporating expressive arts therapy theory, literature related to therapeutic space, event and flow theories. My experiences from EABA as a past graduate counseling student provided a source for understanding EABA and added to the study's conceptual framework. A/r/tography provided artistic renderings through two forms of collages, paper and cloth, as ways for reflection and analysis. Constructivism was the epistemological perspective for this study. Using this framework, a broader understanding of how graduate counseling students described their experience with EABA was achieved, providing inroads for systematically examining and describing pedagogical practices in expressive arts therapy educational programs and informing expressive arts therapy theory.

Addressing the Research Questions

The two research questions that guided this work consisted of a primary and secondary question. The questions were: How do graduate counseling students describe their experience with expressive arts-based activities (EABA)? How does flow theory and event theories align or misalign with students' experiences with EABA?

Three main themes emerged, providing a detailed response to the research question: a sense of self in learning, physicality, and EABA as pedagogy. In the first major theme, sense of self in learning, three subthemes emerged: competing emotions, positionality, and middle-way pedagogy. Within the second major theme, physicality, art as affect and transmission of affect emerged as two subthemes. Finally, in EABA as pedagogy, integration and student growth and pedagogy emerged as two subthemes.

In the pages to follow, each theme is revisited in light of the specific insights it offers to the research questions.

Sense of Self in Learning.

Students experienced a sense of self in the learning space. In response to the first research question, all participants experienced competing emotions, especially when they entered the learning space and participating in EABA. Entering a new learning space, students experienced multiple emotions, some emotions contradicting with other emotions. At other times, competing emotions shifted for students as they moved from one EABA to another. For example, Lauren felt excited and nervous entering the learning experience but then the emotions shifted to doubt and feelings of inability entering a new EABA. Additionally, students experienced social interactions such as meeting familiar and unfamiliar students and faculty. These social interactions also contributed to competing emotions. Finally, students participated in EABA which involved working with such art materials as paint, clay, wood, oil pastels. The art modalities caused competing emotions from activities and art materials that were familiar or unfamiliar. Learning how to navigate with art materials and art forms caused emotions to shift and compete.

In the second subtheme, students experienced a sense of positionality. Positionality was experienced in several ways. Some students were new to the program. They held the position of outsiders. Students who were in the program knew many of their classmates, faculty, and how to navigate through EABA. These students held the position of insiders (Greene, 1995; Knight, 2011). Whether they were new to the program, new to faculty members, or even new to EABA, students' positions influence their emotions and their desire to become insiders.

The third subtheme, middle-way pedagogy was addressed through an artistic interlude which described the faculty's ritual of creating a circle of community. This ritual visually and viscerally makes safe positionality and connected the community of learners. Although the Appalachian Approach incorporates this particular ritual, it is similar to literature on therapeutic space in establishing a successful group work process (Corey, 2004). In this learning environment, rituals are used as a way to meet *in the middle*, where faculty and students respected and honored each other and where cultural bias was made safe (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Sellers-Young, 1998; Zembylas, 2007).

In relation to expressive arts theory, Levine (2005, 2009) describes the state of confusion and powerlessness as a good time for creatively seeking possible remedies. McNiff (1986, 1992, 2004, 2009) refers to art making in particular as a catalyst for benevolent transformation. Participants' expressed experiences in EABA were similar to characteristics in expressive arts theory.

Although expressive arts theorists understand the power of art making providing a sense of wellness, event theorists offer another viewpoint. Event theory describes how the individual navigates through the confusion and chaos of unknown territories. For example, event theory would suggest that when students work with a new art medium or enter into a new class, their minds search the environment for clues and then test out the environment to see if they had the correct understanding in how to successfully navigate through EABA. Additionally, event theorists describe how the mind recalls past similar events to the one that a student is currently experiencing. If the mind matches a similar activity, it informs the student to move ahead. If the mind cannot find any past similar experience, the mind then informs the students to search for more clues or to test out the environment and see if the

student can successfully navigate through the unfamiliar event (Hanson & Hanson, 1996; Newton, 1973; Newton & Rindner 1979; Shipley, 2008; Schwan & Garsoffky, 2008; Tversky, Zacks, & Hard, 2008; Zachs & Swallow, 2007). An example of this process could be described through Cindy's action with having to do a body scan in an EABA. She was physically uncomfortable because of her sciatic nerve. She did not know how to handle the situation in class without calling attention to herself. However, she knew she had to do something different. Because of her experience as a student, she considered her options. Cindy decided to continue working quietly but interpret the facilitator's instructions to fit her needs so that she could successfully navigate through the encounter.

Physicality.

The second major theme emerging from this study is physicality. Students' expressed awareness of their bodies within the learning space described physicality. Students also explained EABA as a time when they physically worked with art materials. For example, several students described their painting EABA as being very physical and tactile. These students painted with their hands and made large brush strokes across the paper. Mary expressed her heartbeat rising in the drumming EABA. Students' interviews reflected a physical, biological, and somatic experience to EABA.

Expressive arts theorists such as Rogers (1999), express the thought that art making is a therapeutic time "to let go, to express, and to release" (p. 115). Levine (2005) writes about Aristotle's (1941) thoughts for gaining understanding through observing, doing, and making. Their theoretical emphasis is that the *making* in EABA establishes embodied resources for understanding. Physicality in expressive arts theory plays an important role for gaining insight because of the physical, biological, and somatic relationship to understanding self.

Csikszentmihayli's (1990, 1996, 1997) flow theory expands and deepens expressive arts theories through empirical research. In EABA, all students shared accounts of how art making and the art product affected them in both emotional and physical ways. Particular to this study, Csikszentmihayli (1990, 1996, 1997) describes the circular agency of arousal and control as a time when individual are fully engaged in the art-making experience found in EABA. This circular agency fuels students to remain engaged in art making even through competing emotions and shifting positionalities. Flow theory aligns with the descriptions of graduate counseling students' experiences with EABA.

Event theory also aligns with student's descriptions of their experiences. Throughout the week's series of intermodal and multimodal EABA, students were *linking* their experiences together. The series of art-making activities can be described by neurological event theory of linking a series of EABA (Schwan & Garsoffky, 2008). Event theory researchers describe the event of linking experience as a way for the mind to segment encounters into manageable units which help to process incoming information. Events are filled with two kinds of density. One kind of density experienced in an encounter is fine, filled with rich sensory experiences. The other kind of density is coarse, filled with a summary of all the encounters. Experiencing a series of encounters throughout a time frame, such as class, fine and coarse experiences causes an interplay between inferential and perceptual processing (Schwan & Garsoffky, 2008). Additionally, making art crosses domains of the brain, causing the brain to be fully activated. This action brings insight, which all students described as personal and academic insight. Flow and event theories broadens and supports expressive arts therapy theory, providing a crucial bridge toward more deeply theorizing pedagogical practices for graduate counseling students.

Students reported being affected by a transmission of affect. Transmission of affect describes the ability of emotions and energies of one person or a group to be absorbed by and enter into another person or group (Brennan, 2004). In expressive arts therapy classes, there was a time set aside for students to witness and respond to art work of others. Students were affected with an embodied sense of emotions and feelings during witnessing and responding to others, deepening insight. All students reported being effected by the encounter with others. One student described this event as a time where it enhanced an understanding of what was going on with herself. Another student felt a connectedness to others in the class which she described as powerful.

Expressive arts theorist Levine (2005) describes that living in the world is a place to experience and reflect upon living. When art making is done in community all are affected through physicality. It was appropriate to respond to each other's art work since the art was created in community. Therefore, it was appropriate for art work to be validated in community.

The literature review expanded to include embodied learning theory. There lacked understanding about social effects of being in relationship to others, such as in a learning space. Bell (2004), Deleuze (1997), Giardini (1999), Hemmings (2005), and Sedgwick (2003) provided a rich understanding of embodied learning as a way to understand the interconnectedness of others, especially in the learning environment.

Flow theory misaligned to some degree with the students' expressed descriptions of transmission of affect. Some students were not aware of what was going on around them because they were focused on their own work. However, others expressed that they were aware of others around them but that awareness did not influence them in EABA.

EABA as Pedagogy.

In this major theme of EABA as pedagogy, there emerged two subthemes: *integration* and *student growth and pedagogy*. There existed an internal process of integration that took place within students. The process for integration consisted of *competing selves*, *negotiation*, and *integration*.

All participants responded through a checklist that they experienced being in flow during EABA which provided them a time to explore their inner worlds. As students entered EABA and remained engaged in the art-making process, they experienced competing selves. Competing selves were in conflict. Expressive arts theorist Levine (1999, 2005) describes this time as *poiesis*, a time of letting go and surrendering to what the soul wants to deliver in the form of art. He also uses the terms “tolerating breakdown” (p.43) to describe the internal conflict that is found in EABA.

All participants described a sense of negotiation with self in EABA as a method to work through their competing selves. Participants remained engaged with EABA, reporting that there was a yearning to work through this inner struggle. All participants felt that at the end of EABA, they achieved a sense of balance. They felt joy and peace with themselves. They were grateful for the experience as it gave them insight. Expressive art therapists speak of a compassionate transformation (Levine, 1999, 2005, 2009; McNiff, 1986, 1992, 2004, 2009; Roger, 1999). Knill (1999) even calls this process “soul nourishment” (p.38).

Event theory offered additional insight into the rewards of integration, describing characteristics to insight as being a result of the mind using information and making sense of the encounter. Insight for event theorists is described as a normal mental process (Shipley, 2008). Literature was reviewed from the field of psychology to explain this phenomenon and

provided an additional understanding of the struggle between inner selves. Bazerman, Tenbrunsel, and Wade-Benzoni (1998), Higgins, (1987), Hoskins and Leseho (1996), and Jung (1969), describe the urging of the body to create a fully integrated self. When individuals speak of being balanced, they are describing a fully integrated self (Hoskins & Leseho, 1996).

Flow and event theories aligned with the integration process. Event theory describes how the brain tries to gain insight into living so that it can instruct the mind when a new encounter is presented (Tversky et al., 2008; Schwan & Garsoffky, 2008).

Flow theory describes the yearning of the individual to meet challenges by gaining better skills. When skills match the challenge, the individual finds contentment (Csikszentmihayli, 1990, 1996, 1997). Both flow theory and event theory express that individuals strive to make sense of living by being engaged in the environment, testing the environment and increasing in skills to be successful in living, thus, both theories align with the research question.

Student growth and pedagogy were imperative to the success of both the EABA experience and the learning environment. Expressive arts theorist, McNiff (1986) speaks of the expressive arts therapy educator's role as being fine and delicate. An embodied learning approach served as the pedagogical practice for the Appalachian Approach program and was observed throughout both classes. All participants reported feeling accepted by faculty. They also reported a sense of safety in the classes which encouraged them to be their authentic selves. Embodied learning theory literature formed a pedagogical foundation for the expressive arts therapy classes, giving students a sense of interconnectedness with each

other, with the arts, and with the learning environment (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Sellers-Young, 1998; Zembylas, 2007).

Limitations and Further Research

Creswell (2009) encourages qualitative researchers to carefully assess their chosen methodology, determining if their findings are beneficial within the knowledge base. This study's findings were beneficial by presenting a foundation for further research in expressive arts therapy pedagogy as well as all adult education programs.

The first limitation of this study is that it involved only a small number of students. While this feature was an intentional part of this study's design, interviewing a larger number of students may provide expanded insights. In addition, further research could utilize the same research design to understand how graduate counseling students experienced EABA within a traditional class setting compared to the non-traditional setting that were observed in this study. Furthermore, with the limitation of gender in this study, further research could seek to understand what phenomenon draws a gender dominant population into expressive arts therapy.

Similar to the first limitation, a second limitation was that the study included only two faculty member's viewpoints. While the focus of this study was primarily on understanding the experiences of students, further studies could strive to strike more of a balance between student and faculty voices. In addition, research focused on faculty's pedagogical views would provide expanded insights into pedagogical processes.

A third limitation is the fact that this study only focused on *how* graduate counseling students experienced an experiential learning approach. Additional research would be to

understand *why* participants enroll in the expressive arts program. From this study, participants expressed their interest in expressive arts therapy primarily because they desired to help others. These participants had either experienced the benefits of counseling therapy or knew individuals who experienced an injustice and wanted to help others through counseling. Additionally, these same participants all regarded the arts as a healing method. Furthermore, another suggested study could be to explore the spiritual characteristics of graduate counseling students enrolled in expressive arts therapy programs which could influence into all areas of education.

Implications and Recommendations

This study was an exploratory study because there exists a gap in literature in regards to graduate counseling students' experiences with expressive arts-based activities and with expressive arts pedagogy more generally. Because the field is still evolving, pedagogical standards across the field are lacking. The data provided an opportunity to link expressive arts therapy to event and flow theories. Furthermore, educating graduate counseling students in expressive arts therapy education can be linked to embodied learning pedagogical practices and adult learning theory more generally. Greater attention to embodied pedagogical practices would be beneficial for expressive arts therapy programs. This study provides expressive arts therapy educators greater understanding of challenges as well as successes students face in this specific learning environment. There stands the potential for transferability for all models of adult learning, especially those related to the helping profession.

The study can serve as an informative tool for policy making, especially in regards to the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association (IEATA) which serves as a hub for

expressive arts therapist, students, and programs. IEATA provides continuing educational opportunities through conferences. As the field grows, IEATA holds the opportunity for encouraging programs throughout the country to develop and articulate sound pedagogical practices and policies related to student learning and assessment. This study found that an embodied learning theory proved to be a significant pedagogical framework for teaching expressive arts therapy and this finding holds significance for future educators and leaders of the field.

Therapists hoping to improve their therapeutic practice may benefit from this study as a resource for greater understanding of an embodied therapeutic approach. In addition, therapists can use the participants' expressed experiences to EABA and relate them to how clients may experience therapy.

As an educational leader, I realize that higher learning environments are continuously evolving within this current economic climate. There will always be external influences that challenge the educational environment. Educational leaders need to be alert to ways in which they can educate and hold a respectful transmission of affect which encourages students to persevere and accomplish goals. Being able to incorporate a middle-way pedagogical approach into education will create better students who are dedicated to reaching their career goals. This study found that pedagogy greatly influenced the learning atmosphere and significantly impacted student success. Providing emphasis between teacher and learner *and* teaching and learning, teacher education program can offer students a broader understanding of education that goes beyond the subject matter.

This study uncovered the use of embodied learning theory which guided expressive arts pedagogical practices at a mid-size university. In the area of educational leadership, the

findings of this study contributed toward my own view of pedagogical practices in education in ways that influence how I teach and assist students and clients. This study affected my awareness of transmission of affect from student to student and from teacher to student. This study will forever change my own view of relationality and positionality. As an educational leader, I wish to provide these contributions to educators, teacher education programs, and expressive arts therapy programs.

Finally, this study sought to understand how graduate counseling students experience EABA but this study also opened the door to considering how individuals learn about life. The thought of living an artistic life, of being an artist, research, and teacher creates pedagogy for all learners and teachers (Springgay, 2008; Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, (2005). This study could open conversations in the education field, encouraging all learners at any age to have an a/r/tographic approach to learning and living.

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APPENDIX A

Seeking Participants for (//) (//)

For students and instructors in (//) (//)
Scheduled for May 9th – 13th at (//) Conference Center

Dear (//) Attendees,

My name is Diane Guelzow and I am a 2007 graduate of HPC's Community Counseling program and hold a certificate in expressive arts therapy. I am currently a doctoral student at (//) State University in the Educational Leadership program. During (//) (May 9th – 13th), I will be conducting a research study to better understand how experiential art activities contribute to personal growth.

The plan is to collect data during this class by observing class sessions; the setting, the therapeutic space that is created, the arts activities, and the interactions of instructors and students. I will collect data by taking notes (writing, drawing sketches and diagrams), describing what I see and hear. I will maintain confidentiality for all attendees.

In order for me to conduct research, I will abide ethical standards set forth by (//) Institutional Review Board's (IRB). I will participate in only the daily opening and closing activities and will not participate in other activities throughout the day so that I can focus on observing the class. I will not observe small group sharing. Because I have designed my research role as stated above, the IRB has reviewed my application for conducting research within this class and has determined that my study is exempt from requiring a signed informed consent form from students and instructors in this class. By just observing in this class, there is minimal risk of doing any harm to participants and no foreseeable risks at this time. IRB has granted me permission to conduct research in (//).

After the class has ended, I will be seeking 8 students and 2 instructors who are willing to be interviewed about their experiences. The interviews will take place after the class has ended and not be longer than 2 hours in length. The interviews will be conducted on campus at a mutually agreed upon time and location. Students who are willing to be interviewed will be invited to bring their journal which was created during the class to the interview. Students and instructors who are interested in being interviewed will be given a separate consent form, indicating the specifics of the interviews and requesting a signature.

I am looking forward to being with your class in May.

Diane J. Guelzow, NCC, LPC, REACE

APPENDIX B

Seeking Participants for // (//)

For students and instructors in (////////) //////////////////////////////////
Scheduled for July 25th – 29th at ////////// Conference Center

Dear ////////////////////////////////// Attendees,

My name is Diane Guelzow and I am a 2007 graduate of HPC's Community Counseling program and hold a certificate in expressive arts therapy. I am currently a doctoral student at ////////// State University in the Educational Leadership program. During /////////////// (May 25th – 29th), I will be conducting a research study to better understand how experiential art activities contribute to personal growth.

The plan is to collect data during this class by observing class sessions; the setting, the therapeutic space that is created, the arts activities, and the interactions of instructors and students. I will collect data by taking notes (writing, drawing sketches and diagrams), describing what I see and hear. I will maintain confidentiality for all attendees.

In order for me to conduct research, I will abide ethical standards set forth by ///'s Institutional Review Board's (IRB). I will participate in only the daily opening and closing activities and will not participate in other activities throughout the day so that I can focus on observing the class. I will not observe small group sharing. Because I have designed my research role as stated above, the IRB has reviewed my application for conducting research within this class and has determined that my study is exempt from requiring a signed informed consent form from students and instructors in this class. By just observing in this class, there is minimal risk of doing any harm to participants and no foreseeable risks at this time. IRB has granted me permission to conduct research in ///////////////.

After the class has ended, I will be seeking 8 students and 2 instructors who are willing to be interviewed about their experiences. The interviews will take place after the class has ended and not be longer than 2 hours in length. The interviews will be conducted on campus at a mutually agreed upon time and location. Students who are willing to be interviewed will be invited to bring their journal which was created during the class to the interview. Students and instructors who are interested in being interviewed will be given a separate consent form, indicating the specifics of the interviews and requesting a signature.

I am looking forward to being with your class in July.

Diane J. Guelzow, NCC, LPC, REACE

APPENDIX C

Consent for Interview Form

Interviewee Consent Form for Students and Instructors

I understand that the purpose of this study is to better understand how graduate counseling students experience expressive arts-based activities. The interview will be used for a dissertation topic in Educational Leadership at ////////// State University in //. I understand that my comments will be audio recorded and transcribed. A minimum of one interview will take place at an agreed upon location for no more than two hour in length. I understand that there are no foreseeable risks associated with my participation. There are personal benefits for participation and no consequences if I choose not to participate. I know that this study may benefit expressive arts therapists, clients, and expressive arts education pedagogy. Data from this study may be used in future research.

I give Diane J. Guelzow ownership of the tapes and transcripts from the interview(s) she conducts with me and understand that tapes and transcripts will be kept in Diane Guelzow's possession. I understand that information or quotations from any tapes and/or transcripts will be published in a dissertation. My name will not be used in the dissertation. I understand I will receive no compensation for the interview.

As a student, I am asked to bring my journal to the interview that I created throughout the class experience. This is an optional choice on my part. No consequences will be held against me if I choose not to bring the journal. There is no compensation for participating in the interview.

I understand that the interview is voluntary and I can end it at any time without consequence. I also understand that if I have questions about this research project prior to the interview and throughout the interview process, I can call Dr. ////////// at /// /// //, Diane Guelzow at /// /// //, or contact //////////'s Office of Research Protections at /// /// // or //

☐ I **DO** wish to participate in the interview at this time. (Continue by filling out the bottom section.)

____Diane J. Guelzow_____
Name of Interviewer (printed)

Name of Interviewee (printed)

Signature of Interviewer

Signature of Interviewee

Date(s) of Interview (s) (To be determined later between interviewer and interviewee)

Student/Instructor Contact Information: email:_____

Phone:_____

APPENDIX D

Questions for Student Interview

Interview questions for students

Warm-up and background questions:

1. Tell me about your interest in expressive arts therapy that has lead you to attend (or teach) in this expressive arts therapy class?
2. How many expressive classes have you had prior to the class I observed?
3. Name the classes you have taken.

First section:

1. Describe to me some of the expressive arts-based activities you have participated in when you attended ____ class.
2. Describe to me the processes the instructor had you do in several of the activities you experienced (directions and steps).

Second section:

1. Describe to me what happens to you physically, mentally, and emotionally when you enter into the learning space. (Was there any resistance, feelings of being uncomfortable or comfortable, finding clues to get through the activity by watching others, by attuning to the music and/or the environment?)
2. Describe to me what happens to you physically, mentally, and emotionally when you enter into expressive arts-based activities. (Was there any resistance, feelings of being uncomfortable or comfortable, finding clues to get through the activity by watching others, by attuning to the music and/or the environment?)

3. Describe to me what happens to you physically, mentally, and emotionally during your art making activity. (Was there any resistance, feelings of being uncomfortable or comfortable, finding clues to get through the activity by watching others, by attuning to the music and/or the environment?)
4. Describe to me what happens to you physically, mentally, and emotionally when you or the class witnesses you art product (visual or performing). (Was there any resistance, feelings of being uncomfortable or comfortable, finding clues to get through the activity by watching others, by attuning to the music and/or the environment?)
5. Have you ever felt like you were *in a flow* in expressive arts-based activities? If so, describe what *being in flow* was like. (Hand out a checklist that describes Csikszentmihalyi's (1990, 1996, 1997) characteristics of being in the flow. Have interviewees note if they observe ALL the characteristics listed)
6. Have you ever wanted not to participate in an expressive arts-based activity? If so, describe to me your thoughts, feelings, and how you handled the situation.
7. Describe to me what is it about expressive arts-based activities that encourages you to participate.

Third section:

1. By participating in EABA, have you ever found insight into your personal life besides the knowledge you gain about expressive arts therapy?
2. If you have found insight into your personal life, describe how you think it happened.
3. If you have found insight into your personal life, describe what elements in the class contributed to personal insight beyond what you learn about expressive arts therapy

(learning space, therapeutic space, the instructor, decentering/center process, art making, the environment, the group influence, witnessing of art product, other).

4. Would you describe the learning space as also being therapeutic for you? If so, why?
5. What else you would like to add to this interview that sheds light on this study?

APPENDIX E

Checklist for Three Theories

Participants: In List A-C, please circle the number corresponding to any items that you have experienced in EABA. Return to researcher when completed.

List A

1. I face goals and possess skills to reach my goals in expressive arts-based activities.
2. I receive immediate internal feedback on my progress which guides me in future actions.
3. I make adjustments along the way.
4. I find contentment when I'm matching my abilities and challenges in the activities.
5. I am playful and contented. These elements are motivation to continue in the activity.
6. By matching my skills and challenges, I am aroused, engaged, and focused in my art-making activities.
7. I am not worried of failure.
8. I gain personal insight from the art-making activity.

List B

1. I am in an encounter each time I enter an expressive arts-based activity.
2. I am mentally processing as engage in an arts-based activity.
3. I cycle back and forth by creating my art and thinking about making adjustments.
4. I mentally/physical pause to process my actions and future actions in art making.
5. I find meaning/insight while I am making art.
6. Sometimes I see the finished art form in my head before I finish the art.
7. Sometimes, I see just the parts I'm working on and not sure of what the finished piece will look like.
8. During the course of many arts-based activities that take place in session, I find myself thinking back across these activities even when I am engaged in the present activity. These memories may influence or tag along with my present state of mind.
9. I have gained personal insight from the art-making activity.

List C

1. Before engaging in an expressive arts-based activity, I watch how others are engaging in the process.
2. I gauge my actions based on what I see others creating.

3. I find myself resistant to some of the activities (uncomfortable, not at ease, difficult, not your style).
4. Sometimes I am resistant to the activity but I still push through the art-making activity.
5. During the course of many arts-based activities that take place in session, I find myself thinking back across these activities even when I am engaged in the present activity. These memories may influence or tag along with my present state of mind.
6. I find personal insight from the series of activities.

APPENDIX F

Interview Questions for Faculty

Warm-up questions

1. Tell me about how you arrived to your current position.

First section:

1. Describe how the collective directly and indirectly influences
 - A. the collective community of faculty
 - B. the learning community
2. Describe how the Appalachian Approach directly and indirectly influences the expressive arts program at this university.

Second section:

3. Students in the program are encouraged to trust the process with EABA. Describe how you plan and structure your classes so students can trust the process.
4. Describe your thoughts to my mapping designs.
5. Is there anything else you would like to add about the educational process in expressive arts therapy?

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Diane J. Guelzow received a B. A. in education from Concordia University (Chicago) in 1976. After graduation, she taught various grades in South Florida for 10 years in a parochial school system. She also taught high school and elementary art for two years at University City School District in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1992, Diane became a preschool teacher and taught for 14 years in Catawba County, NC. She is currently state certified in birth - kindergarten, elementary education, art education (K– 12) and has held National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) for 10 years. In 2006, Diane stepped away from teaching and attended Appalachian State University in Boone, NC and received the M.A. in Community Counseling in 2007. Her internship was at Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, NC. In 2008, she returned to Appalachian State University to begin her doctoral journey in educational leadership finishing in 2012. During this time, Diane was a research assistant for two years with Dr. Clark/Keefe and then worked at two counseling agencies building her counseling career. Her doctoral internship was at Concordia University (Chicago) and at Appalachian State University both in the counseling departments. Diane has also served as the mental health coordinator for five years for the New Opportunity School for Women at Lees-McRae College and serves on the national board for this organization. Diane has presented at the International Expressive Art Therapy Association (IEATA) in 2009 in Boston and has been a guest speaker in counseling at Lenoir-Rhyne University in Hickory, NC. She remains closely linked to counseling and educational leadership.