Affective and emotional experiences in arts-based service-learning environments

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Dewey (1938) once wrote that the most effective forms of learning connect intellectual processes with emotion, which is able to inspire curiosity and excite the learner. This paper adds to the body of research that attests to the transformative role of affect in teacher education, which is able to be cultivated through arts-based service-learning experiences. Pre-service teachers at two universities in Sydney, Australia were placed in service-learning settings that were based around participatory experiences in drama and storytelling, music, dance or visual art. The pre-service teachers' reflections on the placement revealed a transformative experience which combined emotional learning with critical analysis of social justice issues as they relate to education. As part of their placement, they experienced arts engagement that utilised affect and emotion as a transformative pedagogy. They broadened their understanding of the role of teachers, both in an institution and in society. These emerging understandings led them to find voice as advocates, investigate arts education and community projects as alternative career paths and re-evaluate their own perceptions of quality teaching. Some participants continued engaging with the community arts projects after the placement had concluded, and others became advocates for the arts in education and society. Finally, they adopted a critical stance on social justice issues, and shed light on the ways that arts learning service-learning placements can become deeper engagements, leading to sustainable benefits for all parties.

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Introduction

Dewey (1938) contends that the most effective learning connected intellectual processes with emotion, which is able to inspire curiosity and excite the learner. This paper reports on an arts-based service-learning project with pre-service teacher education students in Sydney, Australia, which incorporated meaningful affective and emotional experiences. This paper adds to the body of research that attests to the transformative role of affect in teacher education which is able to be cultivated through arts-based service-learning experiences.

Teaching is an emotionally charged profession, and the role of affect has been discussed in the context of the teaching profession, mostly regarding resilience and teacher wellbeing (Jones & Youngs, 2012; Stark & Koslouski, 2022). Affect and emotion are critically important in the formation of teacher identity (Day & Leitch, 2001; Shapiro, 2010) and the importance of emotion has featured in research on classroom-based practicum experiences (Teng, 2017). Situated learning experiences are also powerful components of teacher preparation courses. This paper reports on a study about arts-based learning in service-learning environments. Eight pre-service teacher education students were engaged in arts-based service-learning placements and agreed to be volunteer participants in this study. Students were placed within a service-learning setting that was based around participatory experiences in drama and storytelling, music, dance or visual art. The students' reflections on the placement revealed a transformative experience (Jacobs, 2022) which combined emotional learning with critical analysis of social justice issues as they relate to education.

While the service-learning placements featured in this study formed just one facet of the participants' teacher education experiences, the participants demonstrated new and emerging understandings of their role in an institution and in society formed as a result of the service-learning experience. The affective nature of the arts experiences added to the profundity of their experience, opening them to new pedagogies, as well as revelations about the challenges of their profession. This paper seeks to extend on the body of research analysing the role of affect on teacher education, contributing pre-service teachers' voices on the relationship between affective pedagogies, the educational environment, and their role in it. It also begins to probe the question of how the affective nature of arts-based learning experiences for student teachers might foster more critical awareness about issues of equity and social justice in line with a critical service-learning approach.

Australian teachers require a university qualification of at least 4 years of education at either undergraduate or postgraduate level. Part of the qualification involves mandatory periods of supervised professional experience placement "in a school or other setting for educational purposes" (NESA, 2017 online), with the required number of days varying from state to state. This study is based in New South Wales where students are required to complete 60 days for postgraduate courses or 80 days for undergraduate programs. While most of these placements take place in schools, NESA (the NSW Education Standards Authority) states that professional experience placements in educational settings other than schools provide a valuable contribution to a professional experience program and may be particularly relevant in certain teaching areas. "Appropriate settings other than schools may include, but are not limited to, sport and recreation centres, homework centres, museums and galleries, early childhood centres, disability services centres and industry"

(NESA, 2017, online). This paper reports on the findings of a study on service-learning programs that address NESA's practicum requirements using placements in settings other than schools, and the context will be described in the methodology section.

Affect and Emotion in Teacher Education

In this paper, affect is understood as the collective term for feeling states; affective states are the precursor to emotions, which are more specific personal experiences that manifest in the unconscious mind, elicited in response to external stimuli. Both affect and emotion play a role in regulating cognition, behaviour, and social interactions; however, affects are the forces that precede, produce and inform emotional responses. Affect and emotion have substantial influence on learning in many ways and have been found to influence cognitive processes and attention (Tyng et al., 2017) as well as comfort in the learning environment and self-efficacy (Heckel & Ringeisen, 2019). Thompson (2009) argues that affect is often downplayed in educational contexts, however affect is vital and should not be accidental or peripheral but should be central to the purpose and thinking about the work. Noddings (2011) adds that its neglect reduces the engagement of students and teachers in a learning environment.

Much of the work around affect and pre-service teachers' experiences have focused on performance, motivation and achievement (Linnebrink-Garcia et al. 2016; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003), connection between emotion and learning strategies (Wittman, 2011) or the emotional experience of becoming a teacher (Anttila, et al., 2016). This paper seeks to extend on this research, contributing pre-service teachers' voices on the relationship between affective pedagogies the educational environment, and their place in it.

The affective dimensions of the job also attract people to the profession. Despite being viewed as a stressful profession (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008), some of the highest motivations for wanting to become a teacher are the desire to make a social contribution or make a difference to children's or teenagers' lives. Bakar et al., (2014) found altruistic factors were among the highest motivators for becoming a teacher. While altruism isn't the same as emotion or affect, it is served by emotional motivation and affectively rich experiences.

Affective learning is concerned with how learners feel while they are learning, and the ways those learning experiences are internalized to help shape their attitudes, opinions, and identity. The participants in this study were all engaged in arts education experiences within situated learning contexts. Arts education encompasses the world of creative, expressive and performing arts, including but not limited to dance, drama, music, media arts, visual arts, creative writing and storytelling, only some of which are referred to in this paper. Arts education has a strong grounding in aestheticism and affect. The arts engage our senses, provoking strong, affective responses for both the creator and the witness of art (Lawrence, 2008). The arts access affective understandings that use primal modes of expression that allows representation of that which cannot be said in words. The presence of embodied expression drives affective responses, as the body was our first way of knowing. Affect is intimately connected with bodily presence and experience, which are heightened in the presence of embodied pedagogies (Nicholson, 2015). The play and playfulness present of arts engagement

allows participants to arrive at understandings of ways to express themselves in their own time which often brought about moments of affect.

Situated and Service-Learning

Pre-service teachers engage in a range of diverse learning experiences, from university-led instruction to field-based practicum and situated learning, which is the focus of this paper. Learning takes place when a novice enters the professional community through peripheral participation whereby student novices are immersed in learning and mentored through to mastery. The learning is constructed socially with scaffolding taking place in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) – which is the point where existing skills or knowledge can be extended with the support of a more capable individual (Daniels, 2016; Vygotsky, 1978).

Educational research and other fields have inquired into situated learning for decades, finding that learners acquire valuable knowledge of education practices and skills while in the field which creates a fuller educational experience, compared to the comparatively sheltered environment of the university (Hixon & Hyo-Jeong, 2009; Korthagen, 2010; Skinner, 2010). Situated learning helps pre-service teachers make connections between the practical realities of the profession and their university experiences. It also helps to develop self-efficacy that contributes to job satisfaction, commitment to the profession, resilience, and overall student achievement (Bandura, 1977; Høigaard et al., 2012; Jacobs, 2022; Martins et al., 2015). As mentioned perviously, situated learning takes place in a variety of settings and pre-service teacher education, these settings are not confined to schools and classrooms. Pre-service teachers in service-learning placements transfer skills and knowledge to a practical setting outside of a formal practicum placement, while also benefitting from using their skills to make a difference in the community (Furco, 1996; Swick, 2001).

Service-learning is a form of experiential education and it offers concrete experiences to bridge theory and practice. As stated in the introduction, Dewey (1938) contends that the most effective learning connects intellectual processes with emotion, inspiring curiosity and exciting the learner. When pre-service teachers engage in service-learning they experience enhanced motivation to learn through the engagement in real-world challenges, as well as questioning and curiosity when stimulated by working on community projects. Service-learning also presents students with a number of educational opportunities beyond standard classroom fieldwork, allowing the pre-service teacher a chance to challenge prejudices, develop skills, and reconstruct preconceived ideas and knowledge (Beard, 2018; Boggs, 2013; Jacobs, 2022). Service-learning invites pre-service teachers to become creative problem solvers that reflect upon their application of the theories they have learned in alternative environments (Sandaran, 2012; Swick, 2001). Service-learning placements can empower pre-service teachers to collaboratively establish a community of practice while developing confidence in their abilities as an educator. Studies have shown an increase in self-efficacy and commitment to teaching practice through service-learning experiences. Pre-service teachers developed relationships, shared responsibilities, took risks in adopting a variety of teaching strategies, and connected theoretical content with practical

applications while engaging in service-learning placements (Eyler, 1999; Kaschak & Letwinsky, 2015; Wasserman, 2009).

This paper importantly notes that service-learning has been examined and critiqued by many, including Terrance et al. (2018). Older models of service-learning often placed needs of students above the needs of communities. Service-learning is also criticised for being a Band-Aid approach to deeply rooted social problems. The limited length of the service-learning experiences have also been critiqued, as short stints of service arguably create limited benefits for the pre-service teacher and can cause damage to the vulnerable service users. A growing body of research prefers critical service-learning in teacher education (Jacobs, 2022; Tinkler & Tinkler, 2016) that frames the program around social justice and explorations of power and privilege. Limitations of the service-learning experiences featured in this paper will be considered, as well as potential strategies that might help address some of these concerns.

Developing understandings of the role of teachers

The benefits of service-learning, as previously outlined, have been well-established, but service-learning also helps to develop pre-service teachers' understandings of their role in a school, in institutions and in society. Students learn that part of their role is to account for individual differences (Iyer et al., 2016), as well as to develop an understanding of professional behaviour in an environment in which there are power disparities and interpersonal skills with people with a different life experience to their own. Social responsibility is learned as part of the broader role of a teacher, as well as a need to accept challenge and be an innovator (Iyer et al., 2016). Pre-service teachers additionally gain an understanding that teaching occurs in many contexts outside of formal schooling, and that their career paths may not be entirely school based. Pre-service teachers' understandings of the multiplicity of their roles evolves over time and service-learning experiences can be effective in creating new and emerging understandings in this regard.

Method

The study was conducted over two years at two universities in Sydney, Australia which offer service-learning experiences as part of a 4-year primary teacher education degree (Jacobs, 2022). After a service-learning placement, volunteer participants were engaged in semi-structured face-to-face interviews. Observations of service-learning environments were also conducted. Data was analysed to examine how pre-service education students experienced their arts-based service-learning placements. Governed by a recognised ethics process at both universities, the participating teacher-education students were informed about the research and gave written and verbal consent to be interviewed at the conclusion of their placements (Jacobs, 2022).

The Participants

The experiences of eight students enrolled in a teacher education course, most in their 3rd or 4th year of a 4-year degree program, informed this study. Participants' age was not captured as part of this study, however,

being in the latter half of their degree, they were all adults over the age of 20 years. Participants from two universities were volunteer participants in this study; 3 students were from University A completing a four-year undergraduate teaching degree and 5 were from University B completing a 2-year post-graduate teacher education program. All volunteer participants were residents of various regions in Sydney where the placements were conducted. The situated learning placements were mostly in Western Sydney, which is a culturally diverse area, with 35% of residents coming from more than 170 countries and speaking over 100 different languages (Western Sydney University, 2020).

The pre-service teacher education students were placed in a variety of arts-based community programs where they were supported by professional arts facilitators who ran the programs. They were offered opportunities to debrief and had support structures available to them as part of their placement. This helped to ensure that any discomfort or concerns were addressed during the placement, making way for productive experiences to occur.

The following table (Jacobs, 2022) lists the participants (pseudonyms used for anonymity) and the service-learning experience in which they were engaged:

Table I. List of participants

Name	Description of Service-Learning Site
Mona (University A)	Drama program in a centre for refugees and people seeking asylum
Brendan (University A)	Drama program in a centre for refugees and people seeking asylum
Saraya (University B)	Storytelling program for recently arrived migrant women
Neda (University B)	Storytelling program for recently arrived migrant women
Li (University A)	Homework club for vulnerable youth (Visual Arts program)
Tania (University B)	Singing group for people experiencing homelessness
Kelly (University B)	Music program for new mothers (single parents and vulnerable women)
Sujan (University B)	Dance program for senior citizens in aged care

Data Collection and Analysis

After pre-service teachers' service-learning placement had concluded, they returned to their university-based studies to complete their semester. At the conclusion of each semester (approx. four-weeks later) those who had completed their service-learning placements in arts-based environments were approached to be interviewed for the purposes of the research. All students who were approached consented, in line with ethical processes, to be engaged in a semi-structured face-to-face interview, lasting 45mins to one hour, by their arts education lecturer, who is the author of this paper. Interview questions were created in response to the central research question: How do service-learning experiences in the arts contribute to pre-service teachers' personal and professional development. The interview also inquired into the features of the service-learning experience that brought it closer to a critical service-learning model (Jacobs, 2022).

For additional context, five participants from University B were also observed by the researcher on two occasions during the service-learning experience (Jacobs 2022). The researcher visited the students in the service-learning placement twice, as part of their role as the arts lecturer at that university. With the participants' permission, the researcher took notes in a journal, recording the range of activities the participant was required assist with, as well as notes on their role and their interactions with service users. After transcription of all data, identifying information was removed or edited. The data was coded using QSR NVivo10 qualitative analysis software. Beginning with a thematic content analysis (Jacobs, 2022; Saldaña, 2016) the data was treated with an iterative approach. Initial analysis centred on identifying and coding participants' experience of service-learning. The researcher then coded participants' views on the arts experiences, pedagogies, service users' response to the program, perceptions of the service-learning environment, affective and emotional experiences and their own professional or pedagogical growth. A range of interconnecting themes were generated through the analysis which are discussed in this paper.

Findings

Arts experiences, engaging affect and emotion as transformative pedagogy

All participants reflected positively on the arts components of their service-learning experience, with their initial comments reflecting the many positive features of community arts projects in which they were placed. Participants reflected on the highly engaging nature of the programs, resulting in happy, joyful service users who appeared to experience mood elevation (Dolling & Day, 2013). The pre-service participants noticed the experience reduced stress both in themselves and service users and were inspired by activities that promoted optimism and positivity. Having completed at least one unit as part of their primary education degree, all student participants had some experience with arts education. For this reason, they were excited, yet somewhat unsurprised by the heightened engagement brought about by the arts program.

"We had so much fun in the arts unit at university, I chose to volunteer in this program because I knew it'd be good." (Brendan)

Beyond high levels of engagement, several participants found the affective and emotional dimensions of working with service users through the arts to be the most transformative part of their experience. Thompson (2009) describes affect in drama education as generative and dynamic, and for some participants it certainly opened doors that allowed rapport and relationships to be quickly established. This was reflected in Brendan's reflections on his involvement with the drama program.

> *In the first session when we were introduced our roles as assistants and volunteers was explained and everyone was nice, but didn't take much notice. But after that first week, when we came in there were big smiles, meaningful conversation as people had recognised us from the week before when we were working with them in a group, pretending to be the king or farmer or whatever. Those things broke the ice and gave us this kind of immediate closeness. It was almost like we shared a secret or something.* (Brendan)

For other participants, the arts provided a vehicle by which they could come to deeper understandings of ways to navigate the complex relationships in the service-learning environment.

"Some of those kids have a tough exterior and don't talk much. But connecting over the artworks meant we could have deep conversations about whatever they wanted to talk about – school, home, homework, whatever." (Kelly)

The presence of emotion and affect intersected strongly with participants' motivation and desire to engage in the service-learning experience. Some said they looked forward to their sessions all week, other missed the learning environment and its people when they were not there.

"*I think I laughed more in that hour than I did all week."* (Sujan)

Neda mentioned that the affective experiences became a democratising force within the learning environment, as it provided pathways for everyone to be involved in the storytelling and for her to be equally engaged in the learning.

> *There were times we were in pairs or small groups and it was great because everyone could be involved equally, because you know we all laugh, cry, have stories or whatever. But I didn't feel like I was the teacher in charge or whatever. We were all just sharing our own contributions like we were the same.* (Neda)

Arts pedagogies have often been noted for breaking traditional hierarchies in the learning environment and blurring the lines between learner and teacher (Sweeny, 2008). However, the data suggests that the coalescing factor of affect and emotion in this instance is more critical than the pedagogy. Without affect and emotion the pedagogy may have been effective but not as transformative for the pre-service participant. The next section discusses the progression towards a transformative pedagogy brought about through the role of emotion and affect in the service-learning environment.

Understanding of teachers' roles

A pre-service teachers' understanding of their role in a school, institution and society is shaped and constantly re-shaped by a myriad of factors. While this section discusses the pre-service participants' understanding of their roles as informed by their arts-based service-learning experience, this paper notes that one such experience is only one of many that collectively inform personal and professional identities. And while a relatively small experience in their teacher education course, with some service-learning placements comprising of just 8 hours, all participants, in the study reported that it was a meaningful, often powerful, experience for them.

After the service-learning experience, advocacy became a key tenant of the student participants' understanding of their role as a teacher. As mentioned previously, participants actively questioned power structures and systemic inequalities of society while they were undertaking the service-learning placement. They appeared to not see service users as victims, helpless or in need of saving. Rather, some participants were keen to extol service user's resilience and unique qualities during the interviews. A desire to re-shape society's

preconceptions about vulnerable communities seemed ardent and some wanted to continue to advocate for the communities they worked with, in either formal or informal ways.

"There's so much richness in language and culture in migrant and refugee communities, but it's often hidden away in schools. I want to keep working with them. And learning." (Mona)

"When people see older people, they just see people who are useless. I want them to see how much they still have to give and that these could be our best years to look forward to." (Sujan)

Some pre-service participants even raised the possibility of alternative career pathways, partly shaped by their fears about the job market in Primary education, but also because they were inspired by the community artists they worked alongside. In some ways their horizons were broadened about their future possibilities and they began to see that teachers occupy a myriad of roles outside of traditional schooling.

> *Look, the reality is I probably won't get permanent job right away. So, I'm thinking that arts education in the community might be a good Plan B. Actually, make that a Plan A. I think this is an excellent job for a teacher.* (Neda)

Understanding the role of a teacher is a dynamic process that is negotiated through a rich and complex set of relations of practice (Chong & Low, 2009). These complexities also contain tensions as pre-service teachers navigate potentially conflicting worlds and also negotiate the gap between their expectations and reality (Beltman et al., 2015). One of the participants in this study had different expectations of the arts program where she chose to complete her service-learning experience. She found the program challenged her perception of quality teaching in a way that questioned her role.

> *Honestly, in the first two weeks I didn't get it. We were creating these fictional stories with the students and that was not what I was expecting. I thought we'd be telling the women's stories as migrants and refugees, and this is why I chose the project, because I thought those stories needed to be told. I asked the program leader why we were doing stories that had nothing to do with their lives and they told me some of them had trauma in their background and it would be wrong to ask them to tell that over and over again, like for our benefit. But still, I thought that everyone was, you know, an expert in their own story. I thought that's what I could bring to my own classroom. Now I'm uncomfortable with what I thought and it made me question what else I don't know.* (Saraya)

Saraya's moment of confusion or vulnerability is helping her understand that education, particularly when working with marginalised groups, is complex. Sometimes there is discomfort in the ambiguity of unfamiliar pedagogies. She went on to state that although she was challenged by the unfamiliar approach, she was appreciative of the opportunity to refine her arts pedagogies in a situated learning environment.

> *Yes, it was excellent that I got to see some of the strategies we covered in arts tutorials in real life. I also got to run a few activities and saw that I wasn't explaining them quite right. But I could also see that some really simple activities were so effective if you just tried.* (Saraya)

Continued engagement with sites and participants

Two of the pre-service participants continued to volunteer in the arts program on a regular ongoing basis after their service-learning placement had concluded. Three other participants said they had wanted to return to volunteer, when they had more time available away from university exams, part-time employment and caring responsibilities. Their reasons for wanting to continue were varied. Some felt they were valued in the learning environment.

"There aren't many Arabic speakers running the program and I felt like I was really helping the women. I feel I really have a role to play here." (Neda)

Others had altruistic reasons for wanting to continue.

I go once a week because honestly, this is what I got into education for. To make a difference to people who need it most. So, it's a couple of hours of my time, but it's pretty amazing what I get back. (Brendan)

One simply enjoyed the experience and wanted to volunteer to pursue it as a personal interest in their life.

"I actually just loved it. I want to do some volunteer work, so I may as well do it somewhere I enjoy." (Sujan)

Demonstrated through participants' responses, the development of their understanding of the multifaceted role of teachers was informed, and potentially transformed, by their arts-based service-learning experiences. From increased understanding of social inequities, advocating for more diverse teaching strategies in recognition of student diversity, or feeling motivated and inspired to stay engaged with the community placements, these pre-service teaching students were constructively impacted by the arts-based service-learning experiences in terms of their personal and professional identities.

Advocates for the Arts and Arts Pedagogies

All eight participants said that one of the benefits of the service-learning experience was the opportunity to develop their arts pedagogies. All said they were more likely to implement arts strategies in their own classroom after seeing them in action during their service-learning placement.

"I don't think I would consider teaching dance before this. Now I just can't wait to try all the things I saw." (Sujan)

Some added that the experience shaped them into a passionate advocate of the arts, particularly in marginalised communities.

"It was the best learning experience to see the exact activities we'd tried in class working in the real world." (Mona)

"I now think that for EAL/D [English as an Additional Language or Dialect] students, you can't possibly teach them without drama or storytelling. I'm definitely taking that into my classroom." (Neda)

The service-learning placement was a significant moment of learning and reflection for the pre-service participants, with each incorporating unique learnings into their repertoire, while developing their understanding of the role of a teacher. However, all of the attributes of the service-learning experience discussed thus far have benefitted the pre-service teacher, which is one of the criticisms of service-learning models, as discussed in the literature review. Noting these critiques, this research also inquired into the features of the service-learning experience that brought it closer to a critical service-learning model. The final discussion section of this paper explores the ways that transformative pedagogies have been shaped by critical service-learning experiences in the arts, with consideration of how such experiences might foster more critical understandings of issues of equity within educational and community settings.

Discussion

This study suggests that even though the service-learning experiences were relatively short, the arts experiences were able to have some influence on their understanding of their role in schools, institutions and society. Having begun their arts-based service-learning as co-participants, rather than expert facilitators, the experiences provided a vehicle through which the pre-service teachers could form equitable connections with service users and understand their lived experience. In interviews, several student participants reported experiencing a oneness, or a sense of cohesion, with the service users brought about by the creative pedagogies which acted to dismantle hierarchies. This is significant as Bickford & Reynolds (2002) have problematised traditional service-learning situations which are predicated on differences between the service-learning student and the community being served.

"I loved that I wasn't there because I could dance. It was really about self-expression and creativity and that put us on the same level." (Sujan)

Writing from the field of drama, Stavrou and colleagues (2019) have argued that the transformative orientation of the arts fosters possible re-workings of the power relations between facilitators and learners (Jacobs, 2022). Pre-service teacher participants were additionally working in embodied ways, some of which was unfamiliar to both the pre-service teachers and the service users. This challenging environment enabled empathy between all parties. Working at the same level, often in a physical sense as well as emotionally and intellectually, all parties experienced both discomfort and joy in the learning environment. Raphael's (2013) study discusses the significance of discomforting experiences in education, as well as disruption and disorientation as notions of learning. She begins her analysis with descriptions of a "disorientating jolt of something new" (Raphael, 2013, p. 165). The concurrent jolts of the off-campus learning environment, the presence of unfamiliar participants and the embodied ways of working led pre-service teachers to abandon their inhibitions, leaving them open to new connections and experiences. Nurtured safely by expert arts facilitators who ran the arts programs, they were also offered opportunities to debrief and had support

structures available to them as part of their university studies. This helped to ensure that the discomfort was productive rather than paralysing.

In this open state, pre-service teacher participants felt challenged, while soothed by a pedagogy of joy that was embedded into each of the arts-based learning environments. All arts projects were designed to be uplifting, hopeful and highly engaging. And while emotional and affective experiences were heightened throughout, service users and participants' left feeling positive.

"I definitely noticed that whatever happened in the session or whatever we talked about, they tried to finish on a fun, happy or funny thing, so people would have a good feeling when they left". (Mona)

This curated joy acted as a panacea to any discomfort in the learning environment and the growing sense of awareness of the service users' predicaments and the underlying conditions that caused their marginalisation. A sense of solidarity formed, and the pre-service teachers began to understand some of the rich nuances of the service users' worlds through carefully planned interactions. The pre-service teacher participants emerged as advocates, seeing one of their roles as active agents of social justice.

> *Before I started, I knew the whole point of the program was for us to be aware of our privilege and it definitely did that. But I can also see that education has a bigger purpose here. The curriculum is one thing, but as teachers we can do more to make sure no one gets left behind and we have to do that any way we can.* (Brendan)

These small shifts in identity formation allow pre-service teachers to be open to greater possibilities as a member of the teaching profession, making way for more critical pedagogies that deconstruct power structures and allow for deep ethical considerations of their role. The pedagogy of discomfort (Boler, 1999; Nadan & Stark, 2016) meets joyful engagement in learning through the arts. This combination feeds the transformational qualities of the service-learning experience, opening spaces for internal dialogue and new realisations. The presence of participatory joy prevented unproductive feelings of paralysis or shutdown that is possible if feelings of discomfort are allowed to dominate.

Conclusion

This paper acknowledges that these placements were limited in both time and scope, thereby limiting the transformation that could occur to pre-service teachers' pedagogical skills and philosophical understandings through participating in meaningful affective experiences fostered by art-focused programs. While the participants expressed an overall benefit to participation in the arts-focused placements both regarding their own identities as teachers, and the role of the arts in equitable teaching and learning, the potential for arts-informed approaches towards fostering social justice awareness needs to be explored further. A subsequent study might interrogate the program of learning through the lens of critical-service learning, which examines hegemonic oppression on a systemic level (Jacobs, 2022; Warren-Gordon & Santamaria Graff, 2018).

As previously discussed, the understanding of the role of teachers in an institution and in broader society is an ongoing experience and no one experience should have its role overestimated in the tapestry. One

critical factor in the transformation appears to be the affective and emotional experiences brought about by arts-based experiences. As part of their placement the pre-service teachers experienced arts engagement that utilised affect and emotion as a transformative pedagogy. They broadened their understanding of the role of teachers, both in an institution and in society. These emerging understandings led them to find voice as advocates, investigate arts education and community projects as alternative career paths and re-evaluate their own perceptions of quality teaching. Finally, they adopted a critical stance on social justice issues, and shed light on the ways that arts-based service-learning placements can become deeper engagements, leading to sustainable benefits for all parties.

An avenue for future research is investigating the differences between arts and non-arts-based service-learning experiences, or investigating if arts-based pedagogies might be useful in other situated learning scenarios. This study suggests that spaces for transformation may be able to be enhanced through affective and emotional experiences, and which can contribute to pre-service teachers' understanding of their role. Furthermore, the safety and comfort brought about through joyful arts experiences can open new avenues for pre-service teachers to experience discomfort and unease in productive and transformative ways.

Disclosure

The author confirms that the research contains no conflicts of interest.

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