



## Art in Early Childhood

A pre-service teacher's journey in the visual arts: a narrative of experiences, beliefs and perceptions of self-concept

Allison Ohlsen

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

### ABSTRACT

**This paper presents a pilot study that examines pre-service teacher dispositions and arts education within generalist initial teacher education. The main focus of this paper is to demonstrate the usefulness of Joseph Campbell's (1949/2008) mythological narrative structure, 'The Adventure of the Hero', or 'The Hero's Journey', as a creative means for interpreting pre-service teachers' journeys within the visual arts. This paper begins by highlighting the need for further research into pre-service teacher dispositions and arts education within generalist initial teacher education (ITE) before telling a story of some student teachers' experiences within a visual arts course. The story is told in three acts with intervening analysis through 'The Hero's Journey' framework and relevant literature. This paper acts as a rehearsal for the application of the theoretical frame to an impending study of the effects of engagement in a visual arts course on pre-service teachers' attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of self-concept in the visual arts.**

### INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

The quality and consistency of arts learning in many childcare centres and primary schools, in Australia (Ewing, 2010) and internationally (Bamford, 2006; Eisner, 2002), is of concern to arts educators and advocates. Australian arts curriculum developments have been applauded nationally (NAAE, October, 2014), and internationally, due to breadth of scope, detail in definition and whole curriculum connectivity (The College Board, 2011). Ongoing speculations regarding the nature of curriculum inclusion, however, continue to raise concerns for arts education advocates in Australia (see Australian Government, 2014; The Music Trust, October, 2014) that lie beyond the scope of this paper<sup>1</sup>. While the effects of economic rationalism on education, curriculum and the nature of arts' inclusion are of great concern for many; a focus on arts curriculum support is not the focus of this paper. Teacher dispositions toward the arts are reported to significantly impact the nature of arts learning in classrooms (Oreck, 2004). Research has found many pre-service teachers (Garvis, 2009; Lemon & Garvis, 2013; Lummis, Morris & Paolino, 2014; Stokrocki, 1995) and practising teachers (Garvis, Twigg & Pendergast, 2011) hold indifferent attitudes toward the arts and possess little confidence in teaching them (Garvis, 2009; Russell-Bowie, 2010). The potential for addressing future teachers' dispositions towards the arts and methods possible to affect positive change are of interest to this author and will be

1. Australian Curriculum: The Arts Foundation to Year 10 has since been endorsed by the Australian Education Council (see ACARA, September 2015; NAVA, October 2015).

the focus of this paper.

## BACKGROUND

In many schools, systems, and across many countries in the world, the arts are subsumed by learning areas considered more important, despite the plethora of research and reviews validating the importance of the arts (UNESCO, 2005, 2006; Winner, Goldstein & Vincent-Lancrin, 2013). Overall findings from Bamford's (2006) study of the arts in education across 40 countries and organizations reported 'a gulf between the "lip service" given to arts education and the provisions [...] within schools' (p. 11). The arts within classrooms are frequently justified as enhancing the 'more important' learning goals of literacy and numeracy, rather than for their own inherent value (Davis, 2008; Eisner, 2002). The arts also 'dress' educational environments, where arts products enhance settings' aesthetics (McArdle, 2012), rather than enact genuine learning through authentic processes. Eisner (2002, p. xi) described education's general regard for the arts as 'nice but not necessary'. The persistence of these views has defined a widespread cultural legacy of the marginalization of the arts.

Compounding effects of teachers' negative attitudes, beliefs and lack of personal arts association with feelings of inefficacy result in disinclination to teach the arts (Alter, Hays & O'Hara, 2009; Russell-Bowie, 2004). It is possible the impact of these factors may be felt in primary classrooms despite the introduction of a mandated arts curriculum. Inclusion of visual arts experiences for children that consist of more than the filling of pre-fabricated photo-copied outlines in educational environments lead by teachers lacking in belief or understanding of authentic art-making's value and practice.

While recent research legitimates the problematic beliefs, attitudes and/or sense of inefficacy that many pre-service teachers (Garvis, 2009; Lemon & Garvis, 2013; Lummis, Morris & Paolino, 2014) and practising teachers (Alter, Hays & O'Hara, 2009; Garvis & Pendergast, 2011) hold about the arts, little is known about what may affect practical change to these perceptions. A study of the nature of generalist pre-service teachers' personal experiences as they undertake a visual arts course will be of benefit to arts teacher educators. Knowledge of the nature of pre-service teachers' 'peak' and 'trough' moments, or 'crystallizing' (Feldman, 1980) and 'paralyzing' (Armstrong, 2000) experiences will enable arts teacher educators to maximize learning opportunities through arts education program design. These 'peaks' and 'troughs' may relate to pre-service teachers' perceptions of their own visual arts abilities, or of understanding opportunities availed through art making.

Davis (2008) confirmed the arts' integral role within generalist initial teacher education (ITE) in her review of Australian visual arts education. Russell-Bowie (2011) supported this in her review of arts education policy covering Australia's history. For many pre-service teachers entering education degrees, experiences availed within their university programs were their first taste of some arts disciplines (Russell-Bowie, 2012). For many more, these experiences were their first contacts with the arts in a considerable length of time. These arts experiences may also, in many cases, have been the last pre-service teachers had before being responsible for teaching these disciplines. The urgency of circumstances is exacerbated by a consistent decline in the representation of the arts within many generalist teacher education degrees (Barton, Baguley & MacDonald, 2013; Russell-Bowie, 2011). It is evident then, that the stakes are high and there is much to be achieved by arts teacher educators within very short periods of time. It is within this context that the research study, for which this paper is a precursor, is set. In 2003, the Australian

National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE) called for review of pre-service teacher education in the arts, declaring current training inadequate. The NAAE subsequently reiterated this call in 2012 (NAAE, 2012). The NAAE's call had echoed that of Bamford (2006), who identified the global 'need for more training for key providers at the coalface of the delivery-chain (e.g. teachers, artists, and other pedagogical staff)' (p. 11).

## THE IMPENDING RESEARCH STUDY'S ORIGINS

With a history of engagement, appreciation, practice and degrees in fine arts and education, I have taught visual arts to generalist pre-service teachers within a Queensland, Australian university for four years. Generalist teachers are those who are responsible for delivery of all areas of the curriculum to children in early childhood (birth to age 8) and primary education (ages 6 to 11). As such, generalist teacher education degrees encompass courses in all curriculum disciplines, including language, mathematics, humanities, sciences and the arts. Through my teaching in tertiary and primary education contexts, my observations of pre-service and practising teachers' attitudes regarding their arts practice and teaching have largely aligned with existing research that has found a prevalence of indifferent attitudes towards the arts and the arts in education (Ewing, 2010; Oreck, 2004). It is evident to me that there is a paramount need to positively affect the arts dispositions and understandings of future teachers during generalist teacher education courses. Improved teacher dispositions toward the arts through increased understanding, in conjunction with appropriate arts curriculum, will equate to more meaningful arts inclusion in future classrooms.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THIS PAPER

Two voices and many voices will be heard within this paper. The two are those of the author and a fictional pre-service teacher named 'Sam'. A story will be told of Sam's journey through a visual arts course forming part of her generalist education degree. The author will interpret the story, analyzing it through the theoretical framework supported by pertinent research. As the study's data collection has not yet occurred, the fictitious Sam represents many pre-service teachers' voices heard by the author, in her role as art teacher educator, over four years. Barone (2001 in Barone & Eisner, 2012) explained this form of 'narrative construction' after Polkinghorne (1995), stating: 'researchers collect descriptions of events and happenings and synthesize or configure them by means of a plot into a story' (p. 12). Eisner (Barone & Eisner, 2012) added that:

Meaning is achieved and enhanced as portions of the world are construed, organized, and disclosed. The document of disclosure – a piece of fictional ABER – may take liberties with the world as it is seen. Composites of individuals might be created to make a point more telling. [This genre] illuminates important qualities, raises profound educational questions [...] and [...] elevates the level of discourse about educational matters (p. 100).

The composite voices of many pre-service teachers are heard within Sam's story through the philosophy of the 'general' within 'the particular', as expressed by Barone and Eisner (2012, p. 101), Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) and Joseph Campbell (1949/2008). That is, the story of many can be found within the story of one.

Sam's story structure and analytical framework follows a hybrid of the influential theories of Joseph Campbell and Christopher Vogler. Vogler's (1998/2007) 'The Hero's Journey', within

The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Storytellers and Screenwriters, was derived from Campbell's (1949/2008) 'The Adventure of the Hero', within *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

Joseph Campbell's life work studying universal myths and symbols resulted in 'The Adventure of the Hero'. The narrative sequence or 'monomyth' theory reveals 'the one, shape-shifting yet marvelously constant story' (Campbell 1949/2008, p. 1) underpinning all stories. The story, fictional or non-fictional, unfolds through the hero's ordeals. 'The hero', according to Campbell (1949/2008), 'is the man or woman who has been able to battle past his [sic] personal and local historical limitations' (p. 14). In the case of this paper, this might mean the pre-service teacher meaningfully engaging with the visual arts course, despite widespread marginalization of the arts in education. The hero, according to Campbell (1949/2008), must metaphorically separate from problematic social norms of 'disintegrating society and psyche', in order to return, 'perfected [...] transfigured' to 'teach the lesson he [sic] has learned of life renewed' (pp. 14-15). Pre-service teachers' experiences through a visual arts ITE course may be metaphorically read through the Campbell/Vogler theory as they optimally conclude their journey relieved of any doubts over arts' status within education, with an improved disposition toward visual arts and with the intention to meaningfully teach visual arts in their future classrooms. MacKenzie (2012) used Campbell's theory in a pre-service teacher education visual and language literacy course, reporting that application 'of a narrative universal theme [produced] transformational learning' (p. 16).

Where Campbell's theory was devised through his patterned analysis of world mythology following Carl Jung's psychological archetypes and symbolism, Vogler proffered the framework for creative ends. Vogler (1998/2007) applied Campbell's theory firstly to cinematic analysis, before scribing 'The Hero's Journey': a framework that became widely instrumental to the writing of movies and novels. Vogler's abridged version of the theory is seen as more accessible, and his condensed description of Campbell's original themes more readily applicable to contemporary audiences. Far beyond Vogler's intended readership, 'The Hero's Journey' framework has been applied to disciplines as diverse as financial investment, tourism studies and leadership. Vogler (1998/2007) described the theory as eminently adaptable, explaining: 'that's why the hero has a thousand faces' (p.13). As 'The Hero's Journey' embodies the psychology of successive experiences leading to change and transformation - the crux of education - the theory has become ever more popular amongst educational researchers.

Randles (2012) utilized Vogler's (1998/2007) 'Hero's Journey' metaphor in analyzing and relaying journeys of students training to become music teachers. Randles (2012) aligned the journey of one music specialist during her practical field placement with the framework, describing 'characters' roles and pivotal experiences on her journey toward teacher identity development. In contrast, Sam, our fictional protagonist, is a generalist pre-service teacher who does not identify with the visual arts. As such, the direction of Sam's journey is that of personal connection and developing understanding of the visual arts, rather than of developing teacher identity. Randles (2012), after Vogler (1998/2007), concludes that the journey structure of myth may be helpful in describing, sorting, and clarifying meanings of experience within future research and practice by music teachers and beyond.

Sam's journey will be told through three Acts, or great stages: Act 1 'Departure', Act 2 'Initiation' and Act 3 'Return', following Vogler (1998/2007), in the defining of 'Acts', and Campbell (1949/2008), in defining 'Departure', 'Initiation' and 'Return'. For brevity, Vogler's terminology will predominate. Analysis, using the theoretical framework and issues pertinent to the study, will be

made at the conclusion of each Act. Sam's story is constructed from her own perspective, as the impending research will gather data from pre-service teachers of their own experiences.

Firstly, to briefly initiate the reader to the framework and terminology: Act 1 (Vogler, 1998/2007), "Departure" (Campbell, 1949/2008), sees the hero leave 'The Ordinary World' of their 'customary element' upon encountering 'The Call to Adventure', in the form of a 'problem, challenge or, adventure' (Vogler, 1998/2007, p.15). Vogler (1998/2007) states that while many journeys traverse outer landscapes of physical locales, as many 'take the hero on an inward journey, one of the mind, the heart, the spirit. In any good story the hero grows and changes, making a journey from one way of being to the next' (p. 13). A fear response may lead to the hero's 'Refusal of the Call' or an expression of 'The Reluctant Hero' (Campbell, 1949/2008; Vogler, 1998/2007). A meeting with a 'Mentor' ensues. This archetypal figure engages in the hero's preparation to 'face the unknown', providing 'advice, guidance or magical equipment' (Vogler, 1998/2007, p. 18). Act 1 concludes with the hero 'Crossing the First Threshold' (Vogler, 1998/2007, p. 18) by committing to 'The Call's' challenge.

Act 2 (Vogler, 1998/2007) sees the hero encounter a series of 'Tests, Allies and Enemies' (Vogler, 1998/2007) as they journey through 'Initiation' (Campbell, 1949/2008) to the new, 'Special World' (Vogler, 1998/2007). In traversing the journey's depths, experiences intensify. 'Approach' is metered toward the supreme 'Ordeal' (Vogler, 1998/2007). 'The Ordeal' confronted and conquered, the hero attains the 'Reward': the metaphoric 'Seizing' of 'the Sword' (Vogler, 1998/2007). As Vogler (1998/2007) explains: 'Sometimes the "sword" is knowledge and experience that leads to greater understanding and a reconciliation with hostile forces' (p. 22).

The hero's journey is rendered meaningless, however, unless the 'Reward' is used to the betterment of 'The Ordinary World' (Vogler, 1998/2007). Act 3 (Vogler, 1998/2007), the 'Return' (Campbell, 1949/2008), sees the hero journey back with 'The Elixir' (Vogler, 1998/2007), though this is not without event. Having validated the title of 'hero', they may be reluctant to leave the 'Special World' (Vogler, 1998/2007). While there may be an initial 'Refusal of the Return' (Campbell, 1949/2008), the hero must negotiate the tumultuous 'Road Back' (Vogler, 1998/2007), possibly hindered by remains of 'the dark forces of the Ordeal' (Vogler, 1998/2007, p. 23). In re-crossing the threshold, the hero makes a 'Resurrection' (Vogler, 1998/2007), a re-birth, of sorts: 'a new being with new insights' (Vogler, 1998/2007, p. 24). Campbell (1949/2008) describes the hero as now a 'Master of the Two Worlds': able to freely travel between the Worlds, knowing the one 'by virtue of the other' (p. 196). Campbell (1949/2008) ultimately defines: 'The hero is the champion of things becoming, not of things become, because he [sic] is' (p. 209). This final statement belies what it is to be both a learner and a teacher, residing always between the worlds of both states.

While the reader may feel Sam's story is somewhat idealized, it is one plausible outcome of a fictitious pre-service teacher's learning journey. It is acknowledged that not all students will experience all of the events as described in Sam's story, or in the ways described. Many of the stages of the journey and feelings expressed at those points in time, however, align with those witnessed over a number of years by the author. Despite the diversity of students enrolled in the course, their journeys through it may adhere, to greater or lesser extent, to the framework outlined by Campbell (1949/2008) and Vogler (1998/2007). As would be expected, individuals' entry and exit points within 'the adventure' vary, as do pathways through the journey, dependent upon pre-service teachers' past experiences and the nature of their personal identification with visual arts, as well as depth of engagement with the course. Campbell

(1949/2008) alluded to this in stating: 'The whole sense of the ubiquitous myth of the hero's passage is that it shall serve as a general pattern for men and women, wherever they may stand along the scale' (p. 101).

Not all pre-service teachers attain the highest peak experiences of transformation as described by the theoretical framework and the conclusion of Sam's journey. Sufficient numbers of students have described similar transformative events, however, to evidence transformation as a real possibility. Individuals' peak experiences vary and while some may appear relatively 'minor' to the onlooker in relation to those of others', these experiences can hold great significance for those individuals; affording a new-found consideration for visual arts practice and a shift in disposition toward visual arts in education.

Statements made, questions asked and the ebb and flow within the narrative are demonstrative of occurrences witnessed by the author. It is the validation of these real possibilities that drives the artist/teacher/researcher's belief in the value of the impending study: the belief that if these experiences are attainable by some pre-service teachers, then they are attainable by a great many.

## SAM'S JOURNEY

### Act 1 - Departure

Sam arrived at her first day of university to begin her teacher education degree having just graduated from high school. She was awash with emotions upon discovering visual art was her first class! She was at university now - what would her teachers want her to be able to do? Was there more to the visual arts that she was meant to understand - what if she didn't? Was it possible to learn how to do art? But surely it couldn't be that difficult ... was it possible to fail a visual art course?

In thinking about herself as a teacher of small children, she hadn't thought about teaching art at all... Surely if she gave the children some coloured pencils they'd know what to do with them? Sam hadn't taken any art classes since the beginning of high school and she had no visual arts experiences outside of school either. She didn't love art, like some people did. She didn't hate it either. Art just didn't mean much to Sam and she couldn't really see the point. Sam remembered colouring-in at school when she was very small, but she never did it for long. She also recalled following her teachers' directions to assemble paper decorations at Christmas time. She remembered being really disappointed in a diorama she had to make for a social studies project when she was in upper primary; the people she'd drawn didn't look right and she thought everyone else's looked better. None of Sam's experiences provided her with any interest in visual art what so ever. She went off to her first visual art class feeling a combination of confusion and dread.

Upon joining a table of students in the art room, Sam was surprised to hear conversation soon turn to their feelings about art. It seemed she was not alone in her fears about the visual art course. While one or two of the students had previous experience with art and appeared quite comfortable, many of the others were like her: they had very little experience with visual art and were feeling uncomfortable and uncertain as to why this was necessary. Maybe she and the other students would be able to help each other along?

The first drawing activity that day had Sam and the others drawing lines to show emotions. The drawing part wasn't hard ... but how can different lines mean different things unless they're making a picture of something? This just didn't make any sense to Sam. The second drawing activity seemed much more difficult. In trying to reproduce the bottle in front of her, Sam just couldn't make her drawing look right: it was too small and she couldn't get the shape the same on both sides. Sam stared at the paper: I can't do this - I just can't draw!

Sam's teacher made a few suggestions to Sam to help her see her drawing more positively and to help her feel as though she should carry on with the task. It was suggested that she spend more time looking at the object she was drawing rather than the paper and that she try holding her pencil differently so she wouldn't be applying as much pressure. Sam found these simple tips surprisingly helpful. Beyond the application of the advice to the drawing task, Sam learnt much more that day. Maybe it is possible to learn to do art? Maybe I will be able to teach my own students something when it comes to art?

At the end of the session, Sam's teacher spoke with the class about the requirement for them to establish a regular drawing practice as part of their assessment. They were required to draw every day and to write about their experiences in drawing. It was explained that the only way to learn to draw was to draw, and to draw regularly. Sam felt panic begin to rise within her again: Draw every day? What would I draw? I've never done anything like this before! Can I do it? What could there possibly be to write about?

On leaving the art class, Sam gave the set daily drawing task a great deal of thought. On reflection of the drawing she'd experienced that day, she was quite surprised as to how much she felt she'd learnt already with the guidance of her teacher and the support of her peers. Given Sam had begun the class with such trepidation, she was beginning to feel that maybe there would be more to come from the visual arts course than she had previously thought. With apprehension tinged with excitement, Sam decided she'd take on the daily drawing task.

### Analysis

Visual arts did not factor into Sam's 'Ordinary World' and in beginning a generalist teaching degree her 'Call to Adventure' took the form of the 'Special World' of the visual arts. Sam's inner dialogue illustrated her specific fears over predicted changes to ways of being and doing within the visual arts: What would her teachers want her to be able to do? Was there more to the visual arts that she was meant to understand? She expressed confusion and a lack of understanding over the language and cultural norms of the visual arts world: How can different lines mean different things unless they're making a picture of something? Was it possible to learn how to do art? This author explicitly heard such sentiment when a pre-service teacher once asked: 'Do I not understand this because it's, you know, 'art'?' Such responses may have roots in beliefs of the arts as elitist and exclusive. Fear responses, additionally, may derive from negative past experiences with the visual arts, as Sam expressed. Professor O'Toole, lead writer of the draft Arts Shape paper stated similarly at a symposium 'that the Arts and education have often regarded each other with suspicion' due to 'a perception that the arts represent a form of elitism only accessible to the highly educated' and 'the misconceptions or baggage from their own prior arts experiences that many teachers have' (as cited in Ewing, 2010, p. 5). Dinham (2011) informed: 'the biggest barrier to success will be this mindset' (p. 63).

Due to Sam's lack of meaningful exposure to visual art, it didn't 'mean anything' to her. Sam's recounting of her own reductive art-making experiences in education may indicate her own

teachers' lacking beliefs in art. Research (Australia Council for the Arts, 2010; Ewing, 2010; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010) has found that low valuing of the arts in education is directly related to teachers' feelings, attitudes and beliefs about the arts. Eisner (1997, 2002) and Holt (1997) stated the role of values and attitudes toward the arts are fundamental to arts education.

Sam expressed doubt over art's significance: But surely it couldn't be that difficult... was it possible to fail a visual art course? She expressed a lack of understanding and belief in the necessity to teach art: Surely if she gave the children some coloured pencils they'd know what to do with them? The prevalence of this understanding resulted in Eisner's *Arts and the Creation of Mind* (2002), aimed at dispelling 'the idea that the arts are somehow intellectually undemanding, emotive rather than reflective operations done with the hand somehow unattached to the head' (p. xi). Lemon and Garvis' (2013) study of pre-service teachers' perceptions of the role of the arts in primary school produced consistently neutral to negative data, alongside that of pre-service teachers' minimal exposure to the arts. Lemon and Garvis (2013) highlight arts teacher educators' need to acknowledge such perspectives when working with pre-service teachers.

Learning that a number of her contemporaries were similarly confused about the visual arts and felt trepidation toward beginning the course appeased Sam. This sense of camaraderie in a shared experience so prone to heightening the emotions of participants seems important to many pre-service teachers undertaking visual arts courses, as witnessed by the author. The role of peer 'Mentors' (Campbell, 1949/2008; Vogler, 1998/2007): towards pre-service teachers' levels of success within visual arts courses appears to have potential significance.

Despite sensing the potential of peer support, Sam showed signs of the 'Refusal of the Call' (Campbell, 1949/2008; Vogler, 1998/2007): I can't do this – I just can't draw! For many a yet-committed hero, some form of catalyst is required to propel her genuinely forward along the journey. For Sam, the catalyst appeared in the form of her 'Mentor' (Campbell, 1949/2008; Vogler, 1998/2007): – the visual art teacher. Sam traveled some distance that day in realizing a few simple words can make all the difference: Maybe it is possible to learn to do art? Maybe I will be able to teach my own students something when it comes to art? To this end, more research is needed to learn how to best improve this situation. As Vogler (1998/2007) intoned, however: 'Eventually the hero must face the unknown alone' (p. 18).

The art teacher laid down the gauntlet in establishing the pre-service teachers' need to establish a daily drawing practice. Upon reflection of the first lesson's small gains, Sam decided to commit to 'The Hero's Journey' and 'Cross the First Threshold' (Campbell, 1949/2008; Vogler, 1998/2007).

Considerable research has found practising teachers' sense of self-efficacy in teaching the arts to be lacking, due to low confidence, motivation and knowledge (Hennessy, Rolfe & Chedzoy, 2001; Russell-Bowie, 2004; Oreck, 2004; Smithrim & Upitis, 2001; Upitis, Smithrim & Soren, 1999). Garvis (2009), however, found pre-service teachers' self-efficacy beliefs about future arts teaching generally quite high, stating this may reflect 'the fact that the pre-service teachers had not undergone practical experiences in the classroom' (p. 27). Lummis and Garvis (2013) similarly found pre-service teachers' confidence in their ability to include the arts to be higher than their belief in the arts themselves. This outcome may indicate some pre-service teachers' simplified understandings of the arts. Garvis (2009, p. 27) proposed if pre-service teachers' sense of self-efficacy was higher, 'greater support structures are necessary to sustain teacher self-efficacy'.

## Act 2 - Initiation

While Sam had mentally decided to dive into the daily drawing task, she found actually beginning, picking up the pencil and beginning to draw, rather difficult. In beginning with familiar objects that seemed to have quite simple shapes, Sam found she was slowly able to break the fear preventing her from marking the paper. Sam thought about this apprehension to put pencil to paper. The more she thought about it, the more irrational it seemed. Do other people feel this way? Do children ever feel this way? Why does this cause so much worry?

As the weeks went by, Sam continued to draw. She continued to have moments where she felt all she'd done was wrong and had difficulty in motivating herself to continue. She found talking with her teacher helpful in learning new skills and new ways of seeing: new ways to see and think about both the subject matter she was drawing and how she had drawn it. Is this starting to 'think outside the box'? Similarly, she found conversations with her peers helpful too as they chatted while they drew: about how they found the materials to use, the different capabilities materials had and how they solved visual problems. Being able to help her classmates in even small ways gave Sam the confidence to experiment with new methods. Is this being 'creative'? These moments also gave her some insight into how it might be to teach visual art, and she began to feel that this may all be much more meaningful and achievable than she'd originally thought.

Sam continued to set herself more complex drawing tasks. When occasions of difficulty arose, she began to encounter them as opportunities to learn more, rather than as blocks to her progress. Sam felt that her visual perception had changed quite significantly since her beginnings with the visual arts course. She noticed how much more she saw in the world around her; in the way light acted on objects and how these observations could make her feel. She noticed that as her observation of the world had amplified, so had her ability to produce her desired meanings within artworks: That's what we were starting to think about with drawing the lines to represent emotions on that first day! Sam felt a sense of pride in her achievements and could perceive how these new understandings were going to benefit her future teaching practice: How will I best work with children so they can see and visually communicate the world in such rich and different ways?

## Analysis

Embarking on her journey across the threshold, Sam encountered many 'Tests' and continued to find 'Allies' (Vogler, 1998/2007) in her peers. As her journey unfolded, she developed technical skills and continued to grow in understanding of the visual arts. Throughout the journey, Sam described oppositional feelings in response to her art-making experiences. There were those that made it difficult to motivate herself, and others that illuminated new ways of thinking. Is this starting to 'think outside the box'? Is this being 'creative'? Numerous theorists have described 'peak' and 'trough' moments, as well as their effects. Armstrong's (2000) text on multiple intelligences explains 'crystallizing experiences', a process initially described by Feldman (1980) and later developed by Walters and Gardner (1986), as 'sparks that light an intelligence and start its development toward maturity' (p. 18). In antithesis, Armstrong (2000) defines 'paralyzing experiences' as those that "'shut down" intelligences', describing these as 'often filled with shame, guilt, fear, anger and other negative emotions that prevent our intelligences from growing and thriving' (p. 18).

After having made the 'Approach to the Inmost Cave', frequently the 'headquarters of the hero's

greatest enemy' (Vogler, 1998/2007, p. 20), Sam came to realize that her 'Enemy' had resided within herself. Reflecting on the obstacles she'd experienced in drawing, awareness of her own self-imposition grew. Why does this cause so much worry? Sam became aware of how her visual perception of the world had changed – the amplification of her 'seeing' and communicating this through her artwork leading her further along the path of insight: That's what we were starting to think about with drawing the lines to represent emotions on that first day! Sam had retrieved the 'Reward' (Vogler, 1998/2007). 'Crystallizing experiences' (Armstrong, 2000) of this nature align with Abraham Maslow's states of self-actualized 'being', following the preparatory state of 'becoming' (Frick, 1971).

### Act 3 - Return

Sam felt surprisingly saddened by the visual arts course's conclusion - she'd certainly not predicted that at the beginning. She'd learnt so much. Far beyond 'how to do art', Sam had gained a new way of seeing, a new way of understanding. She'd learnt 'why to do art' too. Yes, she'd developed technical skills she'd not conceived of previously, but Sam now had a 'feeling understanding' of the value that visual arts could have in people's lives. Sam found it incredibly difficult to articulate this value in words. The words just didn't seem to encompass the true meaning of these new ways, and this she found frustrating. She understood now that there was so much more to the visual arts. She also understood just how experiential the nature of this understanding was. More than needing to draw, to learn to draw, she needed to be in the visual arts – making and looking and thinking and experiencing – to really be able to start to work out what the visual arts are all about. For Sam, the question of whether or not she would or could teach the visual arts to her future students no longer existed. In fact, there was now no question at all. Having learnt to experience the world with her colour turned up, her visual thinking switched on and her desire to 'make' and make it all visible for others ignited, she knew she couldn't help but do this with all the children she would work with – and maybe others too.

### Analysis

Sam expressed some reluctance in taking 'The Road Back' (Vogler, 1998/2007) through her sadness at the visual arts course's conclusion. Sam had made inroads into 'how' and 'why to do art', which is of the greatest importance. Sam attained what could be considered 'The Ultimate Boon' (Campbell, 1949/2008) in developing a 'feeling understanding' of visual arts' value. This implicit understanding seemed to denote a newfound inherent intention within Sam toward the meaningful inclusion of the visual arts in her future classrooms.

Sam experienced the consequences of having confronted 'The Ordeal' (Vogler, 1998/2007, p. 23) in expressing frustration at her inability to articulate this 'feeling understanding'. Wright (2012) described this somatic understanding that 'connects the mind and the body' (p. 15). Matthews (1991) described somatic knowing as:

something different from, but not exclusive of, what cognitive psychologists refer to as kinesthetic knowing. [...] an experiential knowing that involves sense, percept, and mind/body – [...] a knowing, feeling and acting that is independent of distancing, disembodiment, discursive conceptualization [...] that is at the heart of the arts and physical culture (p. 89).

The perception of an inability to articulate somatic knowing has the potential to prevent Sam from successfully advocating for visual arts' inclusion in classrooms in the face of continued

marginalization of the arts in education. This, however, is a whole other journey beyond the scope of this paper.

Campbell (1949/2008) drew parallels between the rituals and rites of passage of many civilizations and the travails of the journey story, stating: 'the purpose and actual effect of these was to conduct people across those difficult thresholds of transformation that demand a change in the patterns not only of conscious but also of unconscious life' (p. 6). These transformations affect a shift away from 'the attitudes, attachments, and life patterns of the stage being left behind' (Campbell, 1949/2008, p. 6), as illustrated through Sam's narrative. Garvis (2008) explained that high self-efficacy is brought about by positive experiences leading to personal interest, whereas Bandura and Locke (2003) reported that those with poor self-efficacy would develop negative associations and discontinue the associated activity. As Lummis, Morris & Paolino (2014) stated, arts teacher educators must endeavor to prevent pre-service teachers from graduating with such negative associations, lest this affect their future arts teaching.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has served to illustrate the usefulness of Campbell (1949/2008) and Vogler's (1998/2007) meta-narrative frame to interpreting pre-service teachers' journeys through a visual arts course. The impending study will collect qualitative data through interviews and visual journals from five pre-service teachers as they undertake a visual arts course as part of their generalist ITE degree. Data sets will be used in the construction of pre-service teachers' individual journey narratives. Commonalities emerging across individuals' journeys will serve to further inform on the nature of pre-service teachers' visual arts experiences and effects of these experiences on attitudes, belief systems and perceptions of self-concept regarding visual arts. The impending study is fuelled by the belief that a deep, qualitative understanding of the nature of pre-service teachers' experiences as they journey through a visual arts course will be of benefit to future iterations of visual arts courses in generalist ITE, to the pre-service teachers who engage in the courses, and to the children they will teach in the future.

## REFERENCES

- Alter, F., Hays, T. & O'Hara, R. (2009). Creative Arts Teaching and Practice: Reflections of Primary School Teachers in Australia. *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, 10(9), 1 – 22. Retrieved from <http://www.ijea.org/v10n9/v10n9.pdf>
- Armstrong, T. (2000). *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: ASCD Publishing.
- Australia Council for the Arts. (2010). *More than bums on seats: Australian participation in the arts*. Sydney: Australia Council for the Arts.
- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). (2015, September 18). ACARA news, September 2015. Australian Curriculum: endorsed and improved. Retrieved from [http://www.acara.edu.au/news\\_media/acara\\_news/acara\\_news\\_2015\\_09.html](http://www.acara.edu.au/news_media/acara_news/acara_news_2015_09.html)
- Australian Government Department of Education. (2014). *Review of the Australian Curriculum. Final Report*. ACT. 978-1-74361-808-0 [PDF]. Retrieved from <https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/review-australian-curriculum-final-report>
- Barone, T. & Eisner, E. (2012). Arts-Based Educational Research. In J. Green, G. Camilli & P.B. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of Complementary Methods in Education Research* (95 – 109). Taylor & Francis Online.
- Bamford, A. (2006). *The Wow Factor: Global research compendium on the impact of the arts in education*. New York: Waxmann Munster Publishers.
- Bandura, A., & Locke, E. (2003). Negative self-efficacy and goal effects revisited. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 88(1), 87 – 99. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.1.87>
- Barton, G., Baguley, M. & MacDonald, A. (2013). Seeing the Bigger Picture: Investigating the State of the Arts in Teacher Education Programs in Australia. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(7), 75 - 90. doi: 10.14221/ajte.2013v38n7.5
- Campbell, J. (1949/2008). *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Bollingen Series XVII. Novato, CA: New World Library.
- Davis, D. (2008). *First We See: The National Review of Visual Education*. Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Retrieved from <http://www.artssmart.sa.edu.au/files/pages/NRVEFinalReport.pdf>
- Dinham, J. (2011). *Delivering authentic arts education*. South Melbourne: Cengage.
- Eisner, E.W. (2002). *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Ewing, R. (2010). *The Arts and Australian Education: Realising Potential*. Camberwell, Vic.: Australian Council for Educational Research. Retrieved from <http://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1020&context=aer>
- Frick, W.B. (1971). *Humanistic psychology: Interviews with Maslow, Murphy, and Rogers*. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company.
- Garvis, S. (2008). Teacher self-efficacy for the arts education: Defining the construct. *Australian Journal of Middle Schooling*, 8(1), 25 – 31.
- Garvis, S. (2009). Improving the teaching of the arts: Pre-service teacher self-efficacy towards arts

education. *US-China Education Review*, 6(12), 23 – 28.

Garvis, S. & Pendergast, D. (2010). Middle years teachers' past experiences of the arts: Implications for teacher education. *Australian Journal of Music*, 2, 28 – 40.

Garvis, S., Twigg, D. & Pendergast, D. (2011). Breaking the negative cycle: The formation of self-efficacy beliefs in the arts. A focus on professional experience in pre-service teacher education. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 36(2), 36 – 41.

Holt, D. (Ed.). (1997). *Primary arts education: Contemporary issues*. London, UK: Falmer Press.

Hennessy, S., Rolfe, L. & Chedzoy, S. (2001). The factors which influence student teachers' confidence to teach the arts in the primary classroom. *Research in Dance Education*, 2(1), 53 – 71. doi: 10.1080/14647890123720

Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. & Hoffman Davis, J. (1997). *The Art and Science of Portraiture*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Lemon, N. & Garvis, S. (2013). What is the Role of the Arts in a Primary School?: An Investigation of Perceptions of Pre-Service Teachers in Australia. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(9), 1 – 9. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2013v38n9.7>

Lummis, G.W., Morris, J., & Paolino, A. (2014). An Investigation of Western Australian Pre-Service Primary Teachers' Experiences and Self-Efficacy in The Arts. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(5), 50 - 64. Retrieved from <http://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/vol39/iss5/4/>

MacKenzie, K. B. (2012). Imagination and Transformation: Performing a Universal Narrative Theme. *Art Education* 65(3), 12 – 16. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezp01>

Matthews, J. (1991). Somatic Knowing and Art Education. *Marilyn Zurmuehlen Working Papers in Art Education*, 10 (1). Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED405243>

McArdle, F. (2012). New maps of learning for quality art education: what pre-service teachers should learn and be able to do. *Australian Education Research*, 39, 91 – 106.

National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE). (2003, 2012). The arts: essential learning for all teachers. Retrieved from <http://ausdance.org.au/articles/details/the-arts-essential-learning-for-all-teachers>

National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE). (2014, October 15). The future of The Australian Curriculum: The Arts: A response to the Review of the Australian Curriculum, October 2014. Retrieved from <http://ausdance.org.au/uploads/content/news/2014/NAAE-response-Australian-curriculum-review-Oct2014.pdf>

National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA). (2015, October). Art Education. National Arts Curriculum in Schools. Update October 2015. Retrieved from <https://visualarts.net.au/campaigns/art-education/>

Oreck, B. (2004). The artistic and professional development of teachers: A study of teachers' attitudes toward and use of the arts in teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 55(1), 55 – 69 . doi: 10.1177/0022487103260072

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. In J. Hatch & R. Wisniewski (eds.) *Life History and Narrative*. Taylor & Francis e-Library.

- Randles, C. (2012). The "Hero's Journey": A Way of Viewing Music Teacher Socialization. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 22(1), 11 – 19. doi: 10.1177/1057083711403000.
- Russell-Bowie, D. (2004). *Arts education: Are the problems the same across five countries?* Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education, Melbourne. Retrieved from <http://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2004/rus04924.pdf>
- Russell-Bowie, D. (2010). Cross-National Comparisons of Background and Confidence in Visual Arts and Music Education of Pre-Service Primary Teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 34, 65 – 78.
- Russell-Bowie, D. (2011). An Ode to Joy...or the Sounds of Silence? An Exploration of Arts Education Policy in Australian Primary Schools. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 112(4), 163 - 173. doi: 10.1080/10632913.2011.566099
- Russell-Bowie, D. (2012). Developing Preservice Primary Teachers' Confidence and Competence in Arts Education using Principles of Authentic Learning. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 37(1), 60 – 74. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ969511.pdf>
- Smithrim, K. & Uptis, R. (2001). Strong poets: Teacher education and the arts. *Journal of Professional Studies*, 9(1), 19 – 29.
- Stokrocki, M. (1995). Creative Tension: Problems in Teaching Art Education to Preservice Classroom Teachers. In Galbraith, L. (Ed.). *Preservice Art Education: Issues and Practice*. Virginia: National Art Education Association.
- The College Board. (2011). *International Arts Education Standards: A survey of the arts education standards and practices of fifteen countries and regions*. New York, NY, August 2011. Retrieved from [http://nccas.wikispaces.com/file/view/int'l%20standards%208%201%20\(final\).pdf](http://nccas.wikispaces.com/file/view/int'l%20standards%208%201%20(final).pdf)
- The Music Trust. (October, 2015). NAAE response to the review of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, October 15, 2014 [Posting of NAAE response]. Retrieved from <http://musictrust.com.au/music-education/advocacy-argument/response-to-the-review-of-the-australian-curriculum-the-arts-october-15-2>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2006). Road Map for Arts Education. The World Conference on Arts Education: Building Creative Capacities for the 21st Century, Lisbon, 6 – 9 March. Retrieved from [http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/CLT/pdf/Arts\\_Edu\\_RoadMap\\_en.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/CLT/pdf/Arts_Edu_RoadMap_en.pdf)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2006). Seoul Agenda: Goals for the Development of Arts Education. The Second World Conference on Arts Education. Retrieved from [http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/files/41117/12798106085Seoul\\_Agenda\\_Goals\\_for\\_the\\_Development\\_of\\_Arts\\_Education.pdf/Seoul%2BAgenda\\_Goals%2Bfor%2Bthe%2BDevelopment%2Bof%2BArts%2BEducation.pdf](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/files/41117/12798106085Seoul_Agenda_Goals_for_the_Development_of_Arts_Education.pdf/Seoul%2BAgenda_Goals%2Bfor%2Bthe%2BDevelopment%2Bof%2BArts%2BEducation.pdf)
- Uptis, R., Smithrim, K. & Soren, B. (1999). When teachers become musicians and artists: Teacher transformation and professional development. *Music Education Research*, 1(1), 23 – 25.
- Vogler, C. (1998/2007). *The writer's journey: Mythic structures for writers* (3rd Edition). Studio City, CA: Michael Wise Productions.
- Walters, J., & Gardner, H. (1986). The crystallizing experience: Discovery of an intellectual gift. In R. Sternberg & J. Davidson (Eds.) *Conceptions of giftedness*. New York: Random House.

Winner, E., Goldstein, T. & Vincent-Lancrin, S. (2013). *Art for Art's Sake?: The Impact of the Arts Education, Educational Research and Innovation*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Wright, S. (2012). Ways of knowing in the arts. In Wright, S. (Ed.) *Children, Meaning-Making and the Arts* (2nd Edition). Sydney: Pearson.