

Instruments of Change: An Action Research Study of Studio Art Instruction in Teacher Education

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Abstract

This article narrates a nine-month action research project conducted in order to improve studio art instruction in a preservice art education programme in Turkey. Setting out to determine the relevant problems through interpretation of conversations, anecdotes, essays and observations of 16 third-year BA students, the instructional atmosphere was rearranged with respect to three themes deduced in the action research process: “us and them,” “old-fashioned curriculum,” and “caring”. The principal results illustrate the concrete examples of “instruments of change” that integrate these themes in studio art teaching: Design of the studio, willing participation, guidance on demand, collegial environment, inclusive curriculum, language, social media and music, and casual interaction. The study presents articulations of participants on each one of these instruments through direct quotes along with links to the broader educational literature. The final concentration is on a discussion based on the changes in the instructional setting conveying the essential role of “caring” in the processes of forming “instruments of change” for art education professionals.

Keywords: art education, teacher education, preservice art education, studio art instruction, instructional design

1. Introduction

In a recent study on professional agency of teachers in the Netherlands, after interviewing 20 teaching professionals, researchers pointed out that teachers could become change agents if they were able to put ideas into action and take initiatives to influence, change, or improve education (Heijdena, Geldensa, Beijaardb, & Popeijusa, 2015). However, in a complex practice such as teaching, agency towards change cannot develop naturally on its own (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009), nor we can talk of agency as something that can be learnt and applied in a conventional sense (Edwards, 2015). According to Postma (2012), teachers as change agents should be able to make complex decisions that entail “imagining of futures that are different from pasts” (p. 70). During my review on agency in teaching, these statements clarified some essential components regarding the nature of agency and its possible uses for change. I am, on the other hand, more interested in the seed of the concept. I believe that becoming a change agent in teaching stems from a personal and genuine need for change. Why else would a teacher question, alter or even forsake the habitual ways of doing the things that teachers do?

In teacher education, an atmosphere that prompts the construction of individual voices with respect to educational needs is crucial. In other words, preservice education should involve “being able to create pedagogical situations that encourage students of teaching to learn about the problematic nature of teaching and to be comfortable in a world of such uncertainty” (Loughran, 2009, p. 200). For this, the teacher educator must “dare to question his own philosophical assumptions and ‘personal philosophy’ which underlie his professional knowledge, attitudes, and skills” (Hansen, 2007, p. 24). Without a personal and genuine need, why would one embark on such a demanding task?

I believe, therefore, that the reason this study exists is simply the need I felt for a new setup to teach better studio art. As an art educator teaching studio art in the division of education at Anadolu University, which holds one of Turkey’s leading art education Baccalaureate programmes, the 2014–2015 academic year, the tenth year of my presence in this institution, has been a period of confrontation. On one hand, there stood the convenient position of following the established setup of teaching studio art which had been imposed on me once as a student; on the other hand, the relatively uneasy position of building a new setup.

The need for a new setup in studio art instruction was reported in various studies concerning preservice art education in Turkey (Bingöl, 2013; Bulut, 2013; Buyurgan, 2007; Çağlayan, 2014; Dilmaç, 2009; Karaaslan, 2014; Kavuran, 2003; Kıratlı, 2005; Mercin, 2009). Misconceptions regarding art education, old-fashioned curricula, poor physical structure and few job opportunities after graduation were repeatedly indicated as main problem areas (Özsoy, 2003). A recent report underlined inefficacy in preservice art education infrastructure as the greatest obstacle in the way of better art education (Ece & Akın, 2014). These studies illustrated structural difficulties while falling short of conveying specific problems concerning the inner workings of studio art practice in Turkey.

2. Method

The report ahead is a form of action research that integrates action and research in order to develop knowledge, understanding, and change. It involves exploratory engagement with a wide range of existing knowledge, and locates the inquiry in an understanding of broader historical, political, and ideological contexts (Somekh, 2006). At the same time, it is practical in the sense that it focuses on studio art practice, hoping to improve it in a particular context (Mason, 2005). Confined to the context I will describe in the following sections, my initial research question was, in what direction, amount and intensity, based on what ideas and premises, and how one should promote change. How does a teacher implement change in studio instruction, in which parameters and through which processes?

Action research here is understood as “the collaborative production and articulation of ‘little stories’ which start from the practitioner and engages the learner in a rigorous exploration of ‘what it is like’ to be them in a particular situation at a particular time” (Griffiths & Cotton, 2007, p. 558). For this purpose, I seek to gather stories of my individual participants to elicit insight that suits the complexity of human lives (Josselson, 2006).

2.1 *Crafting the Text*

The nature of action research embodies a multiplicity of views leading to possible actions and interpretations (Winter, 1987). The structure of such inquiry requires a plural and detailed text for reporting. However, compressing all the details into the predetermined length of an article poses a limitation. Therefore, concision—in other words, an economy of verbiage necessary for serving “the primary heuristic purpose of enabling members of an audience to see social phenomena from a fresh perspective” is a main concern in forming this report (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 149).

2.2 *Context and Participants*

The study was conducted in various contexts with various communication options, but the base was one of the visual design studios in the department of fine arts education at Anadolu University in Eskişehir, Turkey. This department with its four-year art education programme is one of approximately 40 art education programmes in Turkey, in its 30th year and with 220 students and 16 faculty members. The programme yields an average of 55 prospective art teachers each year.

The number of persons involved in this nine-month study was 17, including myself, an associate professor aged 40, and 16 third-year art education B.A. students, 13 of whom were female and three male, belonging to an age range of between 20 and 22. All participants were enrolled in an eight-hour-per-week studio art course, except me, since I was teaching it. Participants were co-researchers in the study, because, as Erickson (1986) suggests, involving the participants directly in the research is an excellent way to establish and maintain trust.

2.3 *“Data Collection” and Analysis*

Although students were continuously observed and their essays were collected based on categories unfolded in discussions, the main tool for collecting interpretations was interview conversations, which were often followed by group discussions. Each student joined loosely structured conversations lasting approximately 90 minutes at least twice.

Gadamer (1975) understands conversation in terms of openness of the parties involved. Therefore, co-constructing meaning through dialogue was essential during conversations and so a systematic but flexible orientation in the analysis was followed. Interview records were transcribed and names of categories and assertions were jotted down in the format of little notes. These were shared with participants instantly and their comments yielded new categories and assertions that rendered the initial notes. In this sense, the analysis process was not a reduction step in the inquiry but a process of identifying shared patterns. After several readings of the transcribed interviews, the patterns agreed upon allowed for the identification of themes (Patton, 2002).

2.4 Limitations

My threefold role as the studio instructor, researcher, and narrator in the study procedures posed some limitations for this inquiry. First, two of the participants showed observable prudence in terms of conveying their critical thoughts regarding studio art instruction during the conversations, and second, one participant was too eager to make this research project “a story of success”. In both cases, students were informed that the main objective in the study was to give way to student voices in a polyphonic and reflective fashion. To avoid any misrepresentation and personal bias, the final text was shared with all the participants and revisions were made in tune with suggestions. In addition, a large number of direct quotes from the interview conversations and essays were placed in the text to minimize biased narration. This was crucial to create meaningful student involvement through minimum filtering of student perspectives (Fletcher, 2014). First person singular “I” was used in order to differentiate my interventions from student perspectives in the research process.

3. A Thematic Synopsis

At the outset, the conversations and discussions mainly focused on critiques and anecdotal stories based on experiences in studio art courses. Over time, certain stories came to the forefront through consensus, but their numbers were still high. Therefore, in order to enable a more crystallized and focused understanding of the otherwise lengthy conversation transcripts, through content analysis, assertions that indicate recurring patterns and shared meanings are grouped under themes. Later on, these preliminary themes are shared with participating students in order to discuss the strength of their coherence and concision with respect to the interview transcripts, essays, and observations. Here, not only do the immediate meanings in the inquiry process suggest themes, but various constructs in broader contexts—such as preservice art education in Turkey—are also linked to the suggestions. In other words, the unfolding and crafting of the following three themes has been a collaborative process of induction and deduction simultaneously.

3.1 *Us and Them*

In many instances in our conversations, students accused our programme of “not responding,” “being insensitive,” “remaining indifferent” and the like. Whether their sentences started with “they,” “the school” or “the teachers” as the subject, the unchanging object was themselves. In their stories, these young women and men made statements that underlined the negligence of their individualities by the school mechanisms. Ayşe, for example, thinks that mandatory attendance in a studio art course does not make sense. In her words, “counting heads” is a disrespectful act with regard to their personalities. She goes on to explain:

If I am not going to be present in a class on time, teachers expect me to inform them in advance. However, let’s say a teacher will not come to the class next week; he/she often does not bother telling us that she is going to be absent. We come to the class and wait until we make sure that the lesson is off. This is simply unfair. As grown up individuals, our time is as important as other peoples are.

Students demonstrated that not only what they were being taught but also the way teachers treated them was far from their expectations as prospective art educators. Their focus was mostly on the physical setup of the school facilities, but almost all of them explained that “the poor conditions” were due to a broader issue. From the standpoint of the majority of the students, “the school” not only does not respond to most of their needs, but also does not bother asking what they need at all. The “us and them” narrative was widespread throughout the conversation sessions and this demonstrated an abstract divide, a divide that owed its existence to the disconnection between them and the professors.

3.2 *Old-Fashioned Curriculum*

During our conversations, concepts embedded in the curriculum such as one-size-fits-all and step-by-step instruction, lesson plans with predetermined details, and strict recording of attendance proved to be irrelevant for students' expectations. In this linear mentality, the idea is that the school professionals know very well what and when students need certain competencies. The teacher is almost a devotee of a curricular code that determines what should be taught with what kind of techniques, for how long and when. The governing idea of such rigid adherence to a curriculum is very modernist in the sense that it dictates specific formulae for students who are seen as not individuals but as a group of people with specific needs, whether they are aware of them or not. Any individual remark or inclination toward aspirations outside the curricular absolute is an aberration.

An interesting point is that my focus here is not on an official curriculum enacted by the centralized structure of the ministry of national education bureaucracy. The curriculum here refers to a set of beliefs, strategies, and ideas regarding instruction and its content inspired by meta-narratives about art, passing from one generation to the other, and recreating itself in a very modernist fashion.

For example, we expect our students to pass a certain kind of drawing exam in order to obtain the right to register for our art education programme. This way of selecting students is not a curricular obligation or an officially imposed procedure; yet, it has been done like this for decades and, by repeating it, we simply reaffirm it. A model poses and we expect our prospective students to draw an accurate representation of the pose on a piece of white paper using a pencil. A common meta-narrative in Turkey, “drawing is the honour of painting,” attributed to famous French painter Ingres, is operating. We know for sure that the artistic repertoire of humankind has diversified considerably and Ingres’ neo-classicist assertion is one among many ideas that art history reports. Yet by privileging this almost two-centuries-old view, our programme simply isolates itself from other artistic ideas, applications, and formats.

Students feel the effects of an old-fashioned curriculum manifesting itself on their schooling experience every day. For example, Dilek, a 21-year-old female who is very interested in alternative literature, following fanzines from various subcultures in Turkey, points out the difficulty she had when I asked them to reproduce a work by a master artist. “Perhaps, you want to teach us to be more deliberate in use of colour, space and texture by assigning us to copy someone else’s work, but for me, this has been identical to torture,” says Dilek. It is obvious from the poor quality of the work she submitted that she simply fulfilled the task just to get rid of its pressure. She reminds me that she asked me if it was possible to be excluded from this assignment and my response was, as she narrates, “I cannot make exception for a single student since it will be unfair to others”.

In another conversation, Seda, a student probably more interested in music than in visual arts and with a considerable taste in vintage fashion, jumps in: “Teaching here implies that the best art can only be made by oil on canvas”. Merve, who returned after her one-semester Erasmus exchange visit to Finland with a considerably raised self-confidence, adds that she does not even show teachers her illustration books she has been keeping for a long time. “It is almost like there is a different realm at this school,” she complains: “Illustration, I am afraid, is a lower kind of art for people here”. For her, our school is “very old-fashioned” in terms of openness to new art. She tells a couple of stories in which her work was considered “illustrative” and she reminds me that I actually told her that these works might harm her artistic integrity as a painter.

Another student, Seda, quotes a conversation she heard. A student came and asked me when, as the members of the studio class, they were going to start making oil on canvas paintings. My response, she remembers, was “the first week of February”. This silent girl, almost mute at times, with an extraordinary talent for finding the funniest videos on YouTube, asks, “Why are we all together passing from one technique to the other?”

3.3 Caring

From the standpoint of the students, “the school” often did not know or care about what individual students brought into the studio and so it remained irrelevant. Students openly expressed that they did not feel themselves to be cared for as individuals. As conversations deepened, caring proved to be the key concept behind many complaints students had.

Students associated some behaviours on instructors’ part with lack of caring. In one essay, for instance, Merve wrote:

Even without a close look, one can instantly understand that teachers here are more into themselves. Many of them are preoccupied with their own artistic work or academic research. I almost always feel myself secondary. They simply do not care whether I am struggling on a painting or having difficulties in understanding a specific technique. Some teachers usually tell us what to do in the beginning of studio classes and never show up the whole day.

Sibel, on the same issue, expresses herself less directly making a connection between “caring and good teaching”. In her opinion, the reason “good teaching” rarely exists in any school is “the result of very limited amount of caring for the students on the teachers’ part”.

It is hard to write on caring without being pulled into romanticized notions of it. One can come across caring almost as a transcendent virtue in all affairs regarding living things. It is generally considered as an automatic impulse stemming from motherhood, family ties or love relations. But how can caring work in a school setting? How can one squeeze from this sentimentally loaded concept an instrumental value in teaching studio art?

In Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education, Noddings (1984) makes a comparison of inferred and expressed needs of students, and underlines the focus on expressed needs through caring relations as a central idea for successful pedagogical activity (p. 53). In another work, Noddings (2005a) suggests that “an authentic way to prepare teachers” in any subject area is more possible in the web of caring relations through responding to questions like “How can my subject serve the needs of each of these students?” (p. 179). She does

not “suggest that the establishment of caring relations will accomplish everything that must be done in education;” rather she proposes these relations as a foundation for better teaching (Noddings, 2005b, p. 4).

4. Instruments of Change

In the final phases of the inquiry, conversations focused more on the possibilities for change. We returned to the initial research question: In what direction, amount and intensity, based on what ideas and premises, and how, one should promote change. Based on the themes deduced in the conversations, more specific questions arose: How can a teacher create an atmosphere of care in the studio, remaining relevant to individual aspirations while at the same time challenging the restrictions of a *démodé* curriculum? Which concepts, applications, and actions could be instrumental in bridging the “us and them” gap? With continuous dialogue and often with consensus, we devised instruments. Each one of the following subtitles represents an instrument of change my students and I adopted and applied based on previous procedures in the inquiry.

4.1 Design of the Studio

First, we redesigned the studio according to the needs specified at the very beginning of the study (see Figure1). We could not wait for the leisurely pace of school bureaucracy, so we simply started working voluntarily and collectively. To have a hand in re-building, I believe, was crucial in order for each of us to have trust in the imminent effects of change.

After redesigning, students themselves made a habit of keeping the studio cleaner and taking care of its general organization regularly. The display board was being used effectively and the content that should be on display (magazine pages, handouts, printouts, posters, etc.) was individually decided by students. After the changes, Sevil described the studio as an “open space” in which she could comfortably translate her moods, while Elif, showing the designs in the model area, said that the studio did not feel like “a boring court room” any more. Since they were primarily responsible for the redesign, they felt more connected with the context.

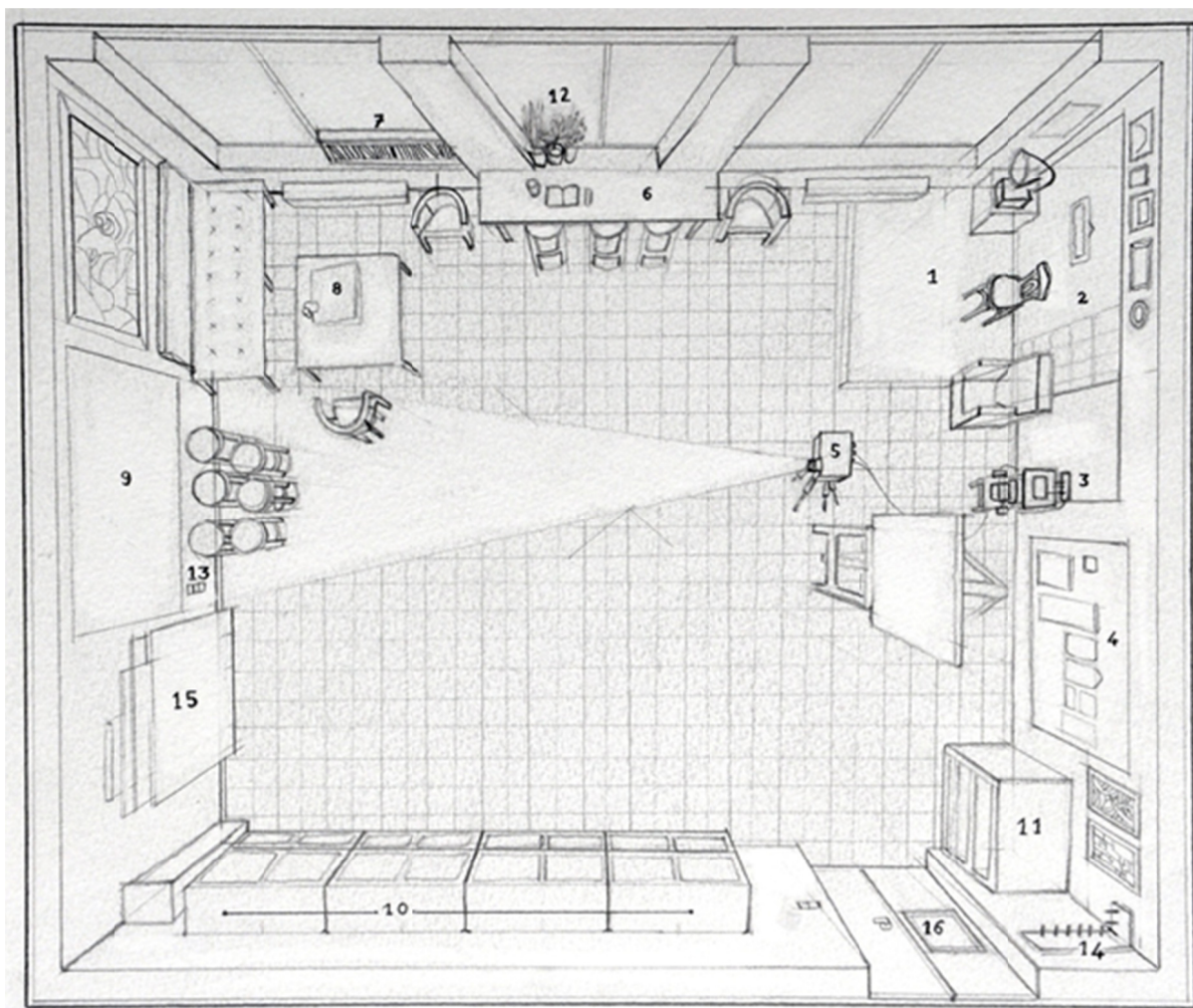


Figure 1. A three-dimensional map of the studio after the collaborative redesign process. Each number illustrates additions that did not exist before the study: (1) Model area, (2) Wall decoration, (3) Music area: Phones, tablets, and speakers, (4) Board for visual communication, (5) Projector, (6) Horizontal study area, (7) Periodicals and catalogues, (8) Coffee table, sofa and chairs, (9) Projection screen, (10) Cabinets for each student, (11) Paper drawers, (12) Flower stand, (13) Additional wall plugs, (14) Wall hangers, (15) Area for finished work, (16) Mirror

4.2 Willing Participation

As a first step in rearranging the instruction, I put the attendance sheets aside, gave up “counting heads”. I was present at all times in the studio for the students and not vice versa. Ayşe was surprised to experience that the class could still hold “some kind of discipline without mandatory attendance,” and this is because discipline in educational settings in Turkey is mostly perceived as rules imposed on students. This perception is a by-product of authoritative teaching. Most of these students, as they expressed in the conversations, have schooling backgrounds in which they were considered as passive recipients of instructions regarding what to do, when and where, without their consent. This created a feeling in them that discipline is always an outer imposition but never a kind of behaviour that they might willingly conduct. In giving up keeping a record of attendance, my intention was to make the studio a centre of attraction for willing learners, not a mandatory destination.

4.3 Guidance on Demand

My role became less interventionist. Other than a couple of instances, I do not recall myself gathering all students in the studio and giving them a lecture on a subject that I picked from the curriculum content. Instead, I waited for individual students to come up with questions and preferred making connections between these specific questions and the curriculum. This can be expressed succinctly as guidance on demand. My new way of

approaching instruction was in contrast with other approaches in which teachers stand at the front and teach learners who are passive recipients.

Nevertheless, promoting something new is never without complications. Two students noted in their essays that they would prefer the teacher to be more interventionist in the studio. One of them, Ali, wrote: "I am the kind of person who always wants to make sure that what he is doing is in tune with what is expected". This was a predicted complication because, in practice, each transition resulting in a new system of teaching cannot quite eliminate the habits of the previous systems (Efland, Freedman, & Stuhr, 1996). Whether caused by a habitual leaning toward linear modes of learning or by a common need for frequent specific instruction, I should have found ways to tune and redirect my teaching so that these students would adjust better.

4.4 Collegial Environment

I sought ways to base all procedures in the studio on dialogue, openness to variety, lucid inclusive goals devised for individual interests and, when possible, self-assessment. Students, as my prospective colleagues, individually determined what they needed more of in the broad repertoire of visual arts: which techniques to apply, which format to focus on, what kind of aesthetics should dominate their work, and in what way to present the finished work. Once the "do-as-I-say" principle was forsaken, the general character of the studio was altered "from one in which all students are working on the same type of project to one several projects are undertaken" (Eisner, 1997, p. 167). As suggested by Wilson (2008), the education in the studio became less like the institutional school and more like a research site (p. 129). To achieve such an atmosphere, as Noddings (1984) would argue, I did "not need to establish a deep, lasting, time-consuming personal relationship with every student" (p. 180). This was humanly impossible. What I tried to do was, in a collegial environment, "to be totally and nonselectively present to the student—to each one of them—as s/he addressed me" (Noddings, 1984, p. 180).

Seda, in her final essay, wrote: "I learnt in this class that I must enhance and understand my own taste, not reach a common taste that was defined by others". Sibel felt "more able" in the new atmosphere, while Hilal considered my teaching "less restrictive". For Figen, even asking her opinion and expecting her to write an essay on her experience in the studio was "probative of a positive change".

4.5 Inclusive Curriculum

To be more inclusive in my facilitation, I adopted a broader interpretation of the curriculum in terms of scope. For example, I challenged the role of painting in the studio as the most prestigious art in studio art tradition. I realized that whenever I made a comment on art, I was often focusing on the specific artistic format of painting, because it was my concentration area during my undergraduate studies. No matter how hard it was for me to give up this habit, I started using "visual design" as an umbrella term instead of "painting," which excludes other art forms. This was not a simple wording preference, in the sense that it had radical implications in terms of the hierarchy of artistic formats embedded in my instruction to collapse. There were many artistic formats and none had authority over another in our studio. In this respect, my new approach involved a shift from traditional art education towards visual culture education in which, through reconceptualization of the field, a more inclusive curriculum is adopted (Carpenter & Tavin, 2010).

4.6 Language

In tune with the spreading of the collaborative atmosphere, I made an effort to give up language that carried an authoritative tone. It can be argued that particular pedagogical stances require particular kinds of language that serve the aims they seek to reach. Hence, without a belief in a rigid linear curriculum, teachers may not need the propositional language these concepts suggest. At this point, it becomes the teacher's responsibility to configure the most suitable language. For example, clashes of ideas, polyphonic statements and differing viewpoints on a topic in traditional teaching may imply some kind of "vulnerability" on the teacher's part. The myth of an omniscient teacher must abide. In the new setup, however, exhibiting such "vulnerability" was very important for building a healthy, sincere and non-hierarchical relationship with students. I can even say that I chose to illustrate my shortcomings in some aspects of visual art in order to denounce my authoritative role in the studio. Despite all its deficiencies, my task was to provide students with a multiple but not overly determined picture of various subjects of interest. Based on these ideas, I started adopting a more suggestive and facilitative language that aimed to reach the level of tactfulness Thomas Barone (2001) seeks in teaching:

Tactfulness means "touching" someone, rousing them from slumber into a greater personal awareness while respecting and preserving their personal space. This kind of tactfulness can bring coherence to the scattered pieces of a self, prompt the construction of a more integrated worldview, and thereby encourage personal growth (p. 140).

4.7 Social Media and Music

I devised ways to channel the apparent interest in social media towards better understanding of the complexities in creating art. The use of Facebook, Pinterest, Behance, YouTube, Google Art Project and other portals engendered powerful learning for students. These portals provided them with opportunities for self-expression while, on my part, through “likes” and comments I gained a new medium to display my interest in these expressions. We also opened a Facebook group as the studio for communication on projects, online conversations and self-expression. This broadened the instructional possibilities of the eight-hour-per-week studio course to seven days and 24 hours.

The new setup enabled students to express themselves through music. This expression was more important than I had reckoned in the initial stages of the study. A modest speaker system compatible with various portable devices such as tablets and phones proved to be the major tool attracting students to the studio. Moreover, some tensions between students that originated from differing musical tastes taught them to respect one another. In other words, quarrels regarding who gets to determine what kind of music are played, over time, evolved to become tolerance for differing musical tastes. Looking back now, I consider this tolerance as an effect of caring relations spreading in the studio, not only between teacher and learners but among learners too.

4.8 Casual Interaction

After arranging a casual corner in the studio, as we spent more and more time together we had the chance to enhance our understandings about one another around the coffee table. Through sharing images, music, videos and all sorts of published materials, the studio eventually became a meeting point to address issues not only in visual design but in every possible topic related to the students. Over time, students started spending extra hours in the studio, because it became a place for eating, drinking, reading, surfing on the net, etc. The new atmosphere allowed students to teach each other. The Deweyan idea that school should not be a place of preparation for future living but a place of living itself was coming true (Dewey, 1897).

5. Discussion

From a Deweyan perspective, caring can be defined as the capacity of a teacher for continual and sympathetic observation of student interests in order to provide relevant learning (Dewey, 1897). This capacity, as a key concept in implementing change, can vary depending on many variables such as context, age, experience, etc. In this respect, the instruments of change we have co-constructed in this study might have been different with different participants in a different context. That is why they should not be understood as shortcut solutions for better teaching ready to be adopted. Instead, one should attend carefully to the process through which they were crafted. Noddings (2005b) illustrates this process eloquently:

First, as we listen to our students, we gain their trust and, in an on-going relation of care and trust, it is more likely that students will accept what we try to teach. They will not see our efforts as “interference” but, rather, as cooperative work proceeding from the integrity of the relation. Second, as we engage our students in dialogue, we learn about their needs, working habits, interests, and talents. We gain important ideas from them about how to build our lessons and plan for their individual progress. Finally, as we acquire knowledge about our students’ needs and realize how much more than the standard curriculum is needed, we are inspired to increase our own competence (p. 4).

On my own account, through this inquiry, I could bring myself to face my shortcomings as a studio art teacher. I had the chance to understand how, in the routine of everyday teaching, one can lose grasp of relevance unless one consistently refreshes one’s understanding through close dialogue. I witnessed the crucial role of valuing individual viewpoints in the studio instead of depending solely on the grand narratives of former generations. After all, teaching and learning in the art class is mostly about “creation of meaning and understanding through the development and recognition of different viewpoints” (Hafeli, 2000, p. 143). Additionally, I experienced a transformation in which I learnt to cast an atmosphere of instruction in which, through instruments of change, every individual had a say in the studio. This gave matchless advantages to me and the students, because “only if teaching is situated in compelling personal contexts will it be grounded enough to inform new ways of knowing, thinking and representing” (Burton, 2000, p. 343).

On the other hand, some of the concepts the study dealt with can be considered as overly subjective inferences in need of calculable analysis. While these can be the subject of future research that seeks “enhancing certainty” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 47), such analysis was not my aim and would not be suitable to the nature of this interpretive inquiry. When it comes to generating change by means of enhancing meanings, I am sure enough, looking back to the changes in the studio in the 2014–2015 academic year, that I learned, and became the

medium of my students' learning, the instructional value of collaborative educational inquiry. If it is put into practice in a web of caring relations, such inquiry generates poetic possibilities for teaching not only as a profession, but also as a profound human action.

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