

SITUATIONAL REFLECTION

[Respond with the perceived glitches or apparent gaps in systems and practices rather than dismissing them. Often leading to serendipitous, authentic ways of making meaning.]

This tactical approach to inquiry begins with curiosity and student questions which guide the direction of explorations. Where multimodal contexts broaden conceptual understanding, inspiration is often drawn from members of the class to disrupt established learning habits of others. Students are encouraged to take risks with their learning choices. These deviations are critical points which may steer learning in alternative directions.

For example, a spontaneous small experiment with water dropping into a container (materials were 'found' in a possibility kit) was captured in slow motion via a smartphone camera. This opened a poetry inquiry using metaphor and providing an alternative mode of poetic representation.

Key to the success in this and other examples is a



fig. 02.45 Visual poetry captured originally in slow motion

form of listening. Listening by zooming in and zooming out- navigating between a meta perspective and daily practice.

Listening is tuned to the senses, it looks for the ruptures which at times disrupt the delicate rhythms of the learning networks we are intricately entwined within. I refer to these moments as glitches.

A glitch is referred to as, "a short-lived fault in a system, such as a transient fault that corrects itself, making it difficult to troubleshoot" (Wikipedia 2019)

The 'faults' here, suggest a failure in a system where I prefer to think of these as possibilities for learning to take new directions from the voices of each student. "Possibilities (which) imply a boundlessness that runs counter to stricter framing of content." (Rowell & Shillitoe, 2019)

Once these situational glitches are noticed, then it is critical to respond and act upon them.

To illustrate these sorts of actions, I provide a view short examples of ways of encouraging situational reflective moments.

In the learning space, materials are visible and openly accessible. Displayed in a manner resembling a wunderkammer or 'cabinet of curiosities', students are encouraged to be curators of this cabinet. Recycled glass jars allow for visibility and layering of materials. Through regular 'show and tell' or personal inquiries, learners are encouraged to add or reassemble the collections to suit their needs.

Likewise, learning artefacts are given prominence to support reflection.

In response to the question , what is an artist?

Student Ellen responded,

"An artist is someone who expresses themselves in many different ways by seeing the whole world in a whole different perspective- (Ellen takes an artefact- an object to think with, and illustrates her thinking. The object referred to was a piece of paper that contains the tracings and marks made underneath an art work- like memory traces.)

Ellen takes this piece of paper and poses a question to the group , "What do you think it is, water, sea?"

Then personally answers- "I see Anger- where the feeling is very strong- you respond and think about different things. When I see this someone is trying to pull away.

Anger pushing through the border, anger tries to keep it still- helped by an artwork to talk about feelings and emotions.

Artists do this every time- See a place in a different perspective"

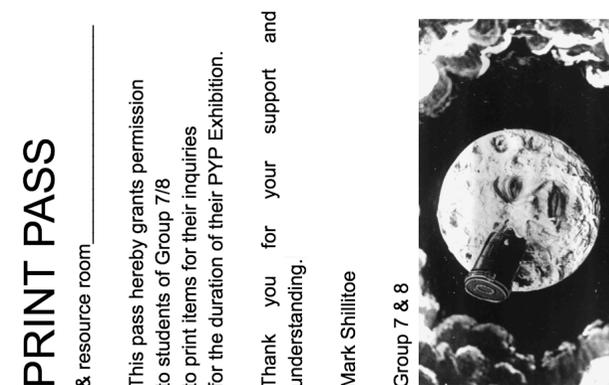


fig. 02.42 Print Pass to enable student access to photocopier

Beyond the classroom space, open access is encouraged, however institutional contexts and conditioning often challenges this openness e.g. access to a supply room would require adult supervision. Use of the photocopier in a 'teacher space' would intrude on privacy of teachers. To counter this example, we created 'access' cards stating that students had undergone training to be able to use the above learning facilities independently.

Soup Social Inquiry

Making Soup together- A collaborative act of preparing and eating food together

"Eating soup always helped us cooperate and understand each other" Student.

The practice of making and eating soup together occurs regularly every six to eight weeks as part of our learning inquiries. We plan each occurrence wholly together - menu, timings and required resources. (I would have personally liked to do the shopping together too, however unfortunately, as yet this has not happened). Tasks are naturally shared out, from preparing the food components and setting the table to adding the recipe to our living archive, cooking and serving.

Once prepared, we eat together collectively around a single table space accompanied by tea or water. The pace and setting are essential to this practice where moments of shared reflection take place. Disruptions in the spatial and temporal rhythms of the class allow for meaningful

conversation to occur. As with wayfaring - a change of perspective creates alternative viewpoints and ways of seeing together with a sense of social togetherness.

Decision making is shared, time if momentarily is slowed down.

When asked in a class meeting what I could do to support learning in the class, students stated that scheduling soup social inquiry should be a high priority- it is a valued part of everyday school life.



fig. 02.43 Situational narrative inquiry with objects from a possibility box

Buddy inquiry

In response to having an outdoor space shared between diverse age groups from 4 to 12 years old we held a democratic meeting to create essential agreements for use of this learning space. However, through significant differences in use between ages, we encountered issues, in particular more physical play by older students. On further reflection the class decided it would be a good idea to get to know the younger children both in and out of the classroom. This idea evolved into the class thinking about role models and the inquiries of other. Now each week the classes share learning experiences. 'Buddy Inquiry' involves children of mixed aged regularly learning together in different spaces of school each week. This has significantly reduced some of the earlier issues in the playground. More importantly the sense of community between the classes has led to many more learning encounters that transcend the 'normality' of daily school life within the four walls of the classroom.

There is an openness to using shared spaces where spontaneous encounters lead to meaningful moments.

In fig. 02.43 a younger student creates a narrative with objects selected from a possibility box. (He just called by to see what we were doing) The visibility of the objects created a moment of inquiry and collaboration between two individuals from different classes.



fig. 02.44 Preparation during social soup inquiry