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Captivating College Classrooms: Applications of Aesthetic Themes for Higher Education

Abstract

This study investigates the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded college educators and their use of aesthetic themes (CRISPA) in the classroom. These topics were explored through interviewing and observing participants under the qualitative framework of educational connoisseurship and criticism. Three research questions guided this study: (a) What are the intentions of aesthetically-minded educators who purposefully utilize CRISPA in higher education? (b) How do the aesthetic themes (CRISPA) operationalize in college classrooms? And (c) what is the significance of the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded educators for higher education and for education in general? The findings show that the intentions of aesthetically-minded educators might be described as the wow experience, forms of energy, transformational catalysts, and innovative practices in teacher education. Operationalizing CRISPA in the classroom resulted in additional best practices for college curriculum and instruction, including recall and introspection, interpretation, synthesis, transposition, and connoisseurship. The outcomes of this study provide evidence that CRISPA holds valuable implications for college students, the college curriculum and integrative models of higher education.

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Captivating College Classrooms: Applications of Aesthetic
Themes for Higher Education

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the Morgridge College of Education

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Amanda Lynne Smith

March 2016

Advisor: P. Bruce Uhrmacher, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded college educators and their use of aesthetic themes (CRISPA) in the classroom. These topics were explored through interviewing and observing participants under the qualitative framework of educational connoisseurship and criticism. Three research questions guided this study: (a) What are the intentions of aesthetically-minded educators who purposefully utilize CRISPA in higher education? (b) How do the aesthetic themes (CRISPA) operationalize in college classrooms? And (c) what is the significance of the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded educators for higher education and for education in general? The findings show that the intentions of aesthetically-minded educators might be described as the wow experience, forms of energy, transformational catalysts, and innovative practices in teacher education. Operationalizing CRISPA in the classroom resulted in additional best practices for college curriculum and instruction, including recall and introspection, interpretation, synthesis, transposition, and connoisseurship. The outcomes of this study provide evidence that CRISPA holds valuable implications for college students, the college curriculum and integrative models of higher education.

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“The Hummingbirds”

In this book
 there are many hummingbirds-
the blue-throated, the bumblebee, the calliope,
 the cinnamon, the Lucifer, and of course
 the ruby-throated.

Imagine!
Well, that’s all you can do.
For they are swift as the wind
and they fly, not across the pages but,
like many shy and otherworldly things,
 between them.

I know you’ll keep looking now that I’ve told you.
I’m hungry to see them too but can’t
 hold them back even for a moment, they’re
 busy, as all things are, with their own lives.

So all I can do is let you know
 they’re here somewhere.

All I can do is tell you
 by putting my own hunger on the page. (Oliver, 2014, p. 37)

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The responsibilities of our colleges are immense, especially when we consider the complexity and fragility of today's world economically, politically, socially, and environmentally (Palmer, 2010, p. 17).

Experience, in and of itself, is the most provocative lesson in life's workbook.

Looking back on my childhood, it was not my grandfather's stories that taught me how to ride a horse; nor did I find that I was built for long-distance running by watching track and field. I did not discover my purpose in life by sitting on the sidelines watching others follow their dreams. Instead, I learned by doing—by interacting with my environment, making connections, taking risks, and imagining possibility.

In reflection, every powerful, profound, and transformative experience I have ever had has, in turn, been educational. Simple foundations became fertile grounds for planting seeds of awareness, knowledge, and perspective. Riding lessons, for instance, taught me how to navigate life's obstacle course while jumping horses over fences. Training for marathons conditioned my strength of character, as much as it did my legs for running. Likewise, examining the aesthetic themes at the Aesthetic Education Institute of Colorado (AEIC), not only engaged my intellect as a learner but also inspired a new way of seeing and interacting with my world.

A graduate student of higher education at the time, I would soon discover that in addition to providing the heart and spirit with a new yet familiar vernacular, exploring the

aesthetic also had many practical implications for teaching and learning. Discovering, for example, that the aesthetic provides human beings not only with a foundation of awareness, but also with a profound set of universal elements by which to define and evaluate experience in an authentic way. As I continued to submerge myself in the concepts and literature, I often found myself in a deeply engaged, satisfied, and contemplative state. This time in life, both as a teacher and a learner, was richly captivating. Rediscovering my lived experience through the aesthetic allowed for the transcendence and transformation necessary for my personal and professional growth. In turn, I began to think about ways that the aesthetic themes might help individuals traversing their college experience do the same. At a time when less than 60% of American college students persist and graduate with a 4-year degree (NCES, 2015), scholars and educators alike must re-conceptualize the academy's approach, pedagogy and practice in the name of change.

Advocating for improved outcomes, Palmer and Zajonc (2010) highlight the following inquiries as guideposts regarding the purpose and intentions of higher education: (a) What steps can we take to make our colleges and universities places that awaken the deepest potential in students, faculty, and staff? (b) How can integrative learning be effectively woven into the culture, curriculum, and co-curriculum of our colleges and universities? and (c) Do current education efforts address the whole human being—mind, heart, and spirit—in ways that best contribute to our future on this fragile planet (see p. 5)? In this model we are also encouraged to consider how experience,

contemplation and transformation might also be nurtured in the academic, personal and professional lives of college students.

Against the backdrop of America's arduous higher education landscape, the integrative model described above is worthy of consideration. In fact, when paired with data on today's college outcomes, Palmer and Zajonc's (2010) words read more like a call to action than a professional inquiry. Currently, there is a broad trend in American higher education in which some 400,000 students drop out every year (Selingo, 2013, p. VII). Over the last 30 years, particularly in the first decade of the new millennium, American college education has seemingly lost its way (Selingo, 2013). Today, only slightly more than 58% of American students who enter college leave with a Bachelor's degree (Selingo, 2013, p. IX). Further data suggests that, in part, the academy's inability to retain and graduate students is due to a decrease in overall quality and, consequently, student engagement. Arum (2010) found that 45% of students made no gains in their writing, complex reasoning, or critical-thinking skills during their first 2 years of college. After 4 years, 36% failed to show any improvement. It comes as no surprise then that the United States is currently ranked 12th among developed nations whose youth attain higher education (Selingo, 2013).

It is here that I would like to begin. There is a body of research that examines aesthetics as a particular field in philosophy concerned with perception, sensation, imagination, and how they relate to knowing, understanding, and feeling about the world (Greene, 1995, 2001). The word *aesthetic*, which comes from the Greek word *aesthesis*, means recognition via the senses. Such ideas have nurtured a myriad of educational

implications across subject matter (Dewey, 1934; Eisner 2002c; Girod, 2006; Girod & Wong; 2002; Greene 1995, 2001; Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2009, 2010, Uhrmacher, 2009; Uhrmacher, Collins, & Lindquist, 2010; Uhrmacher & Moroye, 2007); yet has been widely overlooked by the academy (Young, 1997) even though it has been considered an influential strand in the history of Western thought since well before the 18th century and Kant's discourse on intellectual synthesis and aesthetics (as cited in Cassirer, 1951).

More than 2,000 years have passed since Ancient Greece first presented *aesthesis* to the world. Captivated by the profound meaning that this single word implies, scholars and philosophers such as Kant (as cited in Cassirer, 1951; Crawford, 1724), Dewey (1934), Baumgarten (as cited in Buchenau, 2013) and Ranciere (2013) have studied aesthetics for its epistemological, metaphysical and political implications. Educational theorists such as Eisner (1998, 2002a, 2002b) and Greene (1978, 1995, 2001) have also examined aesthetics for its engaging and ontological qualities. More recently, scholars from the University of Denver, Lamott University, Rivergate College, and Arsdale State University have contributed new research to the field (Keller & Conn, 2015; Mortezaee & Conn, 2015; Salyards & Conn, 2015; Uhrmacher et al., 2010; Uhrmacher, Conrad, & Moroye, 2013).

In 2009, Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Bunn¹ met at the University of Denver to workshop what would become the six essential aesthetic themes in order to provide

¹ Kristen Bunn Olsen is referred to throughout this study. Previously Kristen Bunn before marrying, she co-authored *Beyond the One Room School* with Uhrmacher in 2011. Kristen is cited as Bunn when referring to texts and research, and as Olsen when referring to her as a subject of the dissertation.

teachers with a framework for facilitating deepened engagement in the classroom. The six aesthetic themes included connections, risk-taking, imagination, sensory experience, perceptivity, and active engagement (CRISPA). Moroye and Uhrmacher (2009, 2010), went on to define these as the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning, a curricular framework that depicts research-based strategies shown to enrich standards-based instruction, to enliven the curriculum planning process and to provide ways for students and teachers to explore their creativity.

Between 2009 and 2015, K-12 teachers have utilized these aesthetic themes (CRISPA) in classrooms across the country, showing that aesthetic experience is highly linked to feelings of internal satisfaction and episodic memories that are associated with personal incidents that uniquely define our lives (Schacter, 1996, p. 17). In addition, studies have shown that an increase in perceptual knowledge, deepened potential for meaning-making, and opportunities to foster creativity and innovation are present in classrooms that integrated the aesthetic experience for students (Uhrmacher, 2009). Little research has been conducted, however, regarding how college classroom educators intentionally utilize aesthetic themes in their practice, or how such intentions operationalize in the classroom. Moreover, we have not yet studied the implications of aesthetic themes for higher education in general and what it might mean for the ways in which college students experience and engage with the curriculum.

As the aesthetic, by its very nature, lends itself to contemplative and transformative types of experiences, I believe that aesthetically-minded college educators have the ability to impact students in profoundly meaningful ways. Thus it would stand to

reason that those who integrate the aesthetic themes into the college curriculum and classroom may be able to help individuals achieve greater success in college and in life. At a time when higher education is struggling to do either, the intentional introduction of the aesthetic themes supports a vision of an integrated college curriculum may prove a valuable and prevailing opportunity for the future of our students and classrooms. It is therefore my aim as a researcher to study the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded college educators in order to describe the significance and thus applications of the aesthetic themes for higher education and education in general.

Significance of the Study

This study is important for a variety of reasons. First, it advances Uhrmacher and Moroye's (2009) Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (CRISPA) and, therefore, the application of the aesthetic themes. Second, it provides insight into the intentions of aesthetically-minded college instructors as well as how those intentions operationalize in the classroom. Third, while there is research to support engagement in K-12 classrooms when aesthetic themes are present (Augustine & Zoss, 2006; Booyeun, 2004; Faust, 2001; Featherstone & Featherstone, 2002; Girod, 2006; Girod & Wong, 2002; Greene, 1978, 1995, 2001; Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2007, 2009; Perlov, 1998; Pugh & Girod, 2007; Romero, 1997; Rosso, 2004), little research shows how aesthetic themes engage college-level students. Moreover, while there is research to support a variety of best practices implemented in today's college classrooms (Doyle, 2013; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Kinzie, 2005; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Miller, Bender, & Schuh, 2005; Selingo, 2013;

Young, 1997; Zajonc, 2009), there is little research on how aesthetic themes support the goals of higher education and education in general.

Research Questions

Three questions guide this study:

1. What are the intentions of aesthetically-minded educators who purposefully utilize CRISPA in higher education?
2. How do the aesthetic themes (CRISPA) operationalize in college classrooms?
3. What is the significance of the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded educators for higher education and for education in general?

Below I explain the significance of each question with an accompanying clarification of terms.

Research Question 1

What are the intentions of aesthetically-minded educators who purposefully utilize CRISPA in higher education institutions? Aesthetically-minded individuals identify themselves as any or all of the following: (a) express interest in the lived experience and the quality of that experience; (b) attend to sensation or perception; (c) are drawn to the creation of the expressive object for artists and observer; (d) are motivated by the search for meaning; and (e) find familiarity, context and/or relevance for the aesthetic themes (CRISPA). “Intentions” refer to an individual’s stated or unstated instructional goals or objectives for students in his/her classes and for his/her practice in general. Teachers who utilize aesthetic themes in their classroom aim to provide engaging learning, student satisfaction, an increase in perceptual knowledge, episodic

memory retention, meaning-making, creativity, and innovation (Uhrmacher, 2009). Moreover, curriculum thinking and practice fosters a mindfulness that, by way of its very nature, provides a venue for developing consciousness that transcends what could be described as a “substrate for living” (Blumenfeld-Jones, 2012). In this way, a practitioner’s intentions not only serve as a guidepost for learning, but also a chisel that carves and creates as it enriches and enlivens student experience. I utilize Palmer and Zajonc’s (2010) criteria of an integrative form of higher education to examine possible implications of the intentions of college educators who purposefully utilize the aesthetic themes in their instruction.

Research Question 2

How do the aesthetic themes (CRISPA) operationalize in college classrooms?

This question aimed to address what teachers who are aesthetically-minded actually do. This part of the study examines the nuances of what is taking place when CRISPA are present in the college classroom, while also observing how it is taking place. In other words, this question aimed to address what is being created in the college classroom when aesthetics are present. In addressing this question, I consider the means by which we examine that which has been created. This inquiry is conducted from a lens that considers concepts in alignment with the philosophy of art, such as the constructs of image, expressiveness, feeling, motif, and transformation (Langer, 1957, p. 4). Among others, these interrelated values become a part of describing what has operationalized as a result of a captivating college educator’s intentions. Sound curricular activities, timetables, thoughtfully-designed activities, differentiation, facilitation, and best practices

provide the enabling framework for the curricular experience as it is presented in the classroom. Examining these nuances in classrooms where aesthetic themes are present not only informs various aspects and applications of the framework, but also the lens through which captivating college classrooms are viewed. Here, I reference a set of critical integrative higher education dimensions including experience, contemplation, and transformation as a framework against which to examine the implications of the curricular, structural, pedagogical, and evaluative qualities of CRISPA when operationalized in higher education instruction.

Research Question 3

What is the significance of the intentions and the practices of aesthetically-minded educators for higher education and for education in general? The aesthetic experience is a captivating one. Whether through music, art, a beautiful sunset, or delicious food, the aesthetic creates a natural phenomenon that evokes an emotional response from human beings. The key to exploring the implications of the aesthetic for teaching and learning is to embrace the notion that the aesthetic experience facilitates a passionate response of an extraordinary range of stimuli. When we are in an aesthetic moment, colors become brighter, tastes more enhanced, and textures more deeply perceived. These tactile, kinesthetic moments make deep connections to the brain, memory, and moment. The implications of this for the purpose of learning, the attainment of higher education, and overall life satisfaction is inspiring and worthy of research.

To be successful in school and life, we must trust ourselves, take chances, make connections, explore, be creative, think critically and creatively, and commit to seeing

things through. The experience of art allows us to practice these things, and the exploration of the aesthetic prompts us to go deeper. Research on integrative forms of higher education may provide support for these concepts in a way that is deeply meaningful for student experience, teacher practice, and the future of higher education. As such, I offer insights into how the use of aesthetic themes provides a unique set of meaningful educational applications for higher education institutions and college students in particular. Furthermore, I advance understanding on the practices of aesthetically-minded educators and how these practices (both intentional and operationalized) may provide new ways of thinking about teaching and learning in college classrooms.

Overview of Methodology

In order to best describe the artful intentions of aesthetically-minded college classroom instructors, I chose educational connoisseurship and criticism as my research method. I chose seven individuals identified as understanding and utilizing the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning in their college classroom pedagogy. Each college educator had roots that traced back to the University of Denver and, as such, had been influenced in some way by the teaching practices and aesthetic research contributions of Uhrmacher and Moroye. I interviewed each of the seven participants to better understand their intentions (see Appendix B). I then observed three of the seven participants in the classroom setting to examine how their intentions as aesthetically-minded educators operationalized in their higher education classrooms (see Appendix C). After these observations were complete, I conducted follow-up interviews with each of the three participants whom I observed. Additionally, and in alignment with the requirements of

the methodology, participants were given descriptions and interpretations for their review and comment (see Chapter 4).

Educational Criticism and Connoisseurship

Educational connoisseurship and criticism is a qualitative research methodology that places great emphasis on an observer's ability to evaluate education and render what one comes to know in a language that is accessible to others. Showcasing what Eisner (2002b) calls "noticing ability," educational criticism and connoisseurship recognizes differences that are subtle but significant in a particular qualitative display. As evidenced by the name, educational criticism and connoisseurship consists of two components: connoisseurship and criticism. Connoisseurship is the art of appreciation and requires the researcher to have an advanced understanding of the nuances of a classroom, much the same as a sophisticated palate for wine or art one might have developed over the years (Eisner, 2002b). Criticism, on the other hand, is the art of disclosure (Eisner, 2002b). It allows the connoisseur to point out areas of improvement alongside intention and causation. The ability to critique a setting, much like the ability to critique music or literature, is established through experience and an intuitive recognition of that which is both "revealed and concealed." The ultimate goal of the method is to communicate the complex, ambiguous, and artful series of events taking place in schools and classrooms (Eisner, 1994), as is the goal of this study.

Choosing Participants

In this study, I examined the intentions of seven aesthetically-minded college instructors who utilize the aesthetic themes in their practice and pedagogy. I then

observed how their intentions operationalize in the classrooms of higher education by observing three of the seven participants in their classroom setting. To identify and select the participants, I utilized snowball sampling. Arguably the most widely employed method of sampling in qualitative research, snowball sampling provides the researcher with access to participants through contact information provided by other informants (Noy, 2008). In the case of this study, I asked Uhrmacher and Moroye to share with me potential participants. Through their extended network, I was able to identify four more individuals who had either studied aesthetic themes through coursework with Uhrmacher and Moroye, or who had learned about the aesthetic themes through the research produced by the University of Denver.

As a part of the sampling process, once identified, instructors were ultimately determined through a preliminary inventory (see Appendix B). As this study sought to interview and observe aesthetically-minded college instructors, potential participants were required to meet the following criteria: (a) must be an educator in higher education, (b) must have an understanding of the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (CRISPA) developed through coursework or research, (c) must have a philosophy of education that includes aesthetics and the aesthetic themes for teaching and learning, and (d) must intentionally utilize CRISPA in their college classroom instruction. As a result, Dr. Bruce Uhrmacher and Dr. Christy Moroye, as founding contributors to the research on aesthetic themes mentioned above, were chosen as participants in this study. From the snowball sampling and the aforementioned criteria, the following individuals were also selected.

Dr. Kristen Olsen (previously Kristen Bunn) also played a key role in the creation of CRISPA and is an adjunct professor at the University of Denver. She serves as the director of tools for Teaching for the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ACSD) and has over 10 years of education experience as a classroom teacher, school-level administrator, district administrator, adjunct professor, and director of a Common Core Standards-focused grant at ASCD. Additionally, Olsen has served in district leadership positions where she developed extensive experience leading professional learning communities, classroom walk-throughs, and data teams. She was selected to be a strategic data fellow at Harvard University, where she continues to work as an alumni mentor. In addition, she coauthored the book *Beyond the One Room School* (Uhrmacher & Bunn, 2011), which highlights different classroom settings centered on risk-taking, creativity, care, community and interconnectedness.

Dr. Clair Reisner is an adjunct faculty member of the University of Avalon. Having worked in high performing school districts for part of her career while contributing to curriculum coaching, best practices, and the improvement of pedagogy in K-12 classrooms, Clair offers 14 years of success in developing productive student-centered learning environments to maximize student achievement. Clair has served students in various capacities as a teacher, gifted and talented facilitator, instructional coach, executive board treasurer for a gifted and talented association and has contributed work as a consultant founding CEO of an education company.

In addition to participating in detailed interviews, the final three participants allowed me to observe them in their classroom settings in order to evaluate how their

intentions and thus the aesthetic themes operationalize in classrooms in higher education. These individuals include Dr. Brittany Robinson, Dr. David Collins and Dr. Michael Reed.

Dr. Brittany Robinson is a full-time faculty member at Rivergate College. She teaches Secondary Methods, Foundations of Education, and Human Relations as well as a freshman seminar. Her research interests include religious pluralism and global perspectives, historic teaching and learning, civic engagement, service learning, equity and equality, curriculum theory, and aesthetic pedagogies.

Dr. David Collins is a full-time faculty member and assistant professor at Lamott University. Throughout his tenure at Lamott he has taught Pedagogy for MCE/AYA Language Arts; Content Area Reading; Developing as a Professional; Nature, Needs, and Development of Early Adolescent to Your Adult Students, and Student Teacher Supervision. His research interests include culturally responsive pedagogy, curriculum theory and instruction, the arts in education, teacher education, and aesthetic pedagogies.

Dr. Michael Reed is an associate professor of education at Arsdale State University. Prior to teaching at Arsdale, he was an adjunct instructor at a junior college and, before that, he enjoyed his work as a high school teacher. Progressive, constructivist, and perceptual philosophies influence Michael's beliefs and theoretical frameworks about education. Michael believes students construct meanings from their own experiences, and this process shapes how students come to understand their world. In the tradition of Eisner (2002b), Michael subscribes to the idea that classrooms are governed by ecological dynamics, where intentional, structural, curricular, pedagogical, and evaluative

dimensions interact with one another, which in turn creates the ecology of the classroom environment. His research interests include reducing the use of labels by deemphasizing educational objectives, using sensory experiences to activate prior knowledge, the power of implicit curriculum, the industrial assessment complex, and aesthetic evaluation in literacy and aesthetic pedagogies.

Not substantive of the research, all seven participants are American, Caucasian, heterosexual and are raising one or more children. It should be noted that I chose to use pseudonyms for all but three participants in order to de-identify contributors and keep their personal information anonymous. As the results from the research may be published I wanted to ensure that individual's identities, students and campus locations were kept private. Conversely, I chose to include the given names of Bruce Uhrmacher, Christy Moroye and Kristen Olsen who contributed to the creation of CRISPA and thus the associated founding research which this study investigates as a part of its central theme.

As researcher, I want to also take a moment to introduce myself, my interests and beliefs in order to illuminate how I have positioned myself within this study. As described in more detail in Chapter 3 (see About the Researcher), I myself have been in education for nearly 15 years. Having taught across the sectors including K-12, non-profit, for-profit and higher education, I am deeply committed to transformative practices that aim to educate the whole person. My research interests over the years have included constructs of resilience, teaching artists and artists in residence, arts-education practices, poetry through ethnography, universal design for learning, student success and career readiness, online and adult learning theory, as well as pedagogical practices that support

at-risk learners and non-traditional students. In addition, I believe that a tapestry of aesthetic moments in my life (and research) have helped me to find invaluable connections between my person and purpose. Leaning heavily on my own experiences as a poet, a distance runner and an equestrian, the aesthetic experience has helped me to contemplate and transform in ways that aligned my inner and outer worlds. These experiences and my belief are present in this study and as such, impassioned me throughout its duration to investigate the possibility that others might discover the same.

Data Collection

To examine the intentions of aesthetically-minded college instructors, I conducted formal interviews with each participant (see Appendix A). Interviewing, according to Fetterman (2010, p. 40) is one of the most important data-gathering techniques. Interviews explain and put into larger context what the researcher sees and experiences. In this study, I utilized interviewing as an initial data collection technique in order to capture and define the intentions of these aesthetically-minded college educators. To do this, I asked individuals to share with me their current personal philosophy on education as well as how they develop their college curriculum using the aesthetic themes (CRISPA). In addition, observations were conducted in order to pair intentions with the operational and thus identify subsequent themes in relation to the curricular, structural, pedagogical and evaluative qualities of CRISPA. In qualitative studies, observations and field notes are viewed as a powerful data collection tool. According to Fetterman (2010), observation helps a researcher to capture the basic beliefs, hopes, and expectations of the participants (p. 37).

Conclusion

Edgar Degas (n.d.) said, “Art is not what you see, but rather what you help others see” (n.p.). Herein lies the aim of this study. The seven interviews and three sets of vignettes I present provide thorough snapshots of college classrooms enlivened by the aesthetic themes. As an individual might position room lighting to better illuminate a work of art upon the wall, this study showcases the practices and pedagogy of three aesthetically-minded educators in order to examine the application of the aesthetic themes for higher education. Chapter 2 explores the foundations of the aesthetic, the emergence of the aesthetic themes, the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (CRISPA), higher education and the need for powerful teaching practices, reconceptualizing student success in college classrooms, higher education through Palmer and Zajonc’s (2010) eyes, and implications for transformation, contemplation, and experience in higher education. Chapter 3 explains further the methodology of this study and offers a background on educational connoisseurship and criticism. Chapter 4 highlights the practices of three aesthetically-minded college educators and as such presents a series of vignettes that capture the curricular, structural, pedagogical, and evaluative qualities of CRISPA operationalized. Finally, Chapter 5 presents the findings and organizes the outcomes of the research suggesting that the themes hold significant implications for college classrooms by providing support for integrative forms of higher education and education in general. Chapter 5 also presents recommendations for further research in alignment with the key findings of this study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The deepest form of human knowing is the result of thinking with the mind, descended into the heart (St. Simeon as cited by Palmer & Zajonc, 2010, p. 29).

Overview

In this chapter, I discuss a variety of concepts found in the literature related to aesthetics, foundations of aesthetic education, and the aesthetic themes. In addition, I describe several established best practices for college student engagement and college classroom instruction. Finally, I discuss the core functions of the university and why the aesthetic themes enhances and illuminates Palmer and Zajonc's (2010) ideas on an integrated college curriculum through the transformational, contemplative, and experiential dimensions.

Introduction

Over the last 30 years, especially throughout the course of the last decade, American higher education has hit a serious stumbling block. Its ability to enroll, accommodate, retain, and graduate individuals has been compromised in critical ways. According to the literature, nearly 400,000 students drop out of college every year. Even more disheartening is the fact that though American higher education institutions were once considered the envy of the world, today most colleges struggle to graduate even 50% of those seeking a Bachelor's degree (Selingo, 2013).

This bottle-neck has occurred for a number of reasons, many of which are political and financial in nature and associated with rising college costs, a down economy, and a one-size-fits-all system, among others. Yet another reason students struggle to complete college is due to a lack of engagement and interest. How students connect with, interact with, and perceive their educational experience is as important to retention as any other organizational, pedagogical, political, or financial factor. Prior research shows that student engagement is most highly associated with institutional graduation rates (Price, 2012). Thus, we should turn our attention towards curricular and pedagogical strategies that promote deepened levels of emotional, intellectual, and even spiritual development for students alongside collegiate studies that enhance commitment, purpose, and individuals' professional pathways.

To do so, I first examine the research and foundational literature on aesthetics and the aesthetic themes. I then use the ideas of Palmer and Zajonc (2010) to help us think heuristically about the implications of CRISPA for higher education.

Foundations of Aesthetic Education and Aesthetic Themes

Founded and elaborated upon by various theorists including Baumgarten (as cited in Buchenau, 2013), Kant (as cited in Crawford, 1974), Dewey (1934), and others, aesthetics as a field of philosophy has been examined in terms of its quintessence regarding the lived experience and thus its applications for how we come to know the world through vehicles of teaching and learning. In the following, I summarize the contributions of a few philosophers and educational writers who have studied aesthetics. I have chosen to examine these individuals in particular because their work addresses

intellectual liveliness (Baumgarten), appreciation and synthesis (Kant), as well as experience and meaning making (Dewey) as it relates to the aesthetic themes (CRISPA) for teaching and learning. Moreover, and for the purpose of this study, I have chosen these individuals as their contributions on the topic of the aesthetic are equally significant for higher education as well as education in general.

The word *aesthetic* is derived from the Greek word *aesthesis*, meaning sensation or perception. Though the field of philosophy may place Plato and Aristotle at the forefront of aesthetic discourse, Baumgarten (1750) explored the subject systematically in his works *Meditations on Poetry* and *Metaphysics*. Here, Baumgarten developed his philosophy based on that of the Greek philosophers, who carefully distinguished between the *aistheta* and the *noeta*—that is, between objects of sense and objects of thought. As a result, he began a discourse from which Kant and others would lean into over the course of the next two centuries.

For Baumgarten, a new discipline was emerging: one that addressed a general science of perception and that connected representations to interconnections and interconnections to words. He called this framework the “sensible discourse.” In addition, he introduced the idea of “sensible imagery” and the way a work of art conveys truth. Baumgarten explored how greater clarity is gained through “liveliness,” which is at the basis of aesthetic experience (Guyer, 2008).

Kant, who would later refer to Baumgarten as the “excellent analyst” (as cited in Cassirer, 1951), popularized the word *aesthetic* to mean “the science which treats of the conditions of sensuous perception” (Guyer, 2008). Kant believed that “there are two

sources of human knowledge, which perhaps spring from a common but to us unknown root, namely, sensibility and understanding.” In addition, Kant believed that knowledge was a cooperative affair between the knower and the thing known (Crawford, 1974). Kant (1974) also said that the distinctive activity of the mind was to synthesize and unify experience, and to do so, sensation, imagination, and memory must be involved (p. 279).

From this foundation, Kant (1974) developed a specific set of rules of morality by which one could determine whether an action was morally good behavior in a scientifically reliable way (p. 290). For this, he is perhaps best known. However, in addition, he philosophized that the human mind is also designed to grapple with the aesthetic, which by its very nature does not abide by any single rule but by which all may agree “pleases us universally” (p. 291). Though Kant mostly attended to the concept of beauty and the sublime in his discourse on aesthetics, his philosophy on the subject included strong support for our ability to measure “taste” and, thus, experience “appreciation” as that which presupposes the existence of a “common sense” (p. 294). However, Kant also argued that the true nature of things-in-themselves is hidden from us, and that our world of experience is permanently fixed by the categories that our minds impose on the experience (p. 295).

Dewey (1934) constructed his aesthetic philosophy on the backs of such giants. Like Baumgarten and Kant, he explored the intersection between interconnectedness, appreciation, and the significance of an experience. Dewey (1934) examined art not for the material “work of art,” but rather for the development of an “experience.” Through the creation of the expressive object, the artist and the observer encounter each other and

the origin of the experience. He argued that aesthetics, as a practice of theoretical reflection, begins by focusing on moments when life takes on intensity and meaning, and thus a “consummatory experience” unfolds. Dewey (1934) defined a consummatory experience as one that develops in such a way that the realized meaning is felt or undergone (p. 17). Such a lived moment is completely memorable and connected by distinct and unique qualities that bind the experience into one, perhaps making student’s internal and external constructs feel as an interlaced and profound whole (p. 35).

In addition, Dewey pointed out that art is fundamentally a quality of experience and that qualitative thinking is dependent upon it as such. Essentially, Dewey (1934) argued that art, or the *esthetic*, is the offspring of human intelligence and that it permeates our daily life. Moreover, he believed that the nature of experience is determined by the essential conditions of life and that “life goes on in an environment; not merely *in it*, but because of it; through interactions with it” (Dewey, 1934, p. 13). To this end, he also noted that our purpose and destiny—the very meaning from which we draw from our lived experience—is uniquely tied to our surroundings, not only externally, but also in the most intimate way (Dewey, 1934, p. 13).

Baumgarten, Kant, and Dewey approached the art and science of the aesthetic in various ways. Like artists, each had their own unique form of representation as they sought to give language to an individual expression of the term. Each showcased a different yet complementary aspect of the aesthetic as a meaningful influence on our lives and livelihood. Baumgarten painted with broad strokes; he assessed the intricacies of the color wheel—what it meant to measure the aesthetic and to thread it into scientific

discourse. Kant found complementary hues. He finger-painted with synthesis—the interplay of reason and imagination, genius and artistic intuition, representation and interconnection. Dewey focused on texture—the way the aesthetic added dimension, meaning making, experience, expression, perception, and possibility to our lived experience.

Like those that preceded him, Eisner was enamored by that which resonated within us as a direct result of our interaction with the aesthetic. Eisner believed that the distinctive forms of thinking needed to create an artistically-crafted work are relevant not only to what students do, but virtually to all aspects of what human beings and, more specifically, educators do. Eisner (2005) explored this position by way of the phrase “aesthetic modes of knowing.” For Eisner, the aesthetic is a part of the scientific process, and therefore complementary to the more commonly accepted definitions of learning. All scientific inquiry, Eisner (2005) noted, culminates in the creation of form: taxonomies, theories, frameworks, and conceptual systems (p. 26). The aesthetic function of form therefore is not limited to the fine arts and literature, but instead permeates scientific approach and process. In this way, Eisner (2005) believed that the aesthetic was not merely a part of the contextual whole of process and inquiry, but that it was indeed the essence or flame that ignited the fire of curiosity. The aesthetic, Eisner stated, is motivated by our need for stimulation, as well as by our own need to give order to our world (p. 29). As humans and as “stimulus-seeking organisms,” the aesthetic provides a natural vehicle towards the deeper motives that drive us, including productive activity, exploration, and problem solving (p. 100).

Like Eisner, Greene (2001) was also impassioned by the aesthetic, not only in terms of our lived experience but also for teaching and learning. Greene (2001) explored this concept at length, defining aesthetics as a particular field in philosophy, “one concerned about perception, sensation, imagination, and how they relate to knowing, understanding, and feeling about the world” (p. 5). Greene (2001) stressed the value of aesthetic education as an intentional undertaking designed to nurture appreciative, reflective, cultural, participatory engagement with the arts so that new connections and patterns may be formed (p. 6). For Greene, at the heart of aesthetics are perception, imagination, and the motivation to go in search of meaning. Aesthetics means awareness of process—the realization that it is ongoing, and that there is always something more. Moreover, like her counterparts, Greene believed that thinking in the domain of the aesthetic can only begin with actual experiences. Her line of inquiry complemented the works of those that came before her and placed *aesthetic experience* once again upon the scholarly canvas, so that it may continue to be interpreted and critiqued.

Uhrmacher (2007, 2009) has also contributed much to the body of knowledge concerned with artful curriculum and aesthetic education. Having studied under Eisner, who is perceived as a modern-day thought leader on the subject, Uhrmacher has developed an expertise in curriculum, alternative schooling, and aesthetic education across the span of over 20 years. His early research on Waldorf schools (1991) examined the six dimensions of classroom life—that is, the intentional, curricular, pedagogical, structural, evaluative, and the aesthetic—against the backdrop of an approach to alternative schooling that placed learning through the arts at center stage. After this early

research, Uhrmacher dove even deeper into the elegant outcomes of aesthetics for teaching and learning. In 2005, he coauthored *Intricate Palette: Reworking the Ideas of Elliot Eisner*, a work that explored Eisner's impact on curriculum as well as on the arts in education. Uhrmacher's passion for the aesthetic led him to conduct further research and, as a result publish a number of scholarly articles and book chapters, including: *Instituting the Arts* (2007), *Artful Curriculum, Evaluation, and Instruction: Lessons from Rudolf Steiner and Waldorf Education* (2007), *Working the Image: Unearthing Aspects of Teacher's Lives Through Arts Engagement* (2008), *The Significance of Self Portraits: Making Connections through Monotype Prints in Letras y Arte* (2009), and *The Power to Transform: Implementation as Aesthetic Awakening* (2010), among others.

Among his many contributions to the field, Uhrmacher assisted in implementing the Aesthetic Education Institute of Colorado (AEIC). In January of 2007, AEIC was formed as a merger between Colorado Alliance for the Arts Education and Young Audiences of Colorado (now Think 360 Arts) and the University of Denver's Morgridge College of Education. The institute has played a valuable role in helping to articulate applications for aesthetics in the classroom and to simplify what may otherwise seem a philosophical endeavor, empowering teachers with teaching tools that transform practices. Providing educators with hands-on experience in the visual arts, music, dance, theater, creative writing, and aesthetics, guided by professional educators and teaching artists, teachers are able to come to know arts as both a lens and a vehicle for improving student learning experiences (Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2007, p. 55).

In 2007, Moroye coauthored an article with Uhrmacher entitled “Instituting the Arts.” Having studied under Uhrmacher—much like Uhrmacher studied under Eisner—Moroye’s passion for the aesthetic (alongside ecologically-minded education) was nurtured. The aforementioned publication would become the first of many they would write together, and over the next five years, a specific examination of the aesthetic themes began to emerge in the literature (Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2012; Uhrmacher et al., 2013). These and other works were a result of Uhrmacher and Moroye’s shared examination of AEIC and its associated outcomes. What follows is an overview of the institute, its design, and the emergence of the aesthetic themes.

AEIC and the Emergence of the Aesthetic Themes

Four specific areas related to the arts are discussed in the aesthetic institute. In terms of situating this study within the existing literature, it is important to understand the various intentions behind each domain of arts education. The first area, utilitarian, brings the arts into the classroom for non-arts ends and serves to complement subjects such as math and science (Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2009). Discipline-based arts education is the second area, of which the main purpose is to teach art in a disciplinary fashion while encompassing skills such as critique, production, and evaluation of aesthetics (Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2009). The third area is interdisciplinary, which is when art is taught alongside other subjects as a part of the broader themes by which overall understanding is possible. The fourth area, transformational, is applicable to the lens by which this study is designed. The transformational area aims to facilitate a rethinking of education from aesthetic and artistic views. In the transformational domain, the goal is not so much to

change the curriculum as it is to change people—first teachers, and then students (Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2009).

Through this approach, students learn to do the following: (a) communicate through various forms of representation, (b) develop their own creative processes that they can use in all areas of their life, (c) appreciate the work and lives of artists in their communities, (d) discover new connections among subject areas, and (e) compose information in new ways (Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2007). The AEIC's goals for its participants reside in this last area and, as such, the design of this study is framed here as well. Uhrmacher focused on the transformational approach to arts education as he embarked on describing and articulating specific aesthetic themes by studying artists and teachers over a period of nearly 15 years, working toward a theory of aesthetic learning experiences. Noting that good teachers use authentic pedagogy and constructivist approaches in their teaching, Uhrmacher (2009) investigated the possibility of facilitating *flow* and other outcomes of aesthetic experience, while isolating a concise number of aesthetic themes that teachers could use in their classrooms in order to facilitate enhanced learning opportunities for students.

The Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (CRISPA)

Nietzsche once said, “A thinker seeks his own actions as experiments and questions—as attempts to find out something. Success and failure are for him answers above all.” (n.p.) The aesthetic, in its creation and its exploration, provides us with the opportunity to practice these phenomena while also experimenting with what is possible. It also allows us to take measured risks and to learn from them in order that we may

identify, innovate, and connect in richly meaningful ways. The aesthetic allows us to have successes and failures in a space where there are no right or wrong answers. Through the aesthetic, we have the opportunity to go deeper into ourselves as well as complex aspects of our metacognition. In turn, we are also able to explore multidimensional facets of our existence, and become more confident through a broadened awareness of self and world.

Moroye and Uhrmacher (2007) saw the profundity of such experiences and recognized its presence at the AEIC. Dovetailing on the aesthetic ideas of Dewey (1934), the pair conducted an evaluation of the outcomes of AEIC and, through this process, began to uncover six prevalent themes that would later come to be known as the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2009). This powerful collection of instructional dimensions, known by the acronym CRISPA, comprises the following: connections, risk-taking, imagination, sensory experience, perceptivity, and active engagement. Viewed against descriptions of aesthetic experience such as those put forth by Dewey (1934), it was determined that these newly realized dimensions were sustained by the literature and attended to concepts of interaction, continuity, and growth (pp. 35-36, 51). Connecting to Dewey's (1934) concepts grounded Moroye and Uhrmacher's framework in authentic pedagogy and supported the notion that experience is defined by those situations and episodes that are spontaneously referred to as being "real" or those things about which we say, when recalling them, "*that* was an experience."

Those who have come to know the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning—whether through research, coursework, or professional development—understand these nuances as well. The following definitions clarify each of the six dimensions:

Connections. Connections are the ways in which an individual interacts with an idea or object in the learning environment. These connections may be intellectual, emotional, sensorial, or communicative. Essentially, connections refer to the way in which a person experiences something and then makes meaning of it. Everyone connects in different ways through this process. An individual may have a communicative connection, a sensorial connection, a cognitive connection, or even a metacognitive connection to a certain book, for instance. Connecting is entirely personal to the individual experiencing the specific moment in time and therefore is subjective in nature, though powerfully associated with an aesthetic experience (Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2009).

Risk-taking. Risk-taking refers to students' opportunities to try something new by stepping out of their normal realm of experience. As with connections, risk-taking is not the same for every student. For some, trying a new sport, hobby, or skill like dancing, surfing, or horseback riding is risky; for others, simply working with a partner in class or giving a presentation can pose some risk. According to Moroye and Uhrmacher (2009), the goal is that the risk leads to reward, learning something new about oneself, or an object of study. One might consider the concept a variation on *scaffolding* as it applies to teaching and learning. Just as scaffolding pertains to the needs of each individual learner and thus allows him/her to begin where they are, risk-taking (under safe classroom conditions) provides students an opportunity to stretch their understanding and comfort

level for the sake of achieving what ultimately feels like a small but meaningful accomplishment.

Imagination. Moroye and Uhrmacher (2009) describe imagination as the internal manipulation of ideas that may be characterized in several ways. Imagination may be intuitive, in which a person has a sudden rush of insight; fanciful, in which a person combines unexpected elements; or interactive, in which a person works with materials to yield a product. Imagination can also be mimetic, in that the individual mirrors the creative expression of another. Moroye and Uhrmacher (2009) go on to say:

Although some may use the terms interchangeably, we use imagination to refer to internal work, and consider creativity to be the external expression of this work. Hence, creativity cannot happen without imagination, but one might be imaginative without allowing their ideas to come to fruition. (p. 94)

Thus, imagination helps us to envision what is possible. It is the life force behind our ability to conceptualize, create, connect, and perceive.

Sensory experience. According to Moroye and Uhrmacher (2009), an aesthetic experience depends on sensory experience, which requires at least one person and a sensory interaction with an object. The literature uses the term *object* metaphorically. It may of course refer to an actual object, such as a vase or a painting, but it also can refer to a text, a soundscape, a landscape, an image, or simply a thing focused upon, such as birds flying over a barn. The influence of this dimension on the framework is simply that any kind of aesthetic experience depends upon the use of an individual's senses engaged in some aspect of the world. The object comes to life through the senses and therefore is imprinted (metaphorically) on the body and in the brain. Sensory experience allows tactile, kinesthetic learning to take place while also constructing powerful associations

that both our nervous and neurological systems are receptive to. The senses allow for brain-body connections that deepen learning and meaning-making.

Perceptivity. Perceptivity is a deepened sensory experience. Perception is an achievement and, as such, can be developed. According to CRISPA, perceptivity is applied when we look at almost any object deeply and for a prolonged period of time (Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2009). Take, for example, an observation of a shoreline. At first glance, an observer might notice crashing waves and a sandy beach. Yet, with applied and prolonged focus, he/she might begin to notice scattered tide pools and the ocean life therein. Essentially, when we look at something, we are able to take notice of its surface features; however, when we look at something longer and truly examine it, we begin to notice its subtle qualities. This deepened awareness is what we refer to as perceptivity.

Active engagement. Active engagement requires that students be in the driver's seat: they are at the helm of their own learning. This could include being physically active, intellectually creating meaning, or making choices about how to represent their knowledge. This type of student-centered learning engages one's individual investment and interest, therefore deepening commitment level. Though each of the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning employ an overlay of other dimensions due to their commonalities, active engagement facilitates each of the dimensions in that it calls upon a moment of "flow" where understanding and intuition align thus facilitating a real and meaningful experience through the activation of personal choice.

As a result of the AEIC's efforts and ongoing research by other scholars, much attention has been given in the literature to the role of the aesthetic themes in K-12

education. Uhrmacher and Moroye's (2009, 2012, 2013) ongoing research continues to provide support that when the themes are integrated, an increase in student engagement occurs. In addition, there are observable, if not measurable outcomes that occur—language, activities, and behavior, for example—that an educational connoisseur or master teacher is able to observe in the classroom setting. Such indicators include, but are not limited to: well-conceived lessons, rich learning experiences, integration of various disciplines, enhanced creativity, connection making through a nonlinear approach, shared learning, negotiation skills, increased communication, an improved commitment to learning, and a caring environment (Uhrmacher, 2009).

These findings have supported the argument that the aesthetic is highly correlated with improved classroom experiences for primary and secondary students. However, the implications of introducing the aesthetic themes in higher education are not yet clear. According to the literature, factors contributing to college student success include a similar set of engagement indicators (Young, 1997). Research has shown that adult students who develop interpersonal skills, the ability to navigate foreign environments and interact with others, a sense of self-efficacy, an establishment of an internal locus of control, and the development of critical-thinking abilities develop dispositions simultaneously that lead to graduation, a desirable profession, and a satisfying life after college (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006).

Higher Education and the Need for Powerful Teaching Practices

We still have much to learn about what inspires performance and helps to move students through academic curricula to degree attainment. Scholars, administrators, and

practitioners have long sought to understand and address these concerns and, as such, the principles, pedagogy, frameworks, and best practices that help to foster student success as well as college student engagement in higher education. Such research is well developed in the literature (Bailey, 2006; Barefoot et al., 2005; Baxter & King, 2004; Blimling & Whitt, 1999; Braskamp, Trautvetter, & Ward, 2006; Braxton, 2006; Doyle, 2013; Hearn, 2006; Kuh et al., 2006; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Witt, 2006; Miller et al., 2005; Perna & Thomas, 2006; Sandeen & Barr, 2006; Tinto & Pusser, 2006), yet American higher education institutions still struggle to engage, retain, and place individuals, let alone help to educate the whole individual, cognitively, emotionally, socially, or spiritually. More recently, a new approach to student success has emerged from this research that includes the concept of *thriving*, which refers to students who are vitally engaged in the college endeavor – intellectually, socially and emotionally (Schreiner, Louis, & Nelson, 2012, p.4) as well as a focus on the fundamental curricular aspects of student success: knowledge, intellectual abilities, and professional skills (American Federation of Teachers [AFT], 2011).

The focus on student success, graduation, and satisfactory life after college has increased as college enrollment rates have begun to soar. However, despite an increase in college enrollment, graduation rates are paradoxically in decline. According to the National Center for Education Statistic's Provisional Data on Graduation Rates (2015),

The 2013 6-year graduation rate for first-time, full time undergraduate students who began their pursuit of a Bachelor's degree at a 4-year degree granting institution in the Fall of 2007 was 59%. In essence, less than 60% of newly enrolled, first-time students who sought a Bachelor's degree at a 4-year institution in 2007, completed their degree by 2013 (NCES, 2015).

It is because of such disparities that researchers and college educators must continue to examine practices and pedagogies that not only retain and graduate today's college students, but also aid in meaning making, personal growth, and transformation. The contributions of individuals such as Kinzie (2005), Kuh (2009), and Tinto (1993) provide support for these outcomes and the notion that college students are more successful when one's personal interests are aligned with their collegiate pursuits. Thoughtful, intentional teaching strategies in the academy can help to bridge students' inner and outer worlds, thus deepening their commitment to their academic and professional goals.

Practices such as these evoke positive responses from students and, in turn, promote engagement, retention, and completion of college programs. Defined as integrative in nature, such strategies engage more of the learner's perception of identity, supporting a way of knowing that involves a student's whole self and world (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010). This approach to teaching and learning is aesthetic by its very nature and provides support for a pedagogy that involves relational knowledge, bodily knowledge, intuitive knowledge, and emotional knowledge. College students who experience learning through these dimensions sometimes talk about the moment as one that "changed everything," opening up multiple perspectives and their ability to think about their thinking in such a way that learning feels more like an "encounter" than a course of study (Bain, 2004). Consider the power of this statement for a moment, and the limitlessness of its implications: If students' inner and spiritual lives are attended to alongside the cultivation of the cognitive, technical, and subject matter, students may be

more likely to invest and, thus, persist. College classroom educators should take time to reconceptualize student success and consider alternative guiding frameworks and innovative teaching strategies that engage students in new and impactful ways.

Support for Reconceptualizing Student Success in College Classrooms

Aiming to reconceptualize student success by taking a construct of thriving as its center focus, Schreiner, Louis, and Nelson (2012) challenged those with a vested interest in student success to expand their vision of what it means to help students reap the full benefits of higher education. The authors described thriving as a “set of psychosocial characteristics (not a personality trait) that are changeable within a person and which can be influenced by interventions and environmental situations” (p. viii). Thus, it is arguable that the very nature of what is occurring in the classroom environment, as a part of the intentional, the operational, and the curricular, is critical to what is potentially received in the attempt to cultivate students’ experiences and the traditional goals of higher education.

Complementary to one another, Uhrmacher’s (2009) approach to providing students with engaging aesthetic learning experiences mirrors the intentions and facilitation suggestions presented in the student success research. Termed *strength development* by Schreiner et al. (2012), a set of ideas was presented for college faculty to consider regarding how to engage college-aged students better. They include: (a) creating a sense of community in the classroom by emphasizing the strengths that each student contributes, (b) designing active learning experiences that are connected to students’ current interest and that capitalize on students’ strengths and learning styles, (c)

developing meaningful assignments in a context of clear expectations, choices, and an optimal level of challenge, (d) Communicating to students that there are strategies for success and that learning is under their control, and (e) providing feedback that is timely, frequent, and constructive (Schreiner et al, 2012, p. 24).

Schreiner et al.'s (2012) suggestions also align with another study conducted by Kinzie (2005), which examined 20 diverse 4-year colleges and universities with higher than average graduation rates and whose National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) also demonstrated a myriad of effective practices. Kinzie (2005) pointed to a set of suggestions regarding how best to facilitate student success in college. These student-centered approaches provided relevance for the following: (a) student success is improved when individuals are embraced in their learning; (b) faculty must set and maintain high expectations for student performance; (c) students must understand what they need to do to succeed; (d) engaging pedagogical approaches for course objectives and students' abilities and learning styles is a must; (e) curriculum planning should build upon students' knowledge, abilities, and talents; (f) meaningful feedback to students is invaluable; (g) diversity and differentiation should be present at all times in both the curriculum and out-of-class learning assignments; (h) faculty who make time for students have more successful students; and (i) students must be held accountable for taking their share of the responsibility for their learning.

Kramer (2007) also explored these concepts and the responsibility of the institution to design and implement engaging pedagogies. Described as involving students more intensely in learning, Kramer said that such approaches increase students'

time on task while harnessing peer influence in educationally purposeful ways.

According to Kramer's (2007) research, engaging pedagogies matter to student success in that they involve students more intensely in learning, and increase students' time on task while harnessing interaction in educationally purposeful ways (p. 25).

Yet another role of the institution is in guiding students towards being effective agents of their own life. Essentially, effective institutions not only foster academic success, but also a series of perspectives, resources, and decision-making support systems that help adult learners think through their short- and long-term goals while aiming at the heart of personal growth (Kramer, 2007). Perhaps it is fair to say that the creation of one's life is, in fact, an artistic endeavor. To this end, every interaction is an opportunity to adjust the hues; milestones become a selection of instruments in the background. Which ones we choose to pick up and play and what type of music we develop a fondness for depends as much on the nature of our dispositions as on the influence of our environment.

The academy that promotes an environment where individuals' unique needs, values, and attitudes are developed fosters an opportunity for human beings to discover, dream, design, and begin to determine their destiny (Kramer, 2007). Likened to Eisner's *Six Modes of Aesthetic Thinking* (2002), the aforementioned spurs students into a self-reflective dialogue that begins in the classroom and ends in quiet contentment and the personal fulfillment that comes with being connected to one's purpose in life. Eisner (2002) explored aesthetic means of knowing through: (a) the ability to create a qualitative relationship that serves a purpose, (b) an expression of aims, (c) the relations between

form and content, (d) the notion that not everything knowable can be articulated in propositional form, (e) the concept that there is a relationship between thinking and the material in which one works, and (f) the authentic challenge that art creates intrinsic motivation.

Institutions that advocate for student success through authentic learning experiences such as these naturally facilitate enhanced connections, relationships, and purpose in relation to the college experience. Kramer (2007) adds additional support for these implications, stating that four areas of focus for exploring student success are utilized in college classrooms that actively look for ways to engage students more deeply. These include a focus on (a) individual student characteristics; (b) external influences including social factors; (c) attention to what students do and how they spend their time; and (d) what the institution does in terms of structure, support services, and curriculum. Each of these focus points may be achieved by creating opportunities for metacognition and reflection through alternative modes of knowing (2002) and thus processes borne from the aesthetic. Outstanding faculty and proactive institutions can nurture learning communities and intellectual development in order to achieve these outcomes. Student-success-minded academies can ensure that faculty, too, understand the expectation that engagement flows through the veins of the curriculum, the lesson plans, and the delivery. These conduits provide a stage for the articulation of the aesthetic themes, if desired, and could in turn provide support for a broad set of goals of higher education. Namely, the intersection of the college curriculum and the aesthetic may provide an opportunity for students to test their own lines of reasoning for internal consistency while internalizing

student success indicators such as intellectual self-awareness, perception of their personal identity, self-reliance, purpose, and professionalism (Bain, 2004).

Palmer and Zajonc (2010) (whose ideas we will use throughout this study to help us think about the implications of CRISPA for higher education), place great importance on the roles and responsibilities of today's college institutions. The authors argue that the academy must look at higher education for the 21st century not through the lenses of Newton and Descartes, but of Einstein and Bohr, whose science is not of matter and mechanism but of relationships and dynamic processes. Palmer and Zajonc's (2010) work on the topic has focused upon a guiding framework for colleges as an integrative one in which the core functions of the university are "to recognize the whole human being and his or her place in community and the world" (p. 60). The authors further help us to interrogate this topic by providing a set of guiding questions in order to ascertain the goals of higher education:

1. What steps can we take to make our colleges and universities places that awaken the deepest potential in students, faculty, and staff?
2. How can integrative learning be effectively woven into the culture, curriculum, and co-curriculum of our colleges and universities?
3. Do current education efforts address the whole human being— mind, heart, and spirit—in ways that best contribute to our future on this fragile planet?

(p.5)

Higher Education through Palmer and Zajonc's Eyes

Much research has been conducted on college student engagement (Arum, 2010; Bailey, 2006; Bain, 2004; Bolkan & Goodboy, 2009; Braxton, 2006; Bridges, Buckley, Hayek, Kinzie, & Kuh, 2006; Doyle, 2013; Khan & Law, 2015; Kinzie, 2005; Kuh et al., 2006; Osman & Petersen, 2010; Price, 2012; Schreiner et al., 2012; Young, 1997). We know, for instance, that engagement in the college classroom is the synergistic interaction between motivation and active learning (Braxton, Jones, Hirschy, & Hartley, 2008). Additionally, the literature provides that there are certain epistemologies that we experience through life and, as such, different stages that we move through as we mature, in particular during the formative duration of our college years. For the adult learner, we know that self-authorship, or one's ability to develop their own point of view, is influenced by the development of the socialized mind—that is, one's holistic understanding of their environment and culture (Kegan, 1994). Likewise, we know that these experiences are correlated with increases in general levels of happiness, and that the university is uniquely positioned to help individuals move between these stages (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010).

Nonetheless, the kind of knowledge that is valued in the academy is usually scientific in nature. College classrooms, generally speaking, place great weight on objective data and logical analysis in terms of coursework, higher-order thinking, and cognitive learning outcomes associated with higher education. However, at the heart of any serious approach to college teaching and learning is a dialogue that involves, in Parker words (2010), “mind, heart, hard data and soft intuition” (p. 22). Dovetailing upon

the notions of spirituality, which could be argued to be at the root of student engagement and adult learning, is a set of questions related to relational, bodily, intuitive, and emotional knowledge—that is, dimensions of learning outside the rational and linear dimensions that, traditionally, the academy has placed focus upon (p. 36).

Educators have been studying these finite interactions alongside the development of the academy for many years. Dewey (1934), for example, also recognized the importance of the emotional and metacognitive facets. He argued that when we note the different forms in which the continuity of experience operates (i.e., cognitive, emotional, kinesthetic), we get the basis of discriminating among experiences. Thus, when we begin to perceive the purpose of our life as a series of moments strung together in such a way that one does not fully count one without the other, our paths become clearer, more evident, and more intentional. Dewey's (1934) aesthetic ideas in relation to teaching and learning capture the importance of meaning-making and, within the pedagogy, include models of pre-service teacher education (Augustine & Zoss, 2006) and professional development as well as teaching and curriculum in more broadly defined aspects of education and instruction (Simpson, Jackson, & Aycock, 2005). Each area of study has important implications for college student engagement as well as for teaching and learning in the academy today.

Known best for his research on issues pertaining to education, community, leadership, spirituality, and social change, Palmer's (2004, 2007; Parker & Zajonc, 2010) assessment of today's college institutions complements Dewey's (1934) research regarding the importance of creating meaningful experiences for adult learners. Palmer

and Zajonc (2010) examined the concept of transformational education, and thus what the authors called an integrative form of higher education. Defined as “educating the whole person by integrating the inner life and the outer life by actualizing individual and global awakening” (p. vii), Palmer and Zajonc contended that higher education has a unique opportunity to cultivate such outcomes. Palmer and Zajonc (2010) wrote,

We are being called into a more paradoxical wholeness of knowing many voices. There is a new community of scholars in a variety of fields who now understand that *genuine knowing* comes out of a healthy dance between the objective and the subjective, between the analytic and the integrative, between the experimental and what I would call the receptive. So, I’m not trying to split these paradoxes apart, I am trying to put them back together. (p. x)

According to Palmer and Zajonc (2010), there are three essential domains that guide us toward the integrative form of higher education described above: knowing, teaching, and learning. *Genuine knowing* occurs when we honor the hidden aquifer that feeds human knowing and, as a result, develop a capacity for awe, wonder, and humility that deepens rather than diminishes knowledge (p. 22). The type of knowledge that the authors advocate for is relational, bodily, intuitive, and emotional. Such a state requires an almost meditative sense of engagement: one that is rich with attention, imagination, perception, and awareness. In Parker and Zajonc’s words, “We know something only by being in relation to it, by moving in close and leaning in” (p. 28). Next, *teaching* and pedagogy have an ethical formation on learners. In an integrative model of higher education, educators strive to make pedagogical decisions that lead to moral engagement. This approach engages more of the students’ self and teaches by means of engagement. Palmer and Zajonc (2010) wrote, “The hidden curriculum embedded in such a pedagogy support a way of knowing that involves much, if not all, of the whole self in learning

about the world” (p. 32). Finally, *learning* is about attending to purpose, perceiving the interconnectedness of the world, and expanding one’s universe. This ontology enriches individuals’ understanding of themselves in relation to truth, compassion, ethical action, spirituality, meaning-making, self-expression, and ultimately the human experience (pp. 60-61). An integrative form of higher education which honors the inner and outer worlds of individuals motivates students in such a way that he or she genuinely feels that anything is possible (p. 65).

Transformation, Contemplation, and Experience in Higher Education

Palmer and Zajonc (2010) further discuss the types of practices that ought to be a part of today’s colleges and universities. This includes a study of the experiential, contemplative, and transformative dimensions of higher education, which lend themselves to the operational by giving us a vernacular in which to discuss the ontological implications of CRISPA. Palmer and Zajonc (2010) were interested in the transformational, contemplative, and experiential domains of higher education for the ways in which these areas help to evoke essential connections for students while making their (and the faculty’s) lives more meaningful and altruistic.

The unified element in Palmer and Zajonc’s (2010) perspective is that which underscores their discourse: education is about the lived human experience, and dimensions of that experience (i.e., cognitive, emotional, physical, spiritual, and social) for students. In discussing “transformation,” the authors argue that growth in any fashion is the result of faculties of insight, which allow us to see and live the answers. Aesthetics is a conduit for this type of knowing, which in turn allows individuals the opportunity to

explore intense, sustained, active, and experiential modalities of the engagement required of deeper meaning-making (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010, p. 105).

Palmer and Zajonc (2010) unpacked these ideas further, stating that after many decades of research and writing, institutions of higher education seldom embrace a genuinely transformative view. They went on to say that higher education has a responsibility to balance its informative tasks with the transformative, which in Palmer and Zajonc's eyes is of equal or greater importance. Such practices ensure that individuals not only engage with the curriculum in a deep and highly personal manner, but that the essential developmental stages of the adult learner are also honored in the process.

Palmer and Zajonc (2010) explored the impact of such work by describing the implications of the experiential, contemplative, and transformative. The *experiential* offers students formal opportunities to pursue experiential learning in college while giving them the chance to live life's great questions in real time (p. 108). Reflection is a key aspect of the integration of experience or service learning, and that intellectual framing or introspection creates, in turn, the real and lasting matter of meaning-making.

Next, *contemplation* means to live not only the questions, but the experiences, concepts, and ideas as well. Zajonc (2009) examined contemplation in the spiritual and meditative realm. Wanting to give application to the work as well as rationale to his skeptics, he described a phenomenology of experience that, in turn, supports contemplative cognition. He wrote that "rather than thinking of our experiences as merely subjective impressions, we set aside all notions of a real world beyond experience and

stay with the experience itself” (p. 145). Zajonc (2009) suggested that we let ourselves truly experience through acts of discernment, insight (which is expressed through imagination), relationships, metamorphosis and agency (p. 156). These practices, according to Zajonc, not only change who we are, but also how we act in the world (p. 207). For college students, a contemplative curriculum offers a special opportunity for individuals to consider the intersection of their studies, vocation, and purpose, and thus their intrinsic motivation for engaging in and completing a college program of choice.

Ultimately, and as a result of the aforementioned, *transformation* takes place. As described previously, transformation occurs as a result of intense, sustained, experiential modalities of engagement. Transformation could also be described as resulting from the harnessing of adversity (Stoltz, 2014), or the tension between silence and noise, as Brittany Robinson, a participant in this study, would later say in our interview (communication with author, September 16, 2013). Transformation is a type of alchemy for students. If alchemy turns lead into gold, transformation turns conflict (cognitive or otherwise) into purpose (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010), grit, persistence, tenacity, and resilience (Stoltz, 2014).

Each of these traits is critical to college student success. Palmer and Zajonc (2010) shared that empathetic and imaginative knowing underscores the transformative processes that ensure that a new way of seeing becomes possible (p. 106). The authors stated that transformative learning in higher education rests on an enriched view of the human being, one that affirms our multidimensional nature and fundamental malleability (p. 107). In essence, these methods help to open students up in ways that may help them

to better align their individual interests with their purpose, gifts and passions. For students to be successful in college or life, educators must facilitate and harness intellectual conflicts that sometimes arise across multidimensional areas in support of catalysts and transformation. Integrative curriculum and instruction, lesson plans, and practices that offer individuals the opportunity to encounter, understand, and appreciate themselves and others in multi-faceted ways may in turn help students more deeply connect with their passions, pursuits, and purposes.

Conclusion

In summary, the research provides support that CRISPA may hold valuable implications for higher education as well as an enlivened integrated college curriculum. Moreover, we find complementary synergies between Palmer and Zajonc's (2010) view of an integrated curriculum and current research on the outcomes of aesthetics for teaching and learning (Buchenau, 2013; Crawford, 1974; Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 1998, 2001a, 2002b; Greene, 1978, 1995, 2001; Girod, 2006; Girod & Wong, 2002; Uhrmacher, 2009; Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2009, Uhrmacher et al., 2013). Thus, for this research, these themes help us to better describe and infer the significance of the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded college educators for higher education and education in general.

This study is important for several reasons. First, it advances Moroye and Uhrmacher's (2009) research on the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning by investigating the aesthetic themes in higher education. Second, while much research has been done to identify the implications of the aesthetic themes for K-12 achievement, little

has been done on how aesthetics in education affects college-level students. Third, because teachers have the ability to create pedagogical change within an institution, this study may provide an opportunity to bridge aesthetic education with college curriculum and instruction, which has rarely been experienced in higher education outside of the arts. Finally, by utilizing Palmer and Zajonc's (2010) integrated view of curriculum and instruction for higher education, we may gain additional insight into the applications and implications of the aesthetic themes for college classrooms and education in general.

In the next chapter, I provide an overview of the research methodology and as such a description of educational connoisseurship and criticism as an arts-based qualitative method of inquiry (Eisner 1998, 2002b). Credibility through triangulation, the aesthetic lens and systems of inquiry are presented. Research questions, study design, participants, data collection and limitations are also discussed.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Educational Connoisseurship and Criticism

Educational connoisseurship and criticism (hereafter referred to as educational criticism) is an arts-based qualitative method of inquiry initiated by Eisner (1998, 2002b). A study of the applications of aesthetics is essentially a study of the philosophy concerned with beauty and the standards for judging works of art. If education is art, pedagogy is one's palette. In this analogy, the classroom perhaps can be likened to a canvas, stage, or theatre. Teaching then becomes the art form. Educational criticism, therefore, is a complementary research approach. Through connoisseurship and critique, the methodology examines the nuances and facets of the presentation and production of education, much like a connoisseur of art would note the worthiness of a painting on sensible observations concerning historical influence, use of color, choice of medium, and style of brush stroke.

The Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning gives a definition and pedagogical application to a philosophy traditionally concerned with the analysis of concepts such as beauty and standards for judging works of art (Greene, 2001). Together, CRISPA puts forth eloquent dimensions that, once experienced, transform a student's observations of the world and acquisition of knowledge. Thus, the intent of the educational criticism method aligns with the intent of my study: to improve educational practice as a whole

through our understanding of what aesthetically-minded teachers contribute to college classrooms and educational practices in general.

Educational Criticism: Establishing Credibility through Triangulation

Regarding the reliability and validity of a research design, Eisner (2002b) argued that

what we can productively ask of a set of ideas is not whether it is really true, but whether it is useful, whether it allows one to do one's work more effectively, whether it enable some to perceive the phenomenon in more complex and subtle ways, whether it expands ones intelligence in dealing with important problems. (p. 237)

Utilizing this definition as a lens through which to view the purpose of establishing credibility, Eisner (2002b) cited three sources of evidence used in criticism: structural corroboration, consensual validation, and referential adequacy. Structural corroboration is a process of gathering data or information and using it to establish links (p. 237).

Evidence is structurally corroborative when one aspect of the research validates another or, in other words, when the facts prove to be consistent. For my study, I utilized three primary forms of data to ensure triangulation: teacher interviews (both formal and informal), observations and the literature. Teacher artifacts and observations that attend to the teacher, environment, and students' perceptions were also considered. Through the examination of each, themes deduced from recurrent behaviors or aberrations and contradictory events aided in establishing credibility. It should be noted that this aspect of the methodology relied heavily on my ability to find evidence effectively to support my initial observations and impressions (Eisner, 2002b, p. 238).

A second aspect of triangulation is required in order to validate the observations of the researcher in his or her structural corroboration description. Consensual validation ensures that the observations made in the structural corroboration process adequately answer the questions and are secured by another form of evidence (Eisner, 2002b, p. 238). Like holding up a mirror to see something you just viewed from yet another angle, I shared my findings and observations with my participants (in particular, those observed) in order to seek consensus on accuracy. The more closely teachers and students described aspects of the phenomenon in ways that aligned with my observations or findings, the more the reflection in the mirror could be trusted, regardless of how it was positioned.

The third criterion used to assess educational criticism was referential adequacy, which aimed to validate the observations of the educational critic through yet another lens. Eisner (2002b) stated, “We use the critic’s work as a set of cues that enable us to perceive what has been neglected” (p. 239). The ability to accurately capture in detail the nuances of each aspect of the data as it is collected, processed, and articulated is as critical as guideposts when navigating a new or complex terrain (Eisner, 2002b, p. 239). Essentially, referential adequacy means to describe the setting adequately in such a way as to illuminate something not seen before. What is sought in this process is not the creation of one final definitive criticism, but rather the expansion of understanding by the criticism as we read (Eisner, 2002b, p. 240). Similarly, this research aims to provide expanded understanding for its readers concerning the significance of the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded educators for higher education and education in general.

Educational Criticism and the Aesthetic Lens

For this section of the research, the lens of the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning acts as an overlay in order to identify new hues of classroom practices through a method of educational criticism that takes its lead from literature, theater, film, music, and the visual arts (Eisner, 2002a). The reader will find poems and quotations throughout this study that either preface or frame the interview or vignette presented. This was done with the intention and in support of the aesthetic lens. Eisner (1994) wrote that knowing is related in a fundamental way to the experience that the senses make possible (p. 29). Palmer and Zajonc (2010) also talked about a deeper kind of understanding, which occurs as a result of intuitive and emotional knowledge (p. 36). Poetry and quotations allow space for both of these ontological approaches to cultivate meaning-making and thus have been integrated throughout this paper in support of the research itself.

Defined as that which is concerned with beauty—and also as a set of principles determined to serve the very thing with which it is enamored—the aesthetic lens is a powerful component to the researcher’s methodology. In this study, my aim was to not only observe and appreciate what is beautiful (captivating college classrooms), but to also examine the set of principles (aesthetic themes) that I believe is the underlying work of that which is beautiful (applications of aesthetic themes).

In terms of evaluating the inner workings of college institutions, Young (1997) stated, “Aesthetics refracts at least and illuminates at best, the other values of the academy” (p. 154). Young goes on to say that aesthetic truth is lyrical more than linear, and its elements consist of harmony, symbolization, emotion, intuition, and unity (p.

155). Each of these elements is of value in addressing the practices of aesthetically-minded college instructors who aim to engage students through art applications for the purpose of a broader set of understandings. Hutchins's (1949) writings support this notion as well, in that he perceived that the intellect is rooted in philosophy and principles of that which cannot be answered by rational science. Therefore, it stands to reason that the "whys" of humanity are perhaps only revealed to us through the arts and, as such, aesthetics is (by way of its very nature) an appropriate lens through which to view college classroom instruction, just as much as it is a guide that can show us the way.

System of Inquiry: Description, Interpretation, Evaluation, and Themes

Educational criticism requires that the researcher describes, interprets, evaluates, and discerns themes, although these distinctions are, as Eisner (2002b) pointed out, "sharper on paper than in fact" (p. 225). The descriptive aspect of educational criticism is intended to allow the reader to "participate vicariously" in the educational situation, which points to the use of literary vignettes (p. 226). Although the researcher's acts of selecting what to include and what to leave out of a vignette are considered interpretive acts, interpretation also includes connecting the events to relevant literature and to ask what the situation means to those involved. Additionally, the descriptive dimension contains an element of selectivity. In Eisner's (1998) words, "The skilled teacher knows what to neglect. The competent student knows what to focus upon" (p. 90).

For my study, I describe the practice of aesthetically-minded college educators who purposefully utilize the aesthetic themes (CRISPA). Instructional strategies, curricular choices, and classroom artifacts are written into vignettes as a part of capturing

what is meaningful or significant. Additionally, the teachers' affect is described along with the environment and curricular culture. Indicators of student success are taken into consideration as well as evidence of captivating practices, curricular frameworks, and overall student engagement strategies.

Interpretation is the second layer of educational criticism's system of inquiry. If description can be thought of as giving an account *of*, interpretation can be regarded as accounting *for* (Eisner, 1998, p. 95). Interpretation allows the researcher to illuminate the potential consequences of practices observed by providing reasons that account for what has been witnessed or experienced. Interpretation is preoccupied with asking questions like: What does the situation mean to those involved? How does this classroom operate? and Which ideas, concepts, or theories can be used to explain its major features?

This study addresses interpretation by considering the intentional, curricular, structural, pedagogical, and evaluative. Through interpretation, I make connections between observations and the research. This process not only *reveals* what has been observed, but also addresses what has been *concealed*. To this end, the null and hidden curricula come to light as well. Each of these aspects and their associated set of observations is considered by holding them up against the theoretical frameworks from which they are borne. This is important as this study investigates the significance of the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded college educators who utilize Moroye and Uhrmacher's (2009) Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (CRISPA), thus aiming not only to develop Dewey's (1934) aesthetic educational ideas regarding the

holistic conception of experience, but to also deepen concepts related to the CRISPA framework and its applications for higher education.

Next, because “the point of educational criticism is to improve the educational process,” evaluation is used to show the educational significance of what has been described and interpreted (Eisner, 2002b, p. 233). This third stage in the system of inquiry speaks to Eisner’s (2002b) belief that education seeks to not merely change students, but to enhance their lives (p. 98). It is the responsibility of the educational critic to not just merely describe, but to appraise. Moreover, Eisner (2002b) believed that there can be no claim about the state of education without a conception of what is educationally virtuous. Young (1997) presented a discourse on the upholding of fundamental values in higher education. Aesthetics is one of the inarguable aspects of the human learning experience of which, as Young (1997) stated we must not lose sight. Drawing from these scholars and others, I consider the sound interpretations and theories of those who have studied aesthetics for education, as well as student success in college settings. I offer my evaluation on the practices of aesthetically-minded college educators by juxtaposing my data and findings to that which we consider essential to the objectives of student engagement and the goals of higher education.

From these evaluations, and also from the descriptions and interpretations, a fourth stage emerged from this methodology’s system of inquiry: the themes. Themes in educational criticism are the “recurring messages that pervade the situation . . . a theme is like a pervasive quality” (Eisner, 1998, p. 104). They are, in short, lessons to be learned. Eisner points out that we learn from a single case all the time, whether by folktale,

fictional, or nonfictional stories. The combination of description, interpretation, and evaluation will allow me to make connections in such a way as to ultimately deduce essential themes that resonate throughout the data and thus present themselves in support of the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded college educators.

Research Questions and Study Design

The following served as my guiding research questions with an accompanying clarification of terms:

1. What are the intentions of aesthetically-minded educators who purposefully utilize the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (CRISPA) in higher education? For this study, I interviewed each aesthetically-minded educator about his or her practice, perspective, and philosophy regarding aesthetics in education. I investigated why he/she chooses to implement aesthetics in college classroom instruction and how his/her beliefs regarding aesthetics in education affect his/her intentions (see Appendix A). Each interview lasted for approximately 1 hour.

2. How do the aesthetic themes (CRISPA) operationalize in college classrooms? Following the individual interviews, I observed teachers practicing in their classrooms. I examined the curricular, structural, pedagogical, and evaluative dimensions of schooling in relation to educators' intentions. I utilized systems of inquiry from educational criticism to describe and interpret my observations. I then evaluated these findings against the existing research and foundational frameworks to determine what is significant. Eisner (1998) stated that when there is a prefigured focus, the emergence of the unanticipated can command special attention (p. 177). In this way, I remained open to

the possibility of the aesthetic themes being present, but also to the possibility that they were not. I also remained open to detecting variations on the themes, and perhaps additional themes that may not have been previously identified in the CRISPA framework. Table 1 below illustrates the participants, timelines, and contributions involved in this study. Note that the first four participants provided interviews but not an opportunity for observation. The final three participants provided both interviews and observations at their respective campuses.

Table 1

Aesthetically Minded Participants

Participant	Affiliated College or University	Date Interviewed	Date Observed
Dr. Bruce Uhrmacher	University of Denver	Summer 2014	Not Observed
Dr. Christy Moroye	Northern University of Colorado,	Fall 2014	Not Observed
Dr. Kristen Olsen	University of Denver	Winter 2015	Not Observed
*Dr. Clair Reisner	University of Avalon	Winter 2015	Not Observed
*Dr. Brittany Robinson	Rivergate College	Summer 2013	Observed September 2013
*Dr. David Collins	Lamott University	Summer 2013	Observed September 2013
*Dr. Michael Reed	Arsdale State University	Winter 2015	Observed February 2015

** A pseudonym has been provided for this participant and their respective college campus*

3. *What is the significance of the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded educators for higher education and for education in general?* From interviews, observations, and vignettes collected across each of the three research questions, an evaluative process pointed toward the formation of a final set of themes. I ultimately conducted my analysis through a triangulation of (a) my observations and data collection,

(b) emerging themes viewed through an aesthetic lens, and (c) the literature and current research.

Though I hypothesized that these themes would include the aesthetic dimensions, I remained open to the possibility that they may not. Depending on my ability to see and understand the research correctly, I examined these themes closely as a final step in the system of inquiry in order to detect subtle nuances in teachers' practice. These nuances (which may or may not be aesthetic in nature) may ultimately lead to a greater understanding of aesthetically-minded college classroom strategies and associated implications for curriculum and instruction in higher education. These outcomes are significant for two groups: those concerned with aesthetics in education and those concerned with engaging college classroom practices. In addressing both, and thus contributing new research to the body of knowledge, I answer the third and final question posed in this study.

Data Collection

Interviewing, according to Fetterman (2010), is one of the most important data-gathering techniques (p. 40). Interviews explain and put into larger context what the researcher sees and experiences. In this study, the researcher utilized interviewing as an initial data collection technique. In addition, observations were conducted in order to pair intentions with the operational and thus identify subsequent themes. In qualitative studies, observations and field notes are also viewed as a powerful data collection tool. Participant observation helps a researcher to capture the basic beliefs, hopes, and expectations of the people under study (Fetterman, 2010, p. 37). In this study, seven

aesthetically-minded college educators across the United States were interviewed and three were observed. Locations of interviews and observations spanned Colorado, Ohio, Illinois, and North Dakota.

Through my connections with the University of Denver, I was able to identify my participants by beginning with Uhrmacher and Moroye, then conducting a snowball sampling. Though identifying individuals familiar with CRISPA was not difficult, segmenting a group whom I could observe teaching with the framework in a college classroom setting was challenging. This was partly due to scheduling and partly to the fact that the use of CRISPA in a higher education setting is still a fairly new practice. Though how the framework was being used was not a criterion, it appears that in the last 2 years, participants have become more familiar with it, and thus perhaps more intentional about its use. This made scheduling observations with potential participant easier. Dr. Michael Reed, for instance, having just completed his doctorate work in 2014 and whom I interviewed and observed in the winter of 2015, is perhaps the best example of a participant I would not have had access to when the research began in 2013.

Uhrmacher and Moroye suggested that I connect with Dr. Brittany Robinson, Dr. David Collins, and Dr. Clair Reisner. Uhrmacher later recommended that I also connect with Dr. Kristen Olsen. Dr. Michael Reed's participation rounded out my observation opportunities. Moroye referred him to me in December of 2014. Each of the aforementioned participants embodies the criteria I determined at the onset of the study. The participants (a) are college educators, (b) have an understanding of the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning, (c) have a philosophy of education that includes

aesthetics and aesthetic themes, and (d) intentionally utilize CRISPA in their college classroom instruction. Furthermore, each of the seven participants demonstrated a deeply engrained commitment to the aesthetic themes and their applications for teaching and learning. Each participant had extensive expertise in terms of the constellation of scholars in which much of this research had been founded. It is also noteworthy that each exuded great passion in their role as a college educator and was able to share thoughtful reflections about the path that led them to their aesthetic mindedness as well as to teaching in the classrooms of higher education.

Initial Interviews

I formally interviewed each of the seven participants. The initial interview primarily served to help me fully understand the participant's aesthetic-mindedness, personal educational philosophy and beliefs, his/her description of the CRISPA themes, and each individual's intentions for utilizing them in their practice. The initial interview generally lasted 1 hour. Some were conducted in person and some remote. For each initial interview, I asked each participant the same set of 15 questions (see Appendix B). I conducted these interviews in a variety of locations, depending on the participant. Moroye, Reisner, and Olsen were interviewed over the phone. I interviewed Uhrmacher at the University of Denver, and Collins, Robinson, and Reed at each of their respective college campuses. In each case, I utilized both a handheld recorder and note-taking to capture the nuances of the dialogue.

Observations

Due to timing and location concerns, I was able to observe only three of the seven participants. These individuals included Brittany (Rivergate College), David (Lamott University), and Michael (Arsdale State University). In each institutional setting, I was able to conduct a series of observations: between two to three instructional periods per participant, each lasting an hour to an hour and a half. In total, I logged close to 15 hours of time spent with students and teachers in college classroom settings, and another 15 hours of time spent in interviews, follow-up interviews, associated educational settings and, in some cases, round-tables, student one-on-ones, and even site practicums.

For each observation, participants introduced me to their classes of students, who often greeted me with a warm welcome and sometimes questions about my travels or research. Generally, I sat somewhere near the back of the room with my handheld recorder on, my laptop open, and a notepad beside me. I found it most helpful to capture what I saw in typed notes while the recorder captured what was being said and shared between classmates and their instructor. This approach allowed me to interrogate the observation from multiple perspectives while also allowing for the opportunity to calibrate my typed or written notes with audio bytes that helped to fill in the gaps or answer lingering questions. After each observation, I transcribed my recordings in full in order to immerse myself in the details of the observation. I then revisited the transcriptions, framing them instead as a narrative, adding context and cadence in preparation for the vignettes they would later become. Though this process was not an expeditious one, it allowed me time to practice perceptivity and, as a result, to be more

fully engrained with the research and the experience as a whole. In the end, I was able to gather extremely authentic accounts regarding the operationalized intentions of aesthetically-minded college educators.

Follow-Up Interviews

In the cases of Brittany, David, and Michael, who I spent time with on campus and in person, additional follow-up interviews occurred intermittently. In many cases, these were captured as dialogue that sprang up impromptu over leisurely walks across the campus, shared meals, after office hours, or during meetings with students. Some of the most richly detailed reflections were provided in moments like this. I quickly learned after my first set of interviews and observations with Brittany to keep my recorder available at all times. It became common practice with Brittany, David, and Michael for me to flip the recorder back on when the conversation naturally turned to aesthetics as not only a part of the classroom but, in many cases, a part of each individual's deeply engrained belief systems that permeated many areas of their lives. Each participant gave me permission to do so in these candid and unplanned instances.

The Campuses

Though seven participants are included in this study, I observed only three at their respective campuses. As such, three liberal studies colleges served as the sites for my observations. These included Lamott University, Rivergate College, and Arsdale State University. First, Lamott University was founded in 1830 and as such is considered one of the oldest universities in its region. Nearly 3,500 students attend Lamott each year. Second, Rivergate College was founded in 1853. Listed one of the top tier national liberal

arts colleges, Rivergate offers 40 academic majors and pre-professional programs to approximately 2,000 undergrads a year. Last, Arsdale State University was founded in 1913 and is now considered the third largest university in its region. The university awards undergraduate degrees in more than 60 programs of study and graduate degrees in 10 fields. Arsdale is composed of four main academic divisions and serves nearly 3,500 students annually.

Though each campus was unique in its location, history, and educational offerings, they shared a set of commonalities including their enthusiasm for pre-service teacher education, transformational models in the field and a genuine commitment to developing individuals through a well-rounded collegiate experience. In addition, each university had a charming, welcoming feel about it that seemed to accent the thoughtful, dedicated instructional practices occurring across the campuses. Whether covered in fall leaves, rain puddles, or snow, each was inviting, scholarly, and supported by incredibly passionate faculty. As such, the observation sites themselves served as a complementary accent to the inspiring practices taking place inside their brick and mortar walls.

Limitations of the Study

The primary limitation of this study is that I chose to interview my dissertation Chairman, Dr. Bruce Uhrmacher, who subsequently is also a major contributor to the CRISPA framework that this study's essential questions include. As such, it was important for the authenticity of the research to capture Uhrmacher's story along with that of the other aesthetically-minded college educators who participated in order to (a) adequately explain the framework itself, and (b) adequately describe the significance and

practices of aesthetically minded college educators for higher education and education in general. In hindsight, the choice to interview Bruce could be seen as a limitation.

Although in this case the outcomes were highly favorable, the same interaction in future dissertation research methodologies could contain, or be seen as, a short-shortcoming. It could be argued for instance, that interviewing a dissertation Chair may leave doubt in the reader's mind regarding the validity of the questions asked or argued. Thus the probing and/or questioning that is conducted as a part of one's research methodology in terms of validity, authenticity, ethical foundations, and scholarly debate might be compromised given the relationship between researcher and reviewer.

In this study, however, the relationship and interaction between my dissertation Chair and I did not result in a mundane or falsified conceding between parties; rather the dynamics and interaction of researcher/Chair served to strengthen the discourse and thus the researcher's ability to share an honest, open, and transformative account of her participants and findings. This could be contributed to outcomes that are in fact supported by the implications of this study in that aesthetically-minded college educators who utilize CRISPA could be viewed as encompassing a transformative leadership style that allows for students and teachers alike to act with authenticity, innovation, creativity, motivation, morality, and heightened performance (Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002; Jung, Chow, & Wu, 2003). In either case, it is my recommendation to be highly mindful of the possible outcomes of this investigative approach and thus to be thoughtful about how intentions, perceptions, and themes may be influenced by the student-professor and/or researcher-reviewer relationship.

About the Researcher

With nearly 15 years of experience in the field of education, I have witnessed the “captivating” qualities of the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (CRISPA) in classrooms across the country. Though I may not have had the proper vernacular or CRISPA framework with which to define my practice when I first began teaching at my grandparent’s private school in 2001, this powerful set of themes has nonetheless been a part of my philosophy of education from very early on.

From K-12 to post-secondary institutions, I have observed these seemingly “magical” domains at work time and time again. Whether teaching Kindergarten classes in Clovis, California, third grade in Aurora and Denver Colorado, or working in the nonprofit space for Think 360 Arts to bring teachers and artists together to plan the curriculum, the aesthetic themes were there. They presented themselves again as I went to work in curriculum development for higher education in 2011 for a company based in San Diego, California. Planning side-by-side with administrators in the nonprofit and for-profit sector, I witnessed college institutional leadership long for such strategies both online and in face-to-face settings. Today, as Dean of Curriculum for both online and ground campuses at a higher education institution based in Tampa, Florida, I have the joy and privilege of serving nearly 14,000 students nationwide. In this role, I have been able to operationalize the aesthetic themes successfully in the design, development, and implementation of transformational curriculum and pedagogy that changes the lives of our unique and at-risk student population.

Additionally, and perhaps as importantly, I can speak personally to the way that CRISPA (or the presence of aesthetics in my practice) transformed how I think about living and learning. The recognition and articulation of the aesthetic themes, for me, was a catalyst that prompted me to reconsider (and perhaps reconceptualize) the way I connected to and reflected upon the field of education, my own journey first as a student then as a teacher, as well as the ideas, choices, pursuits, and purpose that had shaped my world. To that end, I believe that CRISPA—or any combination of aesthetic themes—as there are many possible variations on this framework—not only enhances the way that we learn, but also the way that we live. Grounded firmly in educational theory, the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning enhance the high notes of its aesthetic foundations and thus associated principles such as spirituality (Palmer, 2004), experience, contemplation, and transformation (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010), representation (Dewey, 1934), and interpretation (Eisner, 2002a, 2002b; Greene, 2001). These powerful and profound aspects of the human experience, as they apply to discovering our world more fully, are present when all or part of the dimensions is present.

As a student, I have personally experienced these phenomena. As an educator who has worked across the sectors, I have witnessed the powerful implications of aesthetics in the lives of troubled youth, at-risk populations, gifted children, artists, teaching artists and; moreover, in the classrooms of educators who served these individuals. As a professional curriculum writer, I have integrated aesthetic themes into college curriculum and into online distance education models across the country. Now, as a researcher, I examine the captivating applications of this powerful framework as it

relates to the significance of the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded college educators for higher education and education in general.

CHAPTER 4: DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

What is art? Nature concentrated (Balzac as cited by Ballou, 1884, p. 33).

Introduction

The purpose of this study was first to address the intentions of aesthetically-minded educators and, second, to investigate how their intentions operationalize in a college classroom. Together, the outcomes of these two inquiries lead us to examine the third question posed in this study and, as such, to infer the significance of the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded college educators for higher education and education in general. In Section 1: The Intentional, I present the full interviews of the seven participants who are included in this study. To address Eisner's (2002b) first question, "What does this mean to those involved?" I extract four overarching themes that encompass the philosophy, purpose, passions, and pedagogy of my participants in relation to their practice as aesthetically-minded college educators. In Section 2: The Operational, I observe three of the seven participants in their college classroom settings in order to address Eisner's (2002b) second question, "How does this classroom operate?" In this section, I present a series of vignettes that describe the classroom environment when CRISPA is present in the college curricula. From this, I extract five additional subthemes or engagement strategies that occur when CRISPA is operationalized.

In order to unearth greater understanding of the significance of the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded college educators, I draw upon Palmer and Zajonc's (2010) view of an integrative form of higher education. This framework provides a research-based approach to inferring and defining the applications of the aesthetic themes for college classrooms. In addition, the major dimensions of schooling are utilized as appropriate in the consideration of both the intentional and the operational. An applied methodology of educational criticism is used to identify the themes that surface through a triangulation of interviews, observations, and the correlated body of scholarship.

What Does the Experience Mean to Those Involved?

Eisner (2002b) determined that there were five major dimensions of schooling, including the intentional, the structural, the curricular, the pedagogical, and the evaluative. To answer my first research question, "What are the intentions of aesthetically minded college educators?" I focus here primarily on the intentional dimension, which addresses the goals or aims of the classroom. Where Eisner (1998) described the intentional in terms of "what schools aim to accomplish" (p. 72), this study refers to the intentions of the college educators. I am not concerned with the overall mission of the higher education institution.

All seven participants currently teach in a college classroom setting or have taught in higher education institutions. Though not an initial requirement of the study, each of the seven participants also currently teaches or has taught pre-service K-12 teachers. In this research, a set of themes common to all seven educators emerged from the interviews in relation to their intentions and included a commitment to the following set of beliefs

and philosophies: (a) the wow experience, (b) transformational catalysts, (c) Forms of energy, and (d) promoting innovation in teacher education. In all cases, each of the seven participants expressed a strong sense of responsibility and advocacy to ensure joy, care, and meaningful experiences for students and teachers alike.

How Does This Classroom Operate?

In thinking about how the classroom operates, I turn again to Eisner's (1991) concepts on schooling. Here, I reference the structural, curricular, pedagogical and, where appropriate, evaluative dimensions of the classroom. To answer my second research question, "How do the aesthetic themes (CRISPA) operationalize in college classrooms?" I turn to the major areas of schooling in terms of the organization of the learning (structural), the goals of the content (curricular), how the curriculum is delivered (pedagogical), and how the outcomes are measured (evaluative). In addition, I utilize Palmer and Zajonc's (2010) view of experience, contemplation, and transformation to help illuminate and describe the practices of aesthetically-minded college educators.

In this study, three of the seven participants were observed teaching at liberal studies colleges across the country. Each participant teaches pre-service teachers in college classrooms. Depending on the site and class schedule, each aesthetically minded educator was observed utilizing the CRISPA framework for two to three instructional sessions. Each instructional session was no less than 1 hour each. A second set of themes (presented as subthemes) emerged when describing how the aesthetic themes operationalize in college classrooms. These themes included a set of engagement strategies defined as follows: (a) orchestrating transposition, (b) stimulating recall and

introspection, (c) synthesizing individualization, (d) composing interpretation, and (e) actualizing connoisseurship.

Section 1: The Intentional

“Eagles”

Eagles are a majestic species...living in the thin searing air...
building
nests on precipitous ledges...
they are endangered...but unafraid...
An eagle’s nest is an inverted dimple...made of ready smiles...
unbleached
saris...available arms...and clean soap smells...
to withstand all of the elements...
Nestled in the chocolate chaos...destined to become:
roller skaters
submarine eaters
telephone talkers
people
are improperly imprinted ducklings...
Eagles perched...on those precipitous ledges...insist upon
teaching...
the young...to fly... (Giovanni, 1996, p. 320)

Dr. Bruce Uhrmacher: The Wow Experience

The wow experience is the first of four core intentions of aesthetically-minded college educators. The wow experience is a moment of awe, surprise, and fascination. This theme is similar to that of the “great experience” (Ingman, 2013), in that it highlights experiences in life that find their worth in and of themselves and, when compiled, constitute a life well lived (p. 402). These moments, according to Uhrmacher, are bright, bold and richly memorable. In the following interview, Bruce describes his intentions as an aesthetically-minded educator and how the desire to create great experiences—wow experiences—across the span of his career and research eventually

found its outlet in CRISPA. Bruce had noted Ingman's (2013) research during our interview, adding support for the fact that the wow experience builds upon the types of experiences that embody a trajectory of preparation for future living (p. 415). Bruce had gone on to say that these types of experiences are perhaps the most important of all.

Looking back, it was what Bruce shared at the end of our interview that stayed with me the longest. Over the next several months, additional research would be conducted, campus visits and interviews would be held, the triangulation of my research with the literature would occur, and affirmations and observations would be made. I did not know when this study began how much of what he said then would permeate all of the above—presenting itself in many forms and weaving itself into the curriculum, the classroom, individual intentions, and the astounding take-aways that were, of course, the result.

“You’ll have to piece this together if you use it,” Bruce said as he leaned back in his chair.

If you look at my story, there was this interest in creating meaningful education that manifests or could have manifested in various ways over the years of my life. I think this idea of a ‘wow’ experience of aesthetic experiences has been a part of me since being a very young kid. I think that it found its outlet finally in CRISPA—or at least that is how I would look at it at some level. Ben Ingman used this label in his dissertation—he talked about great experiences. I think in some ways that’s what I’m after and to create those in schools and classrooms.

His words left me thinking that every good and worthwhile thing I have ever done was a wow experience: galloping a horse bareback at full speed down a beach in Nicaragua; sky diving and taking in the horizon at 120 miles an hour from 10,000 feet up in the sky; sitting on the floor and writing a poem that captures a moment just right; or recognizing the domino effect of a single positive comment or a grateful action, and how it impacts friends and loved ones. A wow moment is cathartic, elegant, and profound. You feel it from the inside out. It feels bigger than oneself. It feels meaningful. Spiritual. Unforgettable. Bruce would later say that these kinds of moments propel us forward—indeed they do.

It is a beautiful sunny day in Denver, Colorado. Graduation day, in fact, and the campus seems to shimmer with its bright green lawns and blooming rosebushes. I am sitting with Bruce in his office in the Margery Reed Building. Surrounded by books and many stacks of papers, we catch up briefly before we begin. He has played a large part in my life over the years as a professor and chair throughout my coursework at the University of Denver; someone I've looked up to, someone who has challenged and inspired me. Great teachers do this; great professors perhaps even more so. This study, in part, is about aesthetically-minded college educators like Bruce—about their intentions, their practices, and what occurs for students because of them.

I take out my pen and paper, turn on the microphone, and ask Bruce to share with me his story and of how he found himself teaching teachers in the classrooms of higher education. Bruce leans back, folds his hands, smiles warmly, and then begins:

I was an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin looking for a major and I gravitated towards the liberal arts, specifically philosophy and history. I was very concerned early on with what I was going to do with it. It was in the later 70s—between '76 and '79 I think—and I decided that what I really wanted was to become a college professor. The next question was to determine a professor in what. Although the history department at the University of Wisconsin was amazing and I was learning so much, I didn't feel that I was a history kind of person. I had a practical bent and I think that education started to speak to me because I was looking for a practical outlet with my degree. [Pauses] Let me backtrack a little. I had spent some time trying to create an independent major. I had sort of a wild idea. [Smiles] When I look back, it was sort of an intellectual history of western ideas but I threw in a bit of a creative angle and I called it “creative perspectives.” I was looking for a practical outlet, which was why the creativity part was important to me. I finally found a philosophy professor who sat on the committee that approved these kinds of things and he told me that I most likely didn't have a chance here. So I regrouped and gave it some more thought. I realized that part of my struggle was a pedagogical issue. It was a teaching issue about how we think about knowledge. I may or may not have known it entirely then but my ideas were already moving toward the question of “what is knowledge,” and eventually I'd become a curriculum person.

Today Bruce is a professor of education and researcher for the Morgridge College of Education at the University of Denver. In addition to his work with the university, he

also serves as the faculty advisor for the AEIC, cosponsored by the Morgridge College of Education and Think 360 Arts. Affiliated with a number of professional organizations and journals, Bruce has contributed to the field in many ways, not only through his teaching and research, but also as president of the American Association for Teaching and Curriculum, as the coeditor of *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue*, and as book-reviewer for the *International Journal of Leadership and Education*. It is inspiring and touching to consider how he got his start, and the many, many roads he would travel in the time that expanded from this account of his early college years. Bruce continues,

My very first course was called Radical School Reform. Now remember we're in Madison Wisconsin, and it's right around 1975, just coming out of the 60s. You'll also recall that the Vietnam War didn't really end until the 70s and there was sort of that lingering feeling of all things 60s...so radical school reform made perfect sense for the times. One of the things we did during that time was visit alternative schools. I visited several and one of them was called City School. Low and behold I would end up doing my student teaching there. From the very start I was never a "traditional teacher." I never had to teach the same subject several times a day. I never had to even teach one subject. I created my own curriculum from the very start. I never used textbooks and when I graduated in 1979 I moved to Ogden, Utah, where I taught in two different types of alternative schools—public schools mind you. They weren't private schools, but we had a lot of latitude and freedom. If you would have asked me back then what's great about alternative schools I would have told you how great they were for kids and I think that's absolutely

true but as I got older I realized how good they were for teachers. Or at least teachers like myself who wanted flexibility and freedom to really do what I thought was good education.

It strikes me how Bruce's passion for transformational educational practices and his position within the spectrum of the field cultivated itself in the early stages of his career. His interest in a real and practical contribution had always been simply to do what is best for teaching and learning—moreover, to do what is best for students, to present an opportunity for the wow experience. Perhaps it is here that Bruce's fascination with the nuances of the intellectual palette began.

The word *wow* first appeared in the English language in 1513, presumably because of its sound. It is an onomatopoeic word, like buzz or bang. Wow is an exclamation of surprise and awe (O'Connor, 2012). Eisner (1991), too, was fascinated with the quality of experience. At the most sophisticated level, we call them connoisseurs, he said—"those who learn to see aspects of the world that our both subtle and complex (p. 17)". Just as there are different variations of wine that evoke different responses from the senses, there are variations on experience as well. Some are smooth and dark, some earthy and lingering, and some bright, bold, and richly memorable. If an oenophile were to describe the wow experience, he might define it in terms of the latter: expressive in color, full-bodied, and certainly unforgettable. "So that's how I decided to become a teacher," Bruce continues,

Some years later I went into desegregation work and I got a job at the University of Utah in what was called the Mountain West Desegregation Center and our job

was to work with schools that had desegregated voluntarily or involuntarily and try to help them make some progress. Again, that kept me more on the curriculum side of things. We had some federal money so we were able to distribute that to schools and try to make those things happen in local school districts. Knowing this was all federal money in the back of my mind I knew it would not be a permanent job. The truth was that I still had this idea of going back to graduate school and eventually hoping to become a college professor. I finally made that happen and so here I am.

I ask Bruce next where the love of the arts began for him. He tells me that he has always been somewhat artistically inclined:

If I had the talent, I think that I would have wanted to become an artist—but as it turns out, I didn't have the talent. I tried to draw. I tried to do watercolor in high school. I gravitated towards film—photography and filmmaking. If I had stuck with it I could have ended up somewhere in film making, god knows doing what, but I had a proclivity towards those two mediums. I have a decent eye for what makes a good picture but in any case I was going down a different path. Back in this alternative school in Ogden Utah, three of us were creating the curriculum for kids and I was the one who kept bringing in the arts. I would go to the university and bring in these art professors. I had an interest in the arts, threaded throughout my life, but I couldn't really see myself or find a way to turn it into something financial. I didn't know how to get a job doing that.

Similar to his deep desire to do what is best for education, Bruce's gravitation towards the arts and the aesthetic has been a part of his journey all along. It is evident that there was always an awareness—a mindfulness, if you will—about the impact of art on learning.

I asked Bruce about this, seeking clarification: “How did you know to bring an artist into your classroom to help teach? Was that done without prompting or without having seen it in a different environment? What made the connection for you?” While Bruce thought, I added, “It seems that the ways you went about thinking about education, curriculum, and how we learn were always very natural for you.” “That’s right. That’s right,” he answers, “So I was still a social studies guy but I did bring in the arts because I had an interest in it.” I interject with a thought that strikes me. Both Brittany and David had certain artistic influences. Brittany’s father and mother were artists. David always had a love of music and writing. “Were your parents artists by chance? Did you have family that were artists?” Bruce smiles. “Well, it’s actually kind of interesting,” he says, “I don’t think I have these books here.” He pauses and looks around the room. He then asks, “How long do you have for this interview?” He smiles and folds his hands again. “As much time as you have,” I respond. Bruce says. “Okay, then. Sit back and relax. Do I have influence?” His voice trails off and his eyes drift past me. He is thinking and smiling again. He continues,

Alright, tell you what, let me finish this one thread and then I’ll go back to the family. I know that eventually we’ll get to CRISPA. So I went to Harvard in 1984. There were two people who really interested me there. One was Eleanor

Duckworth whose work you may have read in my class and the other was Donald Oliver. Oliver's ideas were artistically bent but he was not an artist, per se. He came from a social studies perspective though he was moving towards the idea of narrative alongside artistic types of sensibilities. It was all threaded throughout his work as well. When I went to Stanford, I studied with Dr. Gross who was a social studies professor. Elliot, of course, was my main professor, but I was keeping my options open so that when I graduated I would have the option to land in social studies as well as general curriculum. In the end, I landed this job [at University of Denver] and ended up in general curriculum but things could have worked out differently. Interestingly enough, I didn't go to Elliot specifically to study art or art education. What drew me toward Eisner was really my interest in his ideas on educational criticism and connoisseurship and moreover the way he talked about curriculum.

It is arguable that Bruce's mentors Donald Oliver and Eleanor Duckworth might also have been wow experience enthusiasts. Donald Oliver, whose two main philosophical interests were the development of culture and the systematic study of the human experience, was fascinated with the fabric of everyday life and examining authentic cultural exchange. Eleanor Duckworth, who grounded her works in Piaget and brought a Freirean approach to the classroom, attended to valuing the learner's experience and insights. Both were advocates of feverish dialogue, critical exploration, and a dynamic curriculum that sparked a deepened investigation of social issues and

educational practices. Both might have been said to be advocates of captivating experiences that encourage us to think, investigate, connect, and recall. Bruce adds,

Where things changed for me here was when there was a meeting and the Dean asked me to go to it. One Saturday all the arts people in Denver came together for one day. It was the first time they ever did it and the last time they ever did it. So I met all these people and at the time, the Aesthetic Education Institute was looking to move from UCD to somewhere else and they were hoping for a DU [University of Denver] connection. I was in the right place at the right time you could say. So once that switch happened I threw myself into the arts and took myself out of social studies. I don't really have a subject matter domain like some people do where they are really an expert in something. I'm not an art education person like some people are who really understand and know art education.

I interject again, "You just had an inclination towards it—you always had." Bruce says,

Yes, I have always been interdisciplinary and I suppose I still am. In that sense I'm a little more like Maxine Greene than Elliot. Elliot was always art education. I was not. I was always rather interdisciplinary. Oliver was too and hence our connection. He brought that interdisciplinary piece. So if I had to encapsulate my subject matter it would be interdisciplinary—but that's another story.

Like Oliver and Duckworth, Eisner and Greene were also drawn to the concept of dynamic experiences. To Bruce's point, different fountainheads brought them there. For Oliver, it was social and community based, for Duckworth, it stemmed from an interest in teacher research and critical exploration. For Eisner (2002a), experience stemmed from

the aesthetic, and for Greene (2001) it was founded in existentialism and her advocacy of “wide-awakeness.” Regardless of the center point from which the passion sprang forth, each scholar dedicated their life’s work to a preoccupation with experience, and moreover, bright, rich, and memorable experiences the intellectual palette might respond to with awe, surprise, and admiration—the very definition of the word wow.

Bruce pauses again. “So family—since you asked. I don’t know if this will make it anywhere near your dissertation but two years ago in the month of December, I received an email from someone in Vienna doing genealogy work.” Even as Bruce says this, I know that the story will be included in the study. As mentioned previously, there seems to be an invisible thread that sews together the history underlying the intentions of aesthetically-minded college educators. A family component and artistic influence—be it genetic or philosophical in nature—perhaps underscores those that have an inclination or predisposition toward the aesthetic. Bruce’s story, as it relates to the development of the intentional, is fascinating to me. Bruce continues,

I’m very suspicious of this email but in the correspondence, the person mentioned a few things about a Joseph Urmacher that were kind of right on and I thought, well, that’s interesting. I send a very tentative email in response saying I know a little bit about this Joseph Uhrmacher you’re talking about but that I want to make sure we’re talking about the same individual. The backdrop to this story is that my family came from Austria and more than half of them were killed in the Holocaust so those who made it out were few in number. I think that my Dad had a good sense of who made it out. His nuclear family made it out but they lost a lot of

cousins and aunts and uncles. I didn't think that there were any Uhrmacher's that we were related to me still around but this was interesting so I pursued it. I asked if it was indeed the Jewish Uhrmacher she was looking for and she said yes. She threw in a few more details that resonated that this could be legitimate. It occurred to me that I have more family alive than I knew, which was really interesting. There was a Günter Urmacher in Vienna whose mother had recently passed away. His wife had then started to do some genealogy work just to see if they might discover some additional family lineage. Her search connected them with Linda Urmacher who is also hugely interested in genealogy and these two women who had married into the U(h)rmacher family did this incredible genealogy work. Linda Urmacher was married to Carlos Urmacher and she was just a great historian. Without going into all of the details, there were two brothers and both of them had rather large families: the Wolf clan and the Daniel² clan. They each had ten kids each. I came from the Wolf clan and that family did have a fairly good handle on who lived and who didn't. But I knew very little, if anything, about the Daniel clan. As it turns out, Carlos Urmacher ends up in Venezuela and then he makes his way to the U.S. in the 70s. Here's the part of the story that relates to your specific question—the broad strokes are that there was a guy named Kurt Roth. Kurt's mother was an Urmacher. Born in Austria, Kurt has this incredible life story of fighting in the Spanish Civil War when he was 16. He goes

² Daniel and Wolf spelled their last names differently. Thus, please note that Uhrmacher and Urmacher, both of which are utilized in the text, are not due to spelling errors.

back to Vienna, realizes his days are numbered there, and goes to England. In England, he is seen as an enemy alien and they send him to Australia. He has a horrible life in Australia and finally makes his way back to England where he changes his name completely so as to no longer be identified as Jewish. The name he gives himself is Roland. Kurt Roland went on to become an artist and an art educator. He has maybe twenty books that I've started to buy off of Amazon. He was a photographer and he did a history of Western art. Interestingly enough, Donna Goodwin, who was one of my students, used his ideas in class. He was very ahead of his time in terms of STEAM thinking and bringing the arts, science and math together.

Bruce looks at me squarely.

So when you ask do I have proclivities, it's weird because yes, Kurt Roland was an artist but he also wrote books on art education. It turns out I have other family that were theatrically inclined. They were musicians, a couple of photographers perhaps. Carlos' son is a filmmaker and my brother's son is also a filmmaker—so the arts are scattered throughout the family.

"It's interesting," I say to Bruce.

I'd asked Brittany and David the same question. I suppose what I'm gravitating toward is how powerful some sort of influence is. Whether known or unbeknownst to us, influence is perhaps a catalyst. That's profound to think about in terms of our students. There are those who have neither: who may have not experienced an explicit, implicit interaction with art or who may not have a

genetic predisposition toward it. Thus, the implications of influence on intentions is fascinating, I think.

“It is really interesting,” Bruce concurs,

and I realize that maybe only a quarter of it will make its way into your work but since you asked the question, it does seem that there was a larger family unit who maybe are artistically inclined but then on the other hand, I didn’t even know who they were. I would not say there was not any environmental relationship. My parents were arts-interested. They were certainly open to the arts and enjoyed them so there I might say there was more of a direct influence.

Mindful of time and the ground we still need to cover, Bruce asks if he can shift us toward the CRISPA story:

So let’s start with the Aesthetic Education Institute. I had background with Elliot Eisner’s work as well as Dewey’s. I had taken Elliot’s Foundations of Aesthetic Education in the winter of ‘86 back at Stanford. I knew about Tolstoy’s work and Susan Langer so I didn’t come into it as a total novice. Elliot’s influence on me was absolutely huge. I may not spell it out in this interview but if you ask me I can do so. Year after year I’m getting into the Aesthetic Education Institute and year after year I’m working with incredible people—incredible artists. I’ve now been involved in AEIC for over 20 years, the first time being in 1992. I’ve learned so much along the way. In terms of CRISPA, I never intended to have a model, per se. I felt as if people have a model, and they use it, and then it goes away. Moreover, we were working with teachers from all across the state and they all

had different interests. My job was to help clarify the role of the Arts in education. This is where my early lectures came from. Instituting the Arts, which was one of my early forays into this, is where I talk about the interdisciplinary approach, discipline-based arts education (DBAE) and the transformative approach. The transformative was basically what we were doing at the AEIC and the idea was to include Artist in Residence in your teaching—that was the thrust in the beginning. At one point, Elliot came out to do a lecture at DU [University of Denver] and to talk to us at AEIC but he really pushed me on this idea of not having an aim, specifically for the arts. He wasn't crazy about this idea.

Bruce pauses, seeming to linger on that statement a moment. “So I started to really delve into what that meant,” he continues,

There was an initiative out of Stanford called SPICE in the 1980s. They were influenced by National Geographic, which in the 1980s came up with a really nice curriculum on themes that social studies teachers ought to use when teaching geography. There were themes like, ‘paying attention to local context,’ and ‘paying attention to interdependence.’ They had five or six themes and I always loved that idea. It felt like something that teachers could hang on to—things teachers can use. So once again, I was already thinking not just theoretically about what we were going to do with these ideas, but we might make them practical.

Theory practice—that alone has always been a main theme in my life.

I consider the series of catalysts Bruce has just shared—transformational catalysts, in fact. The concept is threaded throughout his recollections. Each part of his story,

intertwined with realizations, amazement, and pleasure; each memory tied to an outstanding success and a strong feeling of appreciation. In all of this, one might find the definition of a superb experience.

Moreover, Bruce's literary contributions, over the last 10 years in particular, elegantly etch the take-aways, fascinations, explorations, and intellectual paths that traverse the series of reflections he has just shared. Kristen Olsen and Christy Moroye would contribute to these stories, as well. So would David Collins, Brittany Robinson, Michael Reed, and Clair Reisner—all, who like myself, might consider themselves “grandchildren” in the tree of influence, having grown into their aesthetic-mindedness as a result of Uhrmacher, who grew into his as a result of Eisner, Greene, Oliver, Duckworth and a touch of Noddings: the great generation of scholars who had come before. Bruce continues,

I was working largely with a number of students, in particular Christy Moroye, Kristen Bunn (now Olsen), and Cassandra Trousis among others who added to our ideas. So I wanted to create themes—I wanted to unpack this idea about aesthetic experience and low and behold with a lot of thinking and a lot of reading we came up with the themes that we did. We didn't call it CRISPA right away so if you read my first work in Curriculum Inquiry, which is where I really spell it out. Generally speaking, the themes came about by examining what was going on in the Institute and checking it against Dewey's ideas. That said, I knew that some of them were already there without having to re-read Dewey. Connections was big—that's where I brought in the Csikszentmihalyi work. I knew imagination

would be there, sensory of course. Perceptivity I took from my Eisner influence and Rudolph Arnheim who also talked about the subject. Active engagement is kind of a sort of a progressive education idea anyway. Risk-taking was big at the institute—I couldn't leave it out—so I looked for it in Dewey's work and there it was.

Bruce smiles. "Everyone really likes risk-taking," I think to myself. Bruce goes on, "He [Dewey] uses the word risk-taking actually, which was exciting when we found it in the research." Bruce is still smiling, "It simply came together and the rest, as they say, is history."

Adding support for the concept of wow—which may also be defined as an exceptional moment in time—one might consider the additional scholars who Bruce has just named: Dewey (1934), whose works centered on experiences that are immediately valuable and that better enable students to contribute to society; Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1990), whose research on the aesthetic experience among museum officials; and Arnheim (1956), who explored the cognitive basis of art and by extension, how we interpret our world. Each scholar viewed experience through a slightly different lens, but in the end, each was captivated by rapture-like moments in time that demand our entire attention, our intellectual senses, and our gratitude.

I ask Bruce about his philosophy of education:

When I look back I would have always said I was aesthetically minded. You could choose other terms, but generally speaking I was always paying attention to the right side of the brain; paying attention to the here and now; the experience—

the moment. One might call it mindfulness. You might call it spirituality, but boy, I've had that since I was a kid. Absolutely. It just found its way into the aesthetic. Here's the thing: If you look at the way a lot of people are talking about what we should be doing in colleges there is a lot of discussion about competencies and standards. That K-12 discussion is hitting colleges very hard. If there is a gem of experience—there can be a wow experience. It's those wow experiences that will stand out. When they're good, when they're really good then those are the things that will propel you and move us all forward.

Bruce pauses, thoughtfully.

So why am I in this game you ask? That's probably for the same reasons—which is to say that I think that in the long term we can make this world a little better. Our ambitions have to be much more modest than where I started out but you can make things for the better. It's pushing against some systems that are slow to change but when you do, great things can happen.

“Do you think that all students respond to CRISPA in the same way?” I ask. He nods, and then shares the following:

They do—really favorably, in fact. I think two things: One is that teachers really like these ideas because in part I think this is what good education is about anyway; get kids involved get kids actively engaged. Use their imagination. Try to bring in something. Those are good ideas. Those are good things to have in a classroom. What I try to point out is that you don't have to change what you're already doing but what you're already doing could be perhaps be done in a way

that makes it, well, more of a wow experience. I still believe that. There are the occasional roadblocks, but by and large I have found a very receptive audience. Here's something to consider: years ago, Kristen Olsen mentioned to me that her brother was a math wiz and she thought he would hate "this CRISPA stuff." According to her, he would just want to "go and do math." I try to keep that in mind because there are always people who are in their subject matter and they don't need anything to get them connected. For some, the sensory distracts them from what they really want to do. So I am always mindful of what that is.

Bruce pauses. He raises his folded hands to his chin and rests his head for a moment.

He's thinking:

I think, however, that if you take the example of the math experience and the student that is really "wow'd" by it, well then I think CRISPA would be there.

Over the last few years we started writing about CRISPA in numerous ways and practical ways and slightly more theoretical ways. So that's the story of

CRISPA—or one version of the story and how it came together.

Dr. Christy Moroye: Transformational Catalysts Part 1

"Elegy in Joy"

Out of our life is the living eyes
See peace in our own image made,
Able to give only what we can give:
Bearing two days like midnight. "Live,"
The moment offers: the night requires
Promise effort love and praise.

Now there are no maps and no magicians.
No prophets but the young prophet, the sense of the world.
The gift of our time, the world to be discovered.

All the continents giving off their several lights,
The one sea, and the air. And all things glow. (Rukeyser, 1992, p. 104)

Transformational catalysts is the second of four core intentions of aesthetically-minded college educators. Transformational catalysts are unpredictable and multidimensional. They launch us from one place in our lives to another. They include a beginning, middle, and end and are full of interconnectedness, integrity, and care. In the following interview, Christy Moroye describes her intentions as an aesthetically-minded college educator and how *transformational catalysts* (a term I use to describe how I view her intentions) bring students to a place where they begin to feel that they are living their purpose. The aesthetic themes (CRISPA) help to facilitate the types of experiences that are based in meaningful connections, which in turn facilitate an opportunity for individuals to imagine who they want to be as professionals, teachers, faculty members, and leaders.

I remember the first time I met Christy. She taught a class I took in the beginning of my doctoral coursework. Three years prior to this, her own CRISPA story had just begun, and by the time our paths crossed, she was a fairly new mother as well as a Ph.D. Our first class together was in the spring of 2009 and I recall our interactions quite clearly. Christy reminded me instantly of some of my favorite teachers and colleagues. She was enthusiastic, kind, joy-filled, and always smiling. She approached her work with passion and patience. She exuded commitment to sharing all the good and worthwhile things that came with teaching in K-12 classrooms. I could not have predicted then that she would later share her personal and professional story with me. What follows is her

account of what brought her to the brick and mortar classrooms of higher education and the rewarding, if not charming, intellectual journey she made in pursuit of becoming a college professor. She begins:

I was doing my undergrad work as a philosophy and English double-major. I told my professor that I wanted to teach high school and then teach at the college level. My professor told me that I couldn't do both, and because he told me I couldn't, I wanted it even more. I left my undergrad and a little while later decided I wanted to go back and get my Masters and my teaching certificate. I fell in love with DU [University of Denver] because they had aesthetics and they had different areas of teaching and study that I thought were really interesting. At that point, I had been teaching high school English for a few years, and I thought to myself, there has got to be more to education than this. There was also the fact that I was withering in an indoor environment run by bells and I just couldn't believe that this was really the best we had to offer. Don't get me wrong, I loved my students and I didn't want to leave them. I taught in a really diverse high school and I really loved the students but I just I had a strong desire to study ideas and to read and to write. I wanted the space to pursue my academic interests—I'm the kind of person who needs a lot of white space in my head and a lot of unstructured time so that I could think and write. I knew that alone would inform my teaching. As I said before, it wasn't that I didn't love to teach high school because I did—and to be honest, I miss it all the time. As it turned out though, I

learned that I'm just not cut out for that. I needed a different kind of life so I left teaching for those reasons and went into higher education.

Christy's account of her transition from K-12 to higher education leads me to reflect on the catalysts in our lives that launch us from one point to another. Eisner (2002a) was taken with the notion of perception and cognition and found the two inseparable. I cannot help but think that this is part of the transformational catalyst that Christy describes. Eisner argued that artists not only paint what they see but also see what they are able to paint (p. 130, as cited in Uhrmacher & Matthews, 2005). Perhaps it is the same with those moments in time that capture and catapult us. We identify them because we are ready for them. We are ready for them because in that perfect moment, we can identify the opportunity and all that awaits us on the other side.

I ask Christy to tell me about the classes she is teaching at the Northern University of Colorado, and she describes her responsibilities and students:

I teach a couple of sections of the undergrad Foundations of Education class, which is really their introductory foundations course. Mostly this class is for juniors and seniors, while most of my other classes are for Master's and doctorate students in Curriculum Studies. Next semester I'm teaching Curriculum Development and Evaluation. I also teach Philosophy of Education and Psychological Foundations of Education. In addition, I teach a Curriculum Studies and Foundations course for grad students.

I can hear the smile in Christy's voice: "My undergrads are just starting whereas 90% of my grad students have their teaching license or they're teaching and they're pursuing

their graduate degrees. In some of my other courses I also have a lot of administrators and principles.”

I tell Christy that I’m interesting in knowing the difference between how her freshman and her graduate students respond to CRISPA, but first ask that she share with me the story—her story—of the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning. Like Bruce, Christy is a unique participant in my study as she herself contributed to the research and helped develop the CRISPA framework. She shares,

I worked at the Summer Art Institute as a bridge builder so many years back, and Bruce was my dissertation advisor in my final year of work in writing my dissertation. I recall a day where Bruce and I were discussing the institute and reflecting on take-aways. We were trying to figure out how best teachers could take their experiences at AEIC back into the classrooms. Kristen Olsen was there as well and we were sitting together in that old horrible conference room in Wesley Hall. We were scribbling our ideas up on a board and looking at what Dewey had said.

She pauses and, in a very matter of fact manner, says, “that was kind of the day we came up with the six—the definitive six.”

I consider the words “coincidence” and “intersection” as Christy shares with me her story of CRISPA. Both concepts might be considered transformational in and of themselves. Carl Jung, who founded the theory of synchronicity, said “synchronicity is the coming together of inner and outer events in a way that cannot be explained by cause and effect.” Jung’s research provides additional relevance for Christy’s reflection and the

deepened engagement and memory retention directly associated with the framework itself. In his research, Uhrmacher (2009) concluded that active engagement, sensory experience, connections, imagination, perceptivity, and risk-taking are conditions that encourage the aesthetic experience and thus the very outcomes that Christy is recounting as she vividly describes the conference room in Wesley Hall and the process of stumbling upon the “definitive six.” She continues,

We began to play with them a bit at the institute—to try them out if you will. We wanted them to simmer a bit and we wanted to ask people if these were the right six. We didn’t yet realize that CRISPA was the acronym for the six. We wrote our first paper right around that time—actually our second. Our first one was about different approaches to the themes, which at that time we were calling the aesthetic themes. I think that was 2006. The ideas were really coming to fruition—or should I say more crystalized about that time—and we wrote the article in *Clearinghouse* as a foundation on the topic shortly after that. Rather than just write on the ideas we took some time to study them first.

I ask about Kristen Olsen at this time. Bruce had mentioned her in his interview and I wondered about Christy’s recollection and interpretation of her involvement as well. “She moved into other areas,” Christy begins,

We were both bridge builders together in the summer of 2006—she went more into the policy realm when she started working on her dissertation so she didn’t end up writing with us. I came back and did the research study while Bruce wrote the *Curriculum Inquiry* article. So he was doing the theory piece while I was

doing the data collection. We were simultaneously kind of tackling the first study that way. The *Clearinghouse* article helped us frame our argument for the transformative approach where the arts are infused as a part of everyday schooling.

The *Clearinghouse* article, published in 2007, details the differences between approaches to the arts in education and the relationship of the school ecology. In their research, Bruce and Christy had evaluated the curriculum, pedagogy, school structure, evaluation, and school community relationships in terms of discipline-based arts practices, utilitarian, interdisciplinary, and the transformational. Bruce and Christy found that the transformational dimension sought to nurture students and teachers' creativity with an explicit focus on meaning-making; rethinking education from artistic and aesthetic viewpoints. Christy shares an additional reflection explaining that she was living the research as she was conducting it. Her philosophy, her approach, her passion, and her purpose are deeply embedded in this dimension of schooling. These truths were as much a part of her and Bruce as the classrooms they observed to identify and define them. Honore De Balzac's words come to mind: "What is art?" he had asked. "Nature concentrated." Christy continues,

We had to do that first—we had to look at the transformative. Part of that article came directly from Bruce's lectures at the institute. We really had to interrogate it from this angle before we could articulate our CRISPA themes. We tried to build the blocks intentionally so we set up the inquiry in various ways. Bruce and the *Clearinghouse* article and then we worked to back it up with empirical data.

I ask Christy to share with me her personal philosophy of education: “If you were to think with your heart about your teaching, what anchors it for you at this point?” She replies,

Over the years, with CRISPA and my own work in ecological mindedness, my philosophy has been really simple and centered on creating meaningful experiences in education. So I am looking for all sorts of different ways to create that meaningful experience for students. I have tried to do this for both my face-to-face students, as well as with my online classes. It’s pretty easy to make face-to-face classes interesting and engaging, but for online it’s a whole different challenge—at least for me. I know that there all kinds of people who are really good at this so I’ve been trying to make those experiences really meaningful in online learning and not have it only be this highly technological, highly scientific sterile way of teaching.

She pauses, “I don’t want the teaching that says, ‘Here is the objective and here is the assignment and here is the rubric I’m going to use to see if you met the objective.’”

Again, we see the transformational dimension in Christy’s philosophy of education. She goes back to meaningful experience. It starts and ends there. Uhrmacher and Matthews (2005) studied this in depth when they examined the features of the aesthetic curriculum—a catalyst once more. The outcomes, they found, were that the aesthetic curriculum has four powerful features: (a) it teaches students to make meaning of their world by engaging their senses, (b) it provokes imaginative thought and enables us to secure meaning beyond the merely literal, (c) students learn to secure meaning from

a variety of media and forms, and (d) it broadens the modes of representation we have to make meaning out of what we know (see p. 180). These dimensions are consistently integrated into the description of her intentions. “So my philosophy in action,” she continues, “includes creating the kind of rigorous learning that would also included in a highly scientific or technical approach but trying to do so in a way that is more unpredictable, richer, and multidimensional.

I ask Christy if aesthetics were a part of her work or her teaching before CRISPA, before the research, or before the scholarly articles. I pause and say, “like back when you were teaching high school and in the”—quoting her now—“back in the days of bells?” She replies,

I think there were a few phases of this in my life. In my early career I was always keyed into—and in my Master’s I studied experiential education. So I’ve always had an interest in creating an experience. I want students to have some sort of experience with a beginning, middle, and end, and then debriefing that experience in relation to content. So the experiential part and creating the conditions for an experience have always been a part of why I wanted to teach. I never wanted to just impart knowledge—just lecturing. That’s never been a part of who I am. I’ve never wanted to tell just kids what they should think. So that has always been a part of it. Then when I went to my doctorate work, I was really interested in aesthetic experiences in nature. I wasn’t so much concerned as much about aesthetic experiences in the classroom—maybe because perhaps I didn’t think about how that would be possible. My focus was more on the kind of experiences

we can have outdoors and that those experiences are unmatched—that being in nature is its own kind of environment for learning anything. I wanted to figure out how those types of experiences can be more prevalent.

I ask Christy then if she would say that the work that she did in ecological education, and her passion for that, also included layers of the aesthetic. She doesn't hesitate:

Absolutely. I've been working toward that my entire career. In fact, I'm at a point in my career where the two are really converging. I'm also really interested in flow experience and the connection of the aesthetic and nature and the meaning. So yes, those two paths have never been mutually exclusive but they have run parallel to each other for a long time because I had to really build the theoretical and empirical background for both. I've spent a lot of my career...

Her sentences falls off and picks up again.

I started out with this idea of the meaningful experience and how you do that. My work on ecological-mindedness is about qualities of the experience as foundational principles. Those foundational experiences are foundational ecological principles, but they are also foundational principles of the experience.

She pauses again and then continues, "I guess for me it's about interconnectedness, and integrity and care. They are all related—it makes sense in my head even if it does not make sense yet out in the world." I think to myself how I like the way she says "yet" as if these principles are just moments away from being a household name. She continues,

The idea of an aesthetic experience in nature, for example. You can move it to the ecological and talk about how you create that experience. It's a rich experience and also connected to some kind of content. Or you can push it to the aesthetic and think about how we create the conditions in an unnatural environment or a classroom. To really create sensory experience is to create the opportunity to explore in a different way. I'm at that point in my career right now where they are converging.

Her statement makes me smile. I think to myself that this convergence she describes is fertile ground for what is bound to be another transformational catalyst in her life, her research, and the literature going forward.

Christy continues, "This goes right back to one of Bruce's and my arguments." She laughs. "We argue and disagree about a lot, which is great because it really keeps our ideas grounded—we push each other." I interject with, "Yes, but you also complement one another." "Yes," she continues,

I can point to places where I thought to myself, this lesson stinks—how can I make it better. I think its ironic that we say everyone is so connected but in actuality we are so disconnected. It's so important to make them feel connected to the course and to each other. I think that the teacher's job, and a lot of the time we need to be the conduit between the content and the student. So I've had to take myself out of the equation and find other ways to connect my students to the content.

I ask Christy to share with me her definitions of CRISPA. She tells me that this is tough for her. “I worked on each definition,” she says, “So maybe I can tell you how it has operationalized.” I then ask if the order is important to her given that she gravitates toward risk-taking first. “Does order matter? And would you weigh one more than another?” I inquire. She answers:

Bruce and I argue about this all of the time. Bruce would say if you don’t have connections, you don’t have anything. I disagree, though I have come more to his side over the years. For me, I think if you have risk or sensory experience, that you’ll find the others there as well to some degree. I don’t know how you can be taking a good risk without timelessness. I go back and forth. I wouldn’t get rid of any of them. I do often think about putting them in chronological order but as soon as I get there I think you can do them exactly the opposite. It’s a good question and I ask myself this all of the time. I think they are all important but they are not all important at the same time.

“The risk-taking is really something,” I say, “So that’s interesting.” Christy agrees. “Part of it is because...”—she’s looking for the words—“because it’s risky.” She continues,

It really puts you on the edge of your seat. When you think about planning a risk—even if it’s a small one—you’re less worried about, objectives, let’s say. You cannot plan a risk and not consider someone else’s experience. It really makes lesson planning edgier and it makes it more exciting. There are a lot of studies that study risk, but when we think about risk in the classroom mediated by

some of these other factors, risk becomes a beautiful opening up of the mind and the heart.

Greene (1995) might have called this “cognitive adventuring” (p. 129). Greene (1995) talked about inspiring imagination and risk-taking by encouraging students to choose between a desire for harmony along with the easy answer and a commitment to search for alternate possibilities. Risk-taking is often associated with choice. Aesthetically-minded college educators, like Christy, intentionally create opportunities for choice that catapult students into feelings of possibility and new experience.

Christy goes on to say,

It’s not just about a physical challenge. It’s about openness and I think that’s why a lot of us really love the idea of risk. You can’t go into a risky situation and be close-minded and have nothing happen to you. It’s the sense of openness and spontaneity and letting your guard down which is not done in education. [Pauses] Because why would your guard be down in education when you’re being tested to death to meet the day’s objectives? If you don’t meet that objective you’re a failure. So ‘risk,’ is not the place we are right now in education. That said, it’s exciting isn’t it? It’s really fun to think about the possibilities that lie within the dormant curriculum.

The current study began with an interest not only in exploring the intentions of aesthetically-minded educators but also in identifying what behaviors or experiences operationalize in the classrooms of higher education as a result. An interest in student success underscores this and thus, risk-taking, as a transformational catalyst, is of great

interest. Reid (2010) proposed asking for academic risk-taking behaviors in order to help students who either play it safe or who lack confidence due to skill ability or other influences. Risk-taking is a key element of the CRISPA framework. Regardless of age, students of higher education are required to explore in the name of opening themselves up to new and deepened learning. Dewey (1934) pointed out that a venture into the unknown entails risk (as cited in Uhrmacher, 2009). An aesthetic experience is just that—a venture into the unknown, and as a result, an opportunity to experience what Greene (1978) would call “wide-awakeness.”

Christy continues,

Sometimes I’m like, gosh, this is a boring week, how can I make it better? And I’ll randomly pick a letter—maybe it’s imagination—and I’ll think about how can I enliven it just enough that it’s not mundane and not the same routine over and over.

“Do you see CRISPA then as an additive?” I ask Christy. “That’s the word David would use. Or is it a framework that you can plan with.” Christy answers,

I think its flexible enough to be either. I think it depends on the situation. I always build out from the experience. That’s where CRISPA is the most helpful. Even in an online class, I think about what I want my students to experience this week and how they can experience these ideas. I might consider things like: How can they experience social justice? How can they experience what it means to be an X in a room full of O’s? Whatever the concept is for the week, I’ll find a way to use CRISPA to help build the experience. I know that we’ve often taught it as an

additive and often taught it as here, take a lesson plan and slap these things on it, and it so becomes shiny and new—and I think that can be really powerful. I think that it's just so—I've been thinking about this for a decade—it's just a part of who I am. And I take a lot of time to design the look of my online course room. I take a lot of time thinking about the aesthetic and what kind of artwork to add and making the course room look pleasing—that kind of thing. I think that's the beauty of CRISPA, it is what you need it to be. If you need it to spice up something, it can do that, and if you need it to build out an experience, it is hefty enough to do that. It's elegant and simple enough to add a little bit. I think that's part of the beauty of it.

Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson (1990) wrote about other-worldly experience as well, saying that the case for aesthetics must ultimately rest on the kind of experience it provides (p. 9). Christy uses the six elements of CRIPSA to create a heightened experience. For her, the framework is the recipe and the flavor that makes and enhances the moment. It is a way of exploring new concepts, revisiting recent ideas, and exploring one's introspective reflections. In Greene's (2005) words, the arts and the aesthetic move us to imagine, to extend, and to renew (p. 132).

I ask Christy to tell me about the six dimensions:

When you talk about using all six—and its other worldliness—are there other things, other words, or other descriptors, in between the lines? Are there other ways of describing connections and risk and imagination? Is there something else

when all of those pieces are there? Do you find yourself wondering if something else yet, may be there?

Christy pauses a long time before she begins again. She is very thoughtful about this next piece:

What's cool about CRISPA and the rationale—moreover, what's cool about why we have six, for instance, and not five—is that those are the ones that have the greatest potential for the greatest number of people for the most engrossing kind of experience. We didn't come up with them that way. When it came down to it, we were trying to decide what we keep or what we throw out. While we were determining whether one is weightier than the others, we got to the six that have really incredible potential on their own. Moreover, when combined they work synergistically to really create multisensory, multidimensional, intense, really engrossing experiences where you couldn't possibly not be there. I can't tell you that I haven't done that with my students many times—what I realized from my students also, which will be controversial, is that when I'm able to provide that type of experience for my students—so many dimensions at the same time—every single student takes away something very different and personal and very powerful. That's what my students remember.

The step itself, and the incentive to move toward a thing, is the catalyst in this description. Christy is cognizant of her ability to orchestrate a moment in time that can change everything. That's powerful beyond words. Though she acknowledges that CRISPA was designed to be shared in whatever ways a person may come to find they

need them, for Christy, intentional use of all six elements propels the experience in a profound manner. She continues,

I consider my belief system—that education should be about experience, about the student experience, but perhaps also about those who are aesthetically minded, or who have a philosophy that includes aesthetics. Perhaps these people think about experience in different ways. I ask Christy to talk me to me about experience from the point of a view of the aesthetically minded. I ask her whether or not she thinks that those who think about experience in this way think about the concept in a more holistic or complete way. So are those of us who are more interested in the aesthetic more likely to talk about the experience differently? Yes, because it's where we start, rather than what my objectives are and how I can meet them. I want to be really clear that it's not one or the other. Aesthetics can and can help you meet whatever objective you want to have and then some. You can learn layers of soil through an amazing experience or can you learn about the layers of soil by sitting at your desk and looking at them through a jar or looking at them on the board. I think that experience is right there—it's right at the ready—I do not think that it's exclusive to those who think about aesthetics. I don't talk about aesthetics as much as I talk about being interested in the experience. That's my ecological background, as well. But if you look at progressive educators and Dewey—they work from that experiential perspective. I do think that for those who think about the aesthetic—that there is a connection between the aesthetic and existentialism in that one is having an experience.

I ask Christy to talk more about existentialism: “Would you say that the aesthetic helps us get at something spiritual?” I go on, before she answers, thinking about my time spent in Dr. Paul Micallec’s classes at DU, “Is there a part of the aesthetic, perhaps the self-reflection piece or the metacognition that is associated on some level with the spiritual as well?” Christy thinks for a moment. I hear the pause on the other end of the phone. “I think so,” she begins,

My hesitation with the spiritual is that it is so highly personal that I would never presume to create a spiritual experience for someone else—or even the conditions for one. That’s not to say that I don’t appreciate existentialism—I deeply believe in the spiritual journey that education is. By spiritual I mean you feel like you’re living your purpose. For those who want to be leaders or faculty members or educators of any kind—it’s important to me that they are becoming who they want to become and that I’m not just filling their head with knowledge.

Perhaps that’s just the nature of the aesthetic, I think to myself. It creates an environment where we think about things in new and profound ways, and perhaps that helps or acts as a key or an opening of a door for individuals to learn more about themselves—for individuals to get closer to their inner calling and true purpose. Aesthetics helps to open doors, and when we walk through them, we find a more complete version of ourselves on the other side.

Dovetailing on the topic of spirituality and purpose, I ask Christy what it is that she hopes most for her students. She answers,

I want them to figure out what they are good at and throw themselves 100% into that. As a teacher, that's my biggest drive and the thing that I love the most about teaching. It's helping someone figure out what they're good at, or what's unique about the way they think.

In thinking about how things proliferate and how we help drive change, I ask Christy to share with me a metaphor for her teaching. She thinks on this awhile and then says,

My prevailing metaphor for teaching is more like the child blowing the dandelion. To me, that's the experience. You blow the little thistles off of the dandelion and they go a million different directions and it's beautiful because you never know where they are going to land. Everyone is on their own journey even though we are all in the same room together. Those are the things I think about. I'm always thinking about how to create an experience where everyone can have all sorts of intersections while also being a part of the same experience. We become more of who we are while also experiencing each other.

Dr. Kristen Olsen: Promoting Innovation in Teacher Education Part 1

Imagination is not only the uniquely human capacity to envision that which is not, and therefore the fount of all invention and innovation. In its arguably most transformative and revelatory capacity, it is the power that enables us to empathize with people whose experiences we have never shared. (Rowling as cited by Fowler, 2014, p. 124)

Promoting innovation in teacher education is the third of four core intentions of aesthetically-minded college educators. Innovative practices in teacher education ensure that our students—and our students' students—are able to try on various narratives in

order to look more clearly at themselves as well as at the larger world. In the following interview, Olsen describes her intentions as an aesthetically-minded college educator and how innovation in teacher education is a primary component of her practice as it relates to mindfulness, educational leadership, advocacy for the field, and care in college classrooms. In her own words, “When a teacher is ready, CRISPA is the most amazing thing we can give them—it can bring so much joy and enhanced joy to a classroom.”

According to Kristen,

It’s one of those things where right now, it’s a really interesting time to bring aesthetics back into the conversation—people are looking for it. There’s a lot going on in mindfulness—the whole notion of happiness and joy. [It was] part of my work I did as a fellowship at Harvard on data and schools. I finished it three years ago. It was all about teacher effectiveness and value add, and by the time we graduated, one of the lead researchers at Harvard got up and said they were really interested in looking at different ways to measure learning. It was kind of an interesting swing to go from this group that was mainly interested in teacher effectiveness to go to determining the value add of scores and kind of doing that whole shift into can we measure joy or creativity. My hopeful side is that we’ll start, as a society and a school system, to realize that there is more to learning than what we’re measuring. It’s been a really interesting path for me to think about different perspectives—to really push for the aesthetic part in my classroom and with my colleagues and then going to the district level and realizing that there are a lot of teachers that need more basic stuff than that.

Kristen talks about her intention and the future of education in terms of a shift. She is a driver of change and someone who is passionate about ensuring that the future of education contains the right ingredients for fostering motivation and engagement in classrooms across the country. Both Kristen and Clair share commonalities in their interests regarding mindfulness and positive psychology in education. Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reiviche, and Linkins (2009) concluded that well-being in school should be taught, where possible, on three grounds: (a) as an anecdote to depression, (b) as a vehicle for increasing life satisfaction, and (c) as an aide to better learning and more creative thinking.

Kristen Olsen has over 10 years of education experience and has worked as a classroom teacher, school-level administrator, district administrator, adjunct professor, and director of a Common Core Standards–focused grant at ASCD. She has redesigned curriculum at the district level to match the Common Core State Standards and delivered professional development on formative assessment, curriculum design, and instruction. Through her work managing a Math and Science Partnership grant, she collaborated with teachers to develop their content and pedagogical skills in a mathematics classroom. Additionally, Bunn Olsen served in district leadership positions where she developed extensive experience leading professional learning communities, classroom walk-throughs, and data teams. She was selected to be a strategic data fellow at Harvard University, where she continues to work as an alumni mentor. In addition, she coauthored the book, *Beyond the One Room School* (2011), which highlights different classroom

settings. Bunn Olsen manages the EduCore website and Virtual Learning Networks projects at ASCD. Kristen begins:

I was a graduate student under Bruce at the time. Christy was a couple years ahead of me. I basically ended up at DU because of Bruce's connection to Waldorf. I was fascinated with his work and that helped me make the decision to go back and do my teaching license and Masters at DU [University of Denver] I was going to do it at CU [University of Colorado, Denver], and then found out about Bruce and his research at Waldorf and a couple different things happened and I ended up there because of him. When it came time pick the specialty for the Masters, I picked aesthetics and then I did the institute as a participant in 2003. Bruce and I hit it off right from the beginning and started working on different projects. We did some different work around Waldorf, creativity, and imagination and then started working on a book called *Beyond the One Room Classroom*. This helped us to begin to look at why the institute was so popular. We started examining what the artists were doing and the participants were experiencing that led so many people to transform their lives and their classrooms. That's when we started narrowing down the CRISPA themes. At that point there was still a stage two and I then became a bridge builder. I did that for many years, and then we turned it into a leadership strand. Last year, in fact, was the first year that I hadn't done anything with the institute since 2003.

The transformation of lives in the name of bettering our schools and the future of education is again prevalent in Kristen's description. By definition, innovation means the

act of introducing something new. Flow allows for this type of innovative transformation and as such, for innovative and transformative experiences in teacher education.

Described as a major part of the engaged life, flow consists of a loss of self-consciousness, time stopping, and being one with the music (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990). According Seligman et al. (2009), “Flow only occurs when you deploy your highest strengths and talents to meet the challenges that come your way and it is clear that flow facilitates learning (p. 296).” Kristen states:

Bruce and I really did a lot with the CRISPA themes at that point. We began finalize them and were going back and forth to determine what they were many times. There were quite a bit of semantics between creativity and imagination in particular. When we finally settled on imagination it was mostly because of the fact that though the research could support both, when asked, many people would say they were not creative but no one would say they didn't have an imagination. That felt better to us. We asked different people about it and talked to a lot of people about it. Bruce was the one that found the theoretical research around them and now when we do the training with CRISPA we have very good support strategies that are both theoretical and practice-based. I imagine that you've gone into all of those—the different types of imagination for instance—being fanciful and others. About the time we were finalizing the themes, we did an evaluation of the Institute and then Christy finished her dissertation and was starting to do her own research. We brought her on board because she had more time and she was really passionate about trying to do some of the work and she wanted to publish. I

got busy with my dissertation at the same instance and was teaching full time. Christy and Bruce really ran with it at that point and started publishing. All I've really done is use it at the Institute and bring it into the leadership strand. One of the things we kept getting over and over again at the Institute was that the teachers would be so excited to go back and then would feel this push back from the administrators. They didn't really have the tools in terms of how to speak to them or transform at the school level. We designed the leadership strand to meet that need and brought in different leaders that were either at DU getting their leadership license or practicing as administrators. We did that for a while and ebbed and flowed with it every year—changing around the number of artists and the types of artists. Michelle Shedro took over at Think 360 and she brought in her ideas. Professional development is a lot different now than it was five years ago—so much of it is about the Common Core and teacher evaluation. A lot of teacher evaluation and credits are happening at the district. Teachers and principals are not meeting those credits, and that is changing the face of professional development. In the last couple of years, a lot of the work I have done has been about getting people excited and getting the word out there.

Professional development for teachers is not a new topic, however with increased focus on assessment and accountability, teacher preparation is more important than ever. Kristen was not the only participant who shared with me that she intentionally works to provide current and future teachers with new and innovative ways of working in the field. Moreover, teaching with CRISPA and exposing teachers to aesthetics allows for

conversations that challenge today's higher education model. Economically driven and centered on career preparation and job placement, colleges across the country are beginning to mirror the standards-based practices of K-12 classrooms. In Uhrmacher's words (September 14, 2014), competencies are not a bad thing—students should be competent in something—however, not without the critical thinking skills that the liberal arts provides. CRISPA and aesthetics allow for both. In terms of professional development, the framework alone has significant implications for helping teachers (and future teachers) bridge the gap.

I ask Kristen where she is teaching now. She tells me that she is working for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD):

They are a policy group and publishing house out of Washington, DC. So right now, for instance, with the re-authorization of No Child Left Behind, their books and resources are being leveraged quite a bit in terms of professional development. All of the differentiation work comes from them. A lot of the big names in educational theory in terms of practice have published with them. I am working on a project called Tools for Teaching that is about getting resources and ideas in the hands of teachers across the country in terms of implementing common core and all around teacher effectiveness.

Given how involved Kristen has been with the Institute over the years, her contributions to the framework, and authoring with Bruce, I ask her whether or not she would define her practice or her philosophy as aesthetically minded. She responds,

Yes, but it's different. It's harder to apply it to a certain extent. One thing I would say is that my natural inclination would be to be against standardization and the Common Core. However, I've been able to look at it from an aesthetic point of view, which allows me to consider not what to teach but how to teach. Having that set and knowing what the goals are for the kids allows you to plan lessons that are pretty amazing and really creative. People have fought it because it is standardization, but we've done a lot of trainings around the metaphor of song lyrics—it was originally presented to us by the Gates Foundation—which is why I took it and ran with it—but if you look at how many artists have done the same song and the same lyrics but have done it in a completely different way. We have really presented that to teachers and leaders and that has been a really good message—and I think people get it—they can see how you can apply the CRISPA themes and an aesthetic way of being when you know what your end goal is—much better than when you're just being like, I don't know what kids need.

Once again, we see that aesthetically-minded college educators are passionate about facilitating innovative practices in teacher education. Utilizing CRISPA in lesson planning and the implementation of content in the classroom allows individuals to deliver standards based instruction while also providing space to think creatively, critically, and abstractly. Deresiewicz (2015) described the liberal arts and an economy-driven education model as going hand in hand. In fact, he said, they are synergistic with one another. I believe that this is what Kristen and others are also trying to accomplish—to bridge the gap between where we are, and where we want to go, while also ensuring that

students possess a well-rounded education that prepares them to think for themselves, solve problems, present arguments and develop solutions.

“So you’re explicit about that? The professional development or the resources you’ve provided?” I ask. Kristen answers,

So I’ve used that metaphor a bunch now. When I was at the district office, [it] was the first time I had used it with the master teachers and with the principals. We did it one year at the Institute with the leadership strand. Part of my job now is to conduct webinars throughout the year in the four content areas—science, math, reading, and ELA—my faculty members are leading those webinars now and have incorporated CRISPA into it.

I consider what Kristen has shared with me. By having aesthetics in her toolbox, she has been able to convey how even the standards can be artistic. Her aesthetic-mindedness has allowed her to implement standardized educational practices that are both artistic and creative. Other participants shared similar viewpoints. In the vignettes that follow, aesthetically-minded college educators prepare pre-service teachers for the classroom by arming them with a framework that is as resilient, adaptable, and flexible—which will undoubtedly be required of them in their future work as teachers.

Kristen shares with me that she has been utilizing CRISPA at the district level and within her college classroom teaching. She tells me that in that environment, she has taught CRISPA explicitly, and in particular, she utilizes it in her curriculum class. She also shares that she has incorporated the framework while teaching a Motivation and Engagement course. She shares,

Both times, I taught with the intention of providing current or future teachers with the framework. I used it implicitly to teach through the framework. I also taught it explicitly as a tool and a strategy. I think there is a part of me that always implicitly uses it in my own teaching—it's embedded in my brain. Motivation and engagement introduced them as ways to engage kids.

I ask Kristen, “Do you have intentions or hopes of working it into your work at ASCD?” She says,

We are kind of in a flux right now. I'd love to do it—they do a lot of work around the whole child—so it works really well into that.

It's one of the questions on the inventory too—discussing CRISPA with colleagues and thinking about how others respond. I ask Kristen, “You're doing such interesting work in terms of where the policies are now. There is a lot of opportunity for impact—what are your thoughts about the intersection of those two things?” She responds, “I would say that education swings on a pendulum and we go drastically in one direction and then we go drastically in the other.” Kristen tells me,

It changed my perspective in realizing why we have standardized teaching materials and what is lacking in the classroom. When a teacher is ready, I think that CRISPA is the most amazing thing we can give them—it can bring so much joy and enhanced joy to a classroom. But the district position was really enlightening in that there are so many people who just need content knowledge, and classroom management, and some of those other things that kind of have to take a priority.

I find myself thinking of Greene (1995) once more, who wrote,

It is not enough to emancipate individuals or to enable them to disclose their lived worlds for their enlightenment and our own. Lived worlds themselves must be open to reflection and transformation. The culture and its traditions compose part of the context—so do the languages of the present and the noxious clouds, hoarded books, and socioeconomic phenomena of the world. . . . I hope we can ponder the opening of wider and wider spaces of dialogue, in which diverse students and teachers, empowered to speak their own voices, reflect together as they try to bring into being an in-between (p. 59).

The being and in-between is perhaps at the very nature of Kristen’s intentions to promote innovative practices in teacher education, thus impacting the landscape, the nay-sayers, the students, and the future of education in general.

I ask Kristen, “So for you, the framework and the themes are a conduit for joy and happiness for care?” She thinks about this for a moment. “I think for the teachers and the teacher’s perspective—to bring their own passion and creativity into the classroom and then that is outcome of that kind of teaching and learning.” She pauses and thinks a moment more,

I would also say that Bruce, Christy and I all have a passion for the arts—but I would say that all three of us—the aesthetic side is much more than the art side.

When I explain it to people, I try to move beyond the word aesthetics. It’s kind of like creativity—some people can have a negative reaction to just the word—I introduce it as a way to enhance the learning environment.

On this note, I ask her what brought her to the arts and to working with AEIC for all these years. “Like I said,” she begins,

I was working in advertising and never thought I’d become involved in public education. When I was working in education in San Francisco, I got introduced to

Waldorf [which] really [is about the] whole child—but also a huge focus on the arts and creativity. For me that was my first exposure to school reform and I thought it was a really unique way of looking at how you teach and how you learn. And though I’m not an artist, I guess I would consider myself creative. So I looked at what Waldorf was doing, [and] so then my dissertation was looking at public policy and engagement and how different kind of schools are needed for different types of learners. So my passion goes beyond just the CRISPA themes—though I think that the CRISPA themes are valuable to all kinds of classrooms. I think they enhance all kinds of teaching and learning. So that to me is where some of that passion comes from and where the active engagement and creativity and imagination and connection making comes from—it is much bigger than just aesthetics education. I guess the quick answer is that all of that holds true to me and the arts are an amazing way to teach kids about different perspectives and to just kind of improve everything in our society.

Her passion for using CRISPA to facilitate reconceptualized models of education and what is best for students is apparent. Moreover, her intention to facilitate best practices through educating teachers is also exemplified. Selingo (2013) stated, “How rigorously colleges prepare students for the workforce, as well as mature them for life, will play a greater in the calculation of value and the future of education in America” (p. 71). Kristen’s focus on public policy, engagement, and how different kind of schools are needed for different types of learners speaks to this. In addition, her passion for infusing current and future teachers’ toolboxes with the gift of creativity and imagination points

toward a type of advocacy aesthetically minded college educators consistently demonstrate—that is, to ensure that pre-service programs allow for an exploration of CRISPA, perceptual lesson planning, and thus meaningful experiences for teachers and students alike.

I say to Kristen,

I have asked this question to everyone. Did you have any artistic family or influence that was also inspired by the arts that maybe helped you have an immediate connection with the framework in terms of care, in terms of educating the whole child, in terms of everything you just shared with me?

She answers,

There were a number of influences, I suppose—my mom is an architect and very into how a space makes you feel, so she’s done a lot with sacred geometry. It’s a huge branch of aesthetics—the way we live and the environment around us. So that definitely influences my classroom environment and the design of my classroom. Like me, she’s very creative and she has a ton of talent but she doesn’t paint or do music or any of the things that we traditionally consider as the arts.

We were raised going to different museums and symphonies and definitely with a creative focus.

Next, I ask, “Generally speaking, if you were to close your eyes and make a wish for education—for the future of education—what do you really hope for and hope that we accomplish together?” Kristen tells me,

I think that what it comes down to is getting the right people in front of kids. My big huge magic wand would change the way we respect education and educators in our society. I think that if we could do that and draw the right people into the field and respect them—that the joy of learning, the passion of the arts, would fall into place because we would naturally be drawing those kind of educators into the field.

Dr. Clair Reisner: Promoting Innovation in Teacher Education Part 2

Empathy is about standing in someone else's shoes, feeling with his or her heart, seeing with his or her eyes. Not only is empathy hard to outsource and automate, but it makes the world a better place. (Pink, n.d., n.p.)

Clair Reisner also speaks to the importance of promoting innovation in teacher education and identifies this as a core intention of her aesthetic-mindedness as a college educator. In the following interview, Clair describes how innovation in teacher education begins as a community-driven effort to impact legislation and the field itself by ensuring intrinsic motivation, positive psychology, transformational experiences and creativity for future teachers, future classrooms, and future students. In Clair's words:

CRISPA brought these topics to life and gave us cognitive discourse to talk about the kind of cultures we wanted to create in our schools and classrooms. We see it now more than ever. Now is a time of entrepreneurship. If you want to write a book you don't have to have a publisher anymore. You can have a blog or Facebook or Twitter to demonstrate that people are interested in your topic. Just like that, you have the support to create a book. I think that the pathways to

achieving your dream are becoming broader and more diversified. I don't think our educational system has caught up with that. I look within schools and in classrooms—teachers still feel like they need to impart their wisdom and knowledge, yet they are not a part of this entrepreneurial world that's going on. Even working with higher education— even the complexities of higher education, while it's under a national spotlight, are promoting research in the field for R1 institutions where a lot of their roles and responsibilities reside in informing society about whatever their role is. They have a job of disseminating information about teaching but they're not necessarily preparing students or future teachers for the world that is before them.

Clair Reisner has a passion for gifted and talented education, authentic assessment, educational policy, and making learning fun. Having worked in high performing school districts for part of her career while contributing to curriculum coaching, best practices, and the improvement of pedagogy in K-12 classrooms, her path has led her to program managing and consulting in support of various legislation initiatives. She shares the following,

Let me start at the beginning. Becoming a classroom teacher happened for me by accident. Don't get me wrong—it was there all along—I loved teaching anything or anyone who would let me teach. Siblings, neighbors, dogs, cats—anything living. [Laughs] However, becoming a college classroom teacher happened as a result of loving the people who had mentored me after I had become a teacher. That love was really inspired by neuroscience and how the brain learns and the

realization that education is one of the most powerful tools that our society has to offer. After becoming a teacher, I wanted to be able to give back in ways that my mentors had done. That is what really inspired the dream; as a result of some of the work that I was doing with gifted and talented children and families, and the opportunity came to teach on the topic at the college. It was a graduate level course, as are all six courses that I currently teach. It was that desire to give back and wanting to have a greater influence that led me to the classrooms of higher education. I looked at it as a way to expand my reach. If, for example, I am able to teach 30 teachers who all go out and teach 30 children, you expand your influence and help shift change in the educational system in ways that I wasn't able to do in my own classroom.

Like other college educators who have a passion for bringing innovation and change to the classrooms of higher education, Clair communicates a mission. The desire to expand her reach and touch more lives through work outside of the K-12 space aligns to much of what the research says about caring, committed teachers. Nieto (2005) described the characteristic of “a sense of mission”: “Teacher’s sense of mission often extends beyond their own specific classrooms to their feelings about public education in general. Stephen Gordon views participation in that in an intellectual tradition as an essential component of that mission” (p. 205). Clair continues,

I believe I was an instructional coach in FSD [Finley School District] at the time, when I learned about the aesthetic theme and as a teacher I always believed that learning should be fun. When I moved into a coaching role, I found myself

sometimes working with teachers who didn't share the same joy in the work that I did. I wanted to help them see that teaching was more than nurturing future citizens or to understand x, y, and z. I'll never forget when Uhrmacher introduced me to the six dimensions of CRISPA. I remember thinking, "Wow! This is the educational spark that learning should be invigorating and refreshing." It gave me the vernacular to say learning should be a joy filled, personally meaningful experience.

Nieto (2005) also examined the importance of solidarity—moreover, the commitment teachers make to ensuring that learning is fun. "Having solidarity with students," Nieto writes, "also remembers what it means to be a child" (p. 207).

Aesthetically-educated college educators have a passion for bringing innovative practices to higher education. They also have a passion for delivering those practices alongside joy-filled experiences that remind us what it is like to fall in love with learning—some may even say to see the world through a child's eyes. These types of educators also have a passion for sharing innovative practices with colleagues and future teachers. Referring to CRISPA, Clair tells me,

Right away I started using it—both in my coaching work as well as in my adjunct teaching. The work on the six dimensions that Uhrmacher co-published with Moroye are readings that I require all of my students to read, regardless of the course.

When asked to describe more specifically how she integrates the elements of CRISPA into her practice, Clair shares the following:

It starts with imagination. When you are planning curriculum, you should be thinking about, “How can we inspire imagination, and how can we make it a sensory experience?” Promoting active engagement so that students are not sitting and getting content dumped on them all day long is critical. CRISPA brought this to life and gave us cognitive discourse to talk about the kind of cultures we wanted to create in our schools and classrooms. I think that the connections piece is huge, as well. We all need to feel connected and it’s when students don’t connect to a teacher or don’t demonstrate mastery that they give up on school. I don’t know if one is any more important than another. No one can say, connections, no that’s not important. It’s one of those things that is so obvious once you hear it. [Pauses] Have you ever had a moment in life where you came across something that was so clear to you but you didn’t know it until someone named it for you? CRISPA was like that for me. The moment it became a part of my education speak, my toolbox, my vernacular—I knew it was exactly what I aspire to do when I’m at my best as a classroom teacher. Having that as a frame really changed things for me.

Throughout my interviews, participants shared that once introduced to CRISPA, they felt as if they suddenly had a name for a concept they had always acknowledged as truth. Over and over, there seemed to be a familiarity with the theme, the research, and its implications before they had even encountered it. Perhaps it is the result of those drawn to the framework to begin with—those who have a tendency for aesthetic appreciation found that it fit well in their toolbox. On the other hand, perhaps the knowledge of

CRISPA seemed innate due to the elegant ways it has been built upon a philosophy of the aesthetic—of nature, beauty, and art. This type of acknowledgement is built over time and is perhaps only recognized after something solidifies the various parts. Research, for example, shows that although the experience of insight may seem sudden and disconnected from the immediately preceding thought, insight (and the *ah-ha moment*) could be described as the culmination of a series of brain states and processes operating at different time scales. Aesthetically-minded college educators are aware of the power of moments like this, and aim to intentionally facilitate them for future teachers as well.

Dovetailing into her philosophy of education, Clair shares the following:

It's interesting to think about how this has shifted for me over time and it's really complex. I remember getting my first teaching job and having to write that one-page philosophy of education. At that point it was all around classroom instruction and curriculum design and focused on classroom management, culture, assessment, and engaging with families. It was kind of just this bucket of things that I knew teachers did.

She laughs, "It's really simple though right? What it didn't include explicitly was that learning should be a joy-filled, personal, meaningful experience. I could capture my whole philosophy in just that statement now." She pauses, and then continues,

I'm starting to see the role of education as incredibly sophisticated and really complex. Classroom management, assessment, collaboration—I now see it impacting everything while intersecting with government, politics, and our economy. As a teacher, I never realized that education was such a huge economic

driver. It's interesting to me how that has evolved over time. All of this has impacted my personal philosophy of education and how I view my role, influence, and impact. Take curriculum development for instance—it's not so much about my own [curriculum] but [rather] inspiring curriculum development in others. Some of the greatest ah-ha's I've had are in my ed-prep program while discussing how we nurture the future generation of teachers. I'm currently working alongside the state's sample curriculum project. It's one of the initiatives that the state has been working on to help the field elevate standards-based instruction. The new standards require significant instructional shifts. They are actually the most in-demand unit and have the best response rates, if you will, from the field. I was sitting with a second grade teacher last Monday in fact and we went through some of these sample curriculums that had been developed by the state in collaboration with integrated districts.

Instructional shifts are one of the things that Clair is looking at closely. Nieto (2005) highlighted that having the courage to question mainstream knowledge is a characteristic of caring, committed educators who are passionate about change. Nieto (2005) quoted Greene (2001), stating, "The curriculum has to leave so many questions open so that children will explore and wonder and not believe that there is a final answer because they can only be devastated when they find out there isn't" (p. 209). Nieto (2005) goes on to say that

The challenge for those who work with teachers, including teachers themselves, is to encourage them to confront what the philosopher Michael Foucault calls regimes of truth, that is the kind of discourses promoted by each society as truth

and produced, transmitted and kept in place by systems of power such as universities, military and media. (p. 209)

Clair continues,

In this model, the state might be nurturing the process and empowering teachers to be responsible for designing the sample curriculum for other teachers who need support across the state. I love it because it feels authentic to have curriculum designed by teachers for teachers. Now, that's the future of instructional design. Teachers need to have greater command of curriculum development. In the state context, 50% of a teacher's evaluation is based on measures of student learning. Who knows what will happen in this legislative session on when districts will be held accountable for adhering to this piece of legislation. Last legislative session passed one year to prolong that to be a part of evaluations while districts figured out what they were going to use specifically. Some of our best districts have created assessment literacy training for teachers. Once a teacher demonstrates that they have a high degree of assessment literacy and data interpretation capabilities, they are able to develop those assessment measures on their own. I would love to see our system continue to do that and utilize assessment in ways that are authentic for kids. Assessment is a whole other topic and I do think it goes hand in hand with curriculum development and the technology that we put in kids hands to support their understanding. I think it's important that we start thinking about how to get kids into a game-based mode of assessment and other measures that can be authentically integrated into the school day. CRISPA, as an arts-integrated mode of thinking allows us to bring play into the assessment world,

which would be beautiful. Coming back to the sample curriculum project, I was sitting with this teacher, and as we were going through the units, we came across one on perspective. We started to make a column about what these assessments are all about. We asked, if these were old school, what would they have been about? So the unit on perspective would have formally been a unit on friendship—teaching people how to look through different lenses as they build their friends, their mentors, and their network of support. This is at a second grade level. It's really interesting to think about. There was, for instance, a social studies unit on origins, which focused on traditions and culture that teachers had developed. We went back in time and realized that this would have formerly been referred to as a unit of study on the Oregon Trail. These units require a shift in curriculum development; from content to concepts. We went back through some of the lesson sequences and back through the content to unpack some of the concepts in order to understand them better.

What Clair describes supports strength development, student success, and innovative practices for promoting meaningful connection-making for students and future teachers. Schreiner, Louis, and Nelson (2012) discussed the college student experience and the profound impact concept-based approaches can have on individuals. In addition to four other student-success related themes, the authors described the influence of designing active learning experiences that are connected to students' current interests and that capitalize on students' strengths and learning styles.:

Learning is an active process of making meaning; it entails making connections to other learners and other perspectives as well as to what one already knows to

meaningful goals, and to one's own strengths and ways of seeing the world. (p. 25)

Aesthetically-minded college educators, like Clair, make a concentrated effort to incorporate innovative practices such as this into the classrooms of higher education.

Clair continues by saying integrating changes in the world and within society is related to how we think about the curriculum:

In short, I don't know of an ed-prep program that is teaching future educators how to develop curriculum in this new concept-based world, where all of the content can be googled. There are some pretty profound shifts that are going to happen in curriculum development. I would say that's one of my greatest levels of learning—and one of the things that I'm noticing at the state level, as well. In summary, it's interesting to think about how CRISPA fits into a concept-based instructional framework, and better yet, how it can support the shift from content-based to concept-based curriculum development.

College educators planning with CRISPA are mindful of how innovative practices in teacher education can help to facilitate a shift that honors concept-based learning alongside the many implications of deepened meaning making. One way aesthetically-minded college educators are doing this is by utilizing perceptual lesson planning. Perceptual lesson planning draws largely on the ideas of Dewey (1934), Eisner (1998, 2002a, 2002b), and Oliver, and focuses on the ways in which the lesson planning process itself can be transformed into a meaningful experience for the teacher, and as a consequence, for his/her students (Uhrmacher, Conrad & Moroye, 2013). According to Uhrmacher, Conrad & Moroye (2013),

The intentions of the perceptual mode are to engage teachers and student's senses, creativity, and imagination. The intentions of the teacher operating in the perceptual mode may include instructional objectives or targets, but also would include associated meaning, inspiration, and connections. In other words, the intentions are not generally to stop at the prescribed learning destination, but to also explore further roadside attractions, so to speak (p. 12).

I ask Clair about how CRISPA fits in with the state work she is doing:

The 'unpacking' literally just happened last week. [Laughs] We have been doing this work for a couple years so my role has evolved. The goals of the project include working collaboratively with the state as an educator preparation specialist supporting outreach and training opportunities on the new state educator effectiveness initiatives; launching pilot projects in higher education-based preparation and alternative preparation programs; and providing technical assistance focused on scaling up emerging best practices to support the alignment of all preparation programs to the new expectations outlined by current legislation. The original plan was to go out and train teachers and administration on the legislation. In the first four months of my role I accomplished basically two years of the grant and as a result, people within the field, including deans, directors, faculty, and instructors were raising critical questions regarding how to intentionally embed these initiatives into their programs. Those who I was working with wanted to ensure that they came out prepared with the competencies they need to be successful in the current landscape. At this point, I purposed the grant and utilized what I call the "moving trains" strategy. I defined "moving trains" as "an individual or organization who is highly motivated to lead, inspire,

and elevate our profession by doing good work: work that is good in quality, good for the soul, and good for the world.”

Nieto (2005) added an even broader perspective to Clair’s observations and sense of mission:

Once considered the great equalizer, today’s public schools no longer seem to even entertain the illusion that they provide all young people with an equal and high quality education. In actual fact, the ideal of equality seems curiously out of sync with the reality of public schools today. (p. 216)

Aesthetically-minded college educators like Clair aim to engage and inspire the future of teacher education. Advocacy is at these educators’ core. Recognition of the shift itself is a driver, and Clair, along with other participants I interviewed and observed, reaffirmed their commitments time and time again. Aesthetically-minded college educators are strongly against a deficit approach and an economically-driven model of education. The aesthetically minded are in fact staking a grassroots revolution to bring innovation and entrepreneurialism to the future of education. Clair tells me,

The entire thing has turned out to be more brilliant than I realized because our best and our brightest were already grappling with these things. Being able to provide high degrees of support and maximize their learning and then leveraging them to support others in learning has been a huge success. Teachers learn best from other teachers. College professors learn best from other college professors. Deans learn best from other deans. As it turns out, educational preparation professionals learn best from other educational preparation professionals—not just someone at the state level.

Smiling, Clair says modestly,

It was kind of a beautiful accident that happened. So now we're looking at promoting innovation with the state's "moving trains." Generally speaking, it's been very organic and I've let that lead the way in order [so] that we may really look at the critical shifts that are happening in our K-12 systems—as well as the implications on preparation of educators entering that system.

Aesthetically-minded college educators are passionate about ensuring that a collection of CRISPA-related ideas are integrated into the evolving landscape. What Clair describes is highlighted by other participants as well. Nieto (2005) said:

Subject matter knowledge is important, of course, but if teachers do not learn how to question it, they simply replicate conventional wisdom and encourage students to be docile learners. . . . A grasp of pedagogy is also vital, but if teachers do not develop meaningful relationships with their students, they will not succeed. If they do not understand the life-and-death implications of the work they do, no amount of certification requirements will help. (p. 218)

CRISPA and aesthetics help us to address each of these points directly. Kerdeman (2005) wrote about aesthetic experience and education:

Aesthetic experience integrates mind, body and emotion. It links experience to moral judgment as well. . . . Integrating various ways of knowing, aesthetic experience enables individuals to perceive and understand relationships that pulse throughout the social and natural world (p. 88).

To this end, I ask Clair about the idea of lesson planning with CRISPA. "Does it help us get at these outcomes?" I ask. She responds thoughtfully:

Yes, I think so. I can see CRISPA as a lens, or a protocol, that you can put your lesson plan through. In my early years of teaching there were a lot of critical protocols that we would use to evaluate our lessons. I think that CRISPA does that, but I would say that sitting with teacher candidates who do not have teaching

experience it would not stand alone. Having watched the state's lead educational teams go out and facilitate the development of the sample curriculum project, I would say that it would not stand alone. That said, I think about how teachers are planning and what tools they are using. Anytime I have those moments when I'm astounded that they don't know some of this—I am reminded that I didn't learn how to truly develop curriculum until my Ph.D. program and so a lot of teachers who have not had that type of education have not been empowered to think critically and develop curriculum. They get a scope and sequence from the district, and they have their guides. They use those guides as their primary source of information to design instruction while perhaps coming up with a few on their own. In addition, and thinking now about the increased accountability around assessment, I actually see teachers doing less and less curriculum development.

Really empowering teachers to have the ability to design curriculum is huge.

Again, we see how aesthetically-minded college educators attend to advocacy and improved practices. Innovative practices in education and teacher education arise from breaking out of old norms and helping students think for themselves. Nieto (2005) described the importance of this as well:

In my ongoing work with teachers, I am finding instead that in addition to subject matter knowledge and a mastery of pedagogy, the qualities that teachers develop before they enter the professions, as well as through their practice, are just as significant, and in some cases, even more so. (p. 218)

Uhrmacher, Conrad and Moroye (2013) reviewed the importance of fostering teacher creativity and other qualities that lead to a feeling of increased relevance and intrinsic motivation. About this, they wrote:

First, a main outcome of this mode of lesson planning is to foster teacher and student creativity. The rationales for why creativity needs to be stressed in educational environments has been discussed in numerous ways, from the demands of the current work force (Senges, Seely, Brown, & Rheingold, 2008) to the centrality of creativity as a way to think generally (Robinson, 2006). Clearly, student creativity ought to be developed. But as we mentioned earlier, we believe that teacher creativity ought to be encouraged as well. When teachers are engaged in the creative process, they find the lesson plan interesting in and of itself (Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2010), and we believe this creativity translates into classroom processes if for no other reason than the fact that teachers are modeling creativity when they write their lessons (p. 13).

Clair continues,

So I think to myself, where's the lever of greatest change? Working at the State level, I've seen that legislators can't pass anything if they don't have district support. If certain districts say no, then that's it—it's dead in the water. I watched our last Senator go through that last legislative session where key players in the state said no, and as a result, the initiative died. It's interesting how people think that everything that happens is a result of National and State legislative policies. It's just not the case. When it comes to policy and leadership, everyone matters. We have to work together in a cohesive collaborative system to impact change. Uhrmacher (2012) described the chase as a fascinating aspect of human nature.

Referencing the Butch Cassidy story, he shares how students chase knowledge and degrees, that teacher chase students, and researchers chase process. He goes on to highlight West (1989), stating that intellectuals ought to use “thought as a weapon to enable more effective action” (p. 5). “Arguably, the role of researcher,” he says, “is not only to inquire, probe and chase, but also to “provoke.” Aesthetically-minded college educators apply this type of tenacity and intensity to the purpose of their work. They are

purpose-driven about impact, actualizing Clair's words of attending to the lever of greatest change.

I ask Clair how advocacy for innovation has made its way into her curriculum planning through the use of CRISPA. She responds:

At this point, I've been doing it so long that it comes naturally. At the beginning I used to just sketch it out. I'm very into efficiency. I keep my lessons very well organized so that as things come up I can note it for the next time I teach the course. I use the CRISPA lens now in order to ask myself whether I am doing things to promote active engagement, if I am viewing my lessons through different lenses, if I am applying perceptivity. I use CRISPA to gauge if I am helping my students see things in different ways, if they are up and moving and if they are using multiple lenses to learn things. I also use it as a backdrop for imagination and connections. I want my students to make it their own, to take risks and to try new things.

Clair continues on the topic of meaning-making and introspection:

I think a symbiotic relationship can be used to describe this form of teaching. When you integrate CRISPA into your instructional practices you no longer have a teacher-directed or teacher-led classroom. You negotiate more with students. Students are leaders of their own learning, generating purpose and meaning in their work. They show higher degrees of ownership as a result. As their instructor, you are responsible for meeting the measures of accountability within each course while providing autonomy within the course structure. In this symbiotic

relationship everyone benefits from each other because you are allowing students to be uniquely them and you get to be uniquely you. So you all come to life in different ways that didn't exist before.

The implications of aesthetic experience have been described in many ways. The common denominator of all of these types of experiences is intrinsic motivation, emotional satisfaction, and goal orientation. The participant is self-motivated and wishes to be involved in the activity. Eisner (1985) stated that “the enduring outcomes of education are to be found in consummatory satisfaction—the joy of the ride, not simply in arriving at the destination (p. 103).” These ideas pair well with Clair’s statements and her intention to create opportunities to practice purpose, autonomy, and mastery in education. It should come as no surprise that the qualities highlighted by Clair and supported by the literature to contribute to deepened engagement and meaning-making are the same qualities that research has found supports the greatest sense of intrinsic motivation (Pink, 2010) and, thus, the greatest aptitude for leadership, innovation, and the development of change agents. What more could we wish to grant our future teachers, our future classrooms, and our future students?

Dr. Brittany Robinson: Transformational Catalysts Part 2

“First comes thought; then organization of thought, into ideas and plans; then transformation of those plans into reality. The beginning, as you will observe is in your imagination” (Hill as cited by Egan, 2013, p. 125).

Brittany Robinson’s intentions help us to affirm the concept of transformational catalysts as one of four essential themes. For Brittany, transformational catalysts occur

when the chemistry is just right—when there is magic in the classroom. These ingredients are nurtured by critical discourse, conflict, structure, freedom, and most importantly by the aesthetic themes. In the following interview, Brittany describes her intentions as an aesthetically-minded college educator and how transformational catalysts occur when CRISPA is utilized to help students navigate transactional space and transformational experiences. In her own words, CRISPA helps students move from a high school student *plus one day* to an engaged and contemplative college student. Epiphanies are the kind of catalysts that Brittany is always looking to create in her classroom. Brittany shares with me the following:

If we are really going to try to get at truth or knowledge, we need to interrogate it from multiple perspectives. To do that we have to ensure that there is a community in place. That is such a problematic term “community” but we have to establish as much as possible relationship, a chemistry in the classroom that allows for freedom of thought to take place but also a very conscious structure within that. So the magic can happen. CRISPA does that. It allows for the magic to happen.

Brittany Robinson is an assistant professor for Rivergate College. Accomplished researchers, scholars, and above all, mentors—the faculty at Rivergate are impassioned, committed, and inspired to nurturing the minds and hearts of their students. Brittany is one of Rivergate’s impassioned and highly talented educators. She began her career as a middle school and high school social studies teacher and over the course of 9 years, took on a number of responsibilities, wearing many hats as K-12 teachers often do. Over time,

she found herself in more leadership roles and, as such, began to realize that there were questions for her that remained unanswered. This is what led her to her doctoral pursuit, where her journey towards educating college freshman really began. Brittany continues,

I taught high school and middle school social studies for 9 years and I started finding myself in more leadership roles working with curriculum and curriculum and assessment for the district and I realized that there were some questions that remained unanswered for me in my academic life and I wasn't going to be able to answer them being a classroom teacher. That's why I began my doctoral pursuit. I never really thought consciously about becoming a college classroom teacher, but that's sort of what happened. Mostly I was interested in curriculum and curriculum design and especially the category of the null and the complementary as Moroye has coined. But I found myself more and more captivated by working with future teachers. So through my experience working with pre-service teachers, I realized this is an area I get a lot of—I get fed—in working with pre-service teachers. It inspires me. It's a healthy place to be.

Through her studies, she found herself drawn to curriculum and curriculum design. She was particularly interested in the null and the complementary. During this time, she studied with Moroye, whose work in these areas also inspired Brittany. In addition, Brittany continued to be drawn to the idea of teaching teachers—she described this contribution as a special one, an area where she felt really fed. Working with pre-service teachers held a unique place for Brittany and, over time, this became the direction she knew not only inspired her but that called her to action. She recalls how the aesthetic

themes felt familiar to her when Uhrmacher and Moroye first introduced them at a conference. Like other aesthetically-minded educators, the themes seemed to align to her personal philosophy, her passion for action, and a space where transactional learning could take place. Brittany goes on:

I don't use the CRISPA template that they [Bruce and Christy] have provided for teachers but I find that all of those attributes are really important to me. I don't think I could even list them in my head right now but risk-taking is something that is very important in a classroom environment and I want my classroom to feel very safe for them so that they can take risks. I think of bell hooks for example. Bell Hooks argued that conflict is a really important component to that jump to learn. That once we experience discomfort our next steps will largely determine what happens in our attainment or our seeking knowledge.

Dewey (1934) said this as well—that conflict is an important part of transformational learning. Once we experience discomfort, our next steps will largely determine what happens in our attainment or our seeking of knowledge. Themes of transformational catalysts permeate Brittany's intentions and, as I would later come to find, her practice as an aesthetically-minded college educator. Risk-taking, conflict, and the facilitation of ah-ha moments that create change and introspection are close to her heart and her belief in what's best for students. Brittany shares,

I try to—to what extent I'm successful you'd have to ask the students—but I try to get to those why questions as often as possible. I talk to my students about epiphanies and places that they are when they have one. I assume that they have

had one—but those ah-ha moments—I ask my students to try to put themselves in that place and bring that surrounding with them when they need to be recharged—perhaps the material is very dry and they need to be recharged—its an inspiration.

As Brittany began to explore what she would later define as a transactional space of learning between herself and pre-service teachers, she began to ask questions that, looking back, were rudimentary. This, Brittany says, was because she had not yet done the work. But what she had done was open up a myriad of opportunities to support teachers in new and important ways. Brittany was most curious about teachers' abilities to disclose information about themselves—about tough topics like politics, religion, and sex. In her role as a high school teacher, these subjects had come up often. As a result, she had also come to realize that there was also often a lot of confusion on the part of the school about what teachers can or cannot do in regards to disclosure. These moments raised questions for Brittany about teacher identity in the classroom. She found herself wondering what the real and perceived boundaries were in terms of the development and manifestation of teacher identities. “The classroom,” she says, “conversely, is a place where neutrality is largely a myth and yet teachers try to create neutral environments because of expectation and social norms.” The aesthetic themes help Brittany get at this:

In order to get to those aesthetic attributes—one really has to have existential experiences and to have existential experiences they need to be aesthetic and we need to be in an environment where we are truly charged—that could be through nature, that could be through art it could be through poetry. It could be through music. I encourage my students to express themselves through a variety of

means—I wanted them to be able to perform to create to provide written analysis all of these expressions of knowledge, recognizing that we privilege writing and reading and verbal communication over other modalities of expression. But I found that in my own practice, encouraging those other modalities helped to lead to better expression as students, and as individuals, not to mention in written and verbal and reading comprehension as well.

Neutrality is not something Brittany believes in. In fact, she believes quite the opposite. In her teaching over the years, Brittany has always infused her lessons with risk-taking, sensory manipulation, and conversations that challenge students' worldviews. It was no surprise then that CRISPA and the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning felt familiar to her the first time she was introduced to the framework. She was at a conference when Bruce and Christy presented on their research. Brittany recalls knowing then that she had always incorporated its attributes into her practice though perhaps she did not know it or have the words to describe it in quite the same way. Brittany also shares that though she did not personally see herself as an artist, her parents were, and that as a result, she had been raised feeling intuitively that art is good for a person. It's good for everyday use, Brittany says. She also had admitted to being an aficionado and, as such, believes that a feverish pursuit of art is needed to interrogate education and, moreover, neutrality.

As we talk, Brittany shares with me her educational philosophy, which reaffirms her thoughtful approach to teaching and learning:

My belief in education is that it's a transaction—a democratic transaction. I'm inspired by the work of Dewey and Nel Noddings and Maxine Greene and Elliot Eisner. That constellation of scholars is what I believe to be true of practice and dialogue. Dialogue is an essential part of that. In order for teaching and learning to be authentic, there needs to be dialogue about content. Dialogue comes in many forms. I define that very loosely. It's a democratic process. It's evolving. It requires dialogue. It requires structure. And freedom.

Transactional and transformational are words that surfaced often throughout our conversations. Inspired by the works of Dewey, Noddings, Greene, and Eisner, this constellation of scholars is what she believes to be true of practice and dialogue. Brittany is keen on the idea that dialogue comes in many forms and is therefore loosely defined in this sense. She adopts the notion that transaction can only occur through multiple modalities and that is one of the many reasons that education is and must remain complex. Complexity, she says, is what underscores teaching and learning. To interrogate a truth or knowledge is to engage it from multiple perspectives. Community is essential to this as it provides a space where ideas can be shared freely. Community both flexes and holds ideas—it is a backdrop as much as it is a stage. It's the auditorium and engineering that both absorbs and expands the acoustics of space and thought. Brittany describes these types of catalysts as “magic”—the perfect chemistry that ensures a democratic, evolving dialogue tethered gently between freedom and structure.

At another juncture in our interview, Brittany reiterates the importance of creating captivating college classrooms. “Magic in the classroom,” she says, “is the moments

where silence and noise are in delicate tension.” She goes on to say that in teaching and learning, there must be an appreciation for a kind of silence that is nearly palpable. “That sound is thinking,” she tells me. “You just hear it. It’s poetry. It’s when things are moving fluidly. It’s when those eyes are wide open.” She references Greene’s (2001) “wide-awakeness.”

I ask Brittany if she felt that aesthetics were a part of her philosophy of education. She responds that when she was in graduate school pursuing her Master’s degree, she worked with a professor who focused on the spiritual and existential realm of teaching and learning. For her self-study she had used the scholarship of Greene and examined the nature of good, gravity, and grace. She used symbols, metaphor, and symbolic representation to better understand what was meant by this paradox. As a result of her multisensory interrogation, she was better able to understand and uncover the existential and spiritual dimensions. Brittany notes that she did not come from a religious background and, thus, delineates clearly between spirituality and religion. Nonetheless, she says that it was within spirituality that she came to realize that in order to get at the aesthetic attributes, one really has to have an existential experience. Inversely, to have an existential experience one must also engage the aesthetic. Again, she approaches this work with the intention of fostering a learning space where catalysts can occur. To foster both, the environment must be charged in a certain way—whether by nature, art, or poetry, there must be fuel and a match. It could be music, it could be sculpture, or it could be silence—but it must be aesthetic.

These types of realizations led Brittany to an integration of the aesthetic with her own personal philosophy of education. They became a part of her as much as they did her practice and, as such, she began to encourage her students to express themselves through a variety of means. She became passionate about wanting her students to be able to perform, create, and analyze in writing of all these expressions of knowledge. Like many things we find ourselves moved to contribute to, the process itself is cathartic. Brittany, as a result, began to think about her own practice differently and realized that utilizing various modalities also helped her to produce better expression in written and verbal forms. The existential view: this was something I wanted to know more about.

“Do you feel like you facilitate [the existential view] in the classroom or that the classroom naturally allows for it?” I ask Brittany. She shares with me that she does facilitate it, but to really know the extent to which she is successful in this pursuit, one would have to ask her students. She says that she tries to get at those questions as often as she can. Talking with her students about having epiphanies and even where they are when those ah-ha moments occur are a part of her facilitation style. This is intentional. Brittany believes that a great way to recharge is to go back to that place where the realization, the recognition, and the inspiration happened. Brittany laughs as she describes those moments, when her students look at her “like what is this crazy person talking about.” We both laugh at this together. I know what she’s talking about, and we both know that her students do, too.

For Brittany, the process of the aesthetic includes conflict so that we may seek resolution. Conflict in art, literature, or learning allows for advancement and

transcendence of the human experience. Conflict encourages development and new approaches and allows for a solution that resolves the paradox of two or more competing views. O’Sullivan (2006) wrote, “Art, does not so much offer up a set of knowledges—as it sets up the conditions, the contours, for future knowledges still to come (p. 146).” The conditions and contours that O’Sullivan spoke of is the same type of landscape Brittany strives to create in her classroom.

Risk-taking, she tells me, is one way of getting students to that precipice. When she designs learning, Brittany always keeps this in mind. She finds ways to ensure that students have multiple opportunities to take risks. Sensory experiences are the means to taking risks, and sometimes, the sensory experiences are the risks themselves. Brittany tells me that I will see this in her teaching and in her classroom. This is a clear intention. Expanding on this, Brittany says that to identify as an artist is to take a risk. This is where she begins. As an aesthetically-minded teacher, she asks herself, “What risks are going to be taken here?”

Interested in how Brittany would describe other parts of CRISPA, I ask her how she might personally define each attribute. Conversations with both Bruce and Christy had spurred curiosity around this topic. Pertaining to her lessons, Brittany describes the connections as numerous. Risk-taking, Brittany says, is doing something that we are unfamiliar with and for a purpose. An example of this would be breaking free of a structure we are familiar with—say, for example, the five-paragraph essay. Brittany mentions at this moment that I will be observing first-year freshmen right out of high school. They have been socialized in a five-paragraph essay environment. She adds that

they have also been socialized in a standardized testing environment. Learning to be comfortable with breaking the rules is what she hopes to inspire in her students—being conscious about breaking the rules. Another goal of hers is considering what is good about a five-paragraph essay and what we can do away with.

Imagination, for Brittany, begins with novelty. Imagination is what happens when we're presented with novelty and possibility. Imagination is possibility. It's optimism. She says, "One can only have imagination if one can see possibility." "Sensory experience," Brittany tells me, "is using all of them." She smiles. It's visual, tangible, texture—and it's recognizing that texture can take place visibly. Recognizing all of the sounds that are around us, or what confuses us, or what inspires us is all part of the sensory experience for Brittany. Recognizing our own personal state of mind, recognizing when we are hungry or trying to do something—even this is the most basic of sensory experiences. Sensory experience is checking in. I notice that Brittany uses the word "recognition" often in her descriptions and metacognition. I ask her if she believes that recognition is the protagonist of understanding ourselves and that around us. She tells me that sensory experiences can help us to see or understand better, so if we are aware of those senses—or the veil that we surround ourselves with—then we can better discern things.

She wants this for her students: for them to use their senses like a lens and a microscope. Our senses provide clarity and obscurity. She wants her students to ask themselves what they see and what they don't see, as this leads us to perceptivity. Brittany tells me this one is harder for her. Perceptivity, to her, is an interpretation of the

world; it's how we perceive the world. She wants her students to use perceptivity to consider how we are clouded by judgments and biases. Perception is truth, Brittany says to me. I tell her that for me, it's always been about going deeper: to be more immersed, to really look at the details. Brittany agrees with this notion. She tells me that she uses Eisner's (1998, 2001b) description of interpretation and analysis to get her students to perceive with more intention. She wants them to understand and see definition and detail. "Perception is also a filter," she says.

Active engagement: When I ask Brittany what this means to her, she tells me that she defines this for her students as listening actively, verbal engagement, and preparedness. Eye contact is also big, she tells me. Using facial expressions, body language, and presence in class is another aspect of engagement. Being fully present can be identified by behavior, but it also requires dialogue, or the ability to articulate what is being seen and felt. It might be through some other articulation—verbal or written. Nonetheless, it is preparedness. It is recognition that one's students are ready to have the conversation and take part in the transaction. Brittany looks at me and says, "That's it—that's what it is for me. I imagine a runner on a racetrack: their eyes are focused and their body is tense. They are ready for the pursuit."

I respond to her imagery with affirmation: "It's the tension between the noise and the silence, right?" Brittany smiles and says, "Exactly. That's it exactly." Brittany continues,

I talked a little about risk-taking—but that's kind of an essential component of teaching and learning, I think. The other aspects of CRISPA are equally

important. If my students cannot identify in certain ways with certain things, it limits their ability to have multiple perspectives and therefore limits their access to the world and to knowledge. So coming at knowledge or subject matter from a variety of experiences or modalities gives them better access. I think even allowing them to move from, “I’ve always written in this way,” and then render it in a new way—they come to new understandings.

Brittany looks at the clock, noting that it is nearly time for class to start. She says,

In essence, my intentions for my students are that I want them to consider possibility. So I’m thinking of Daniel Lortie’s apprenticeship-of-observation theory. Here are individuals that might go into teaching someday and everything they know about teaching is from the desk. It’s from sitting and watching teaching and evaluating teaching from the perspective of the student. I want them to depart from that apprenticeship of observation, and so my intentions for them (and again, risk-taking is a part of this disruption of structure), I want them to disrupt the structure—the expectation of what teaching is, the expectation that teaching is always going to be this way or that. I want to turn the tables for them.

On this note, I ask Brittany what she believes college students need most and whether or not she thinks the aesthetic themes help them. She answers without hesitation:

Confidence. I think that expression—clear expression of ideas—I believe that once my students have come to me they have the basic skills down. They can read and write and articulate to varying degrees of ability but for them to sustain and persevere. I think that they need to have opportunities to express themselves in

ways that they are unfamiliar with. They can't just follow a formula to come up with a novel idea. We want to cultivate novel ideas; that's what the pursuit of knowledge is. When I poke the boundaries of knowledge more and more and more, that's what the purpose of education is, I would argue, among other things.

Her voice trails off for a moment, and then she goes on:

There's more to it than that I think—there needs to be persistence in novelty, persistence in curiosity, and a lot of that has to do with how well they can articulate their ideas. We privilege verbal and written articulation but I think that in encouraging and cultivating other aspects of expression it allows them to better articulate verbally and in written expression. CRISPA helps us to facilitate these things. I think that the liberal arts do too, to be honest. I think that's the dirty word in today's popular society or popular media. Having a wide experience with disciplines allows for a better articulation of ideas. CRISPA allows students to make deep connections across disciplines and subject areas.

She pauses and thinks on this a moment.

Students don't magically become college students—the freshman that I'm teaching are out of high school plus a day. They haven't magically transformed into a student in higher education overnight. I'm conscious of that. Which is one of the reasons I use CRISPA—CRISPA helps students to have transactional and transformational experiences. It helps them move from a high school student plus one day, to a college student, prepared for and engaged with a thoughtful, contemplative discourse.

I ask Brittany to unpack these statements a bit more, to share with me how she plans for and develops college curriculum utilizing CRISPA. She shares the following:

Here's an example. I think that for my upper division students I use CRSIPA for the benefit of their teaching practice. It lets them think about how one might incorporate various modalities of expression into their own classroom. Whereas for my freshman and sophomore students its more about metacognition, transactional learning and transformational spaces. I don't meant this to sound as if I'm approaching it from a psychological perspective but from the perspective of what kinds of knowledge is there and how can we get at it?

Again, Brittany pauses to think for a moment. She looks across the room and then at her bookshelf. Her eyes settle on the text *Reimagining Schools* by Elliot Eisner (2005). She looks back at me and continues:

Let me say it this way: I would argue (as I think Elliot Eisner would argue) that an intellectual experience comes in many forms and certainly I see teaching as an artistic form. I think there are scientific aspects of teaching like there are scientific aspects of doing art. You have to understand the chemistry and the materials and how the materials interact. You have to understand the methodology to working with oil for example. There is art in education. Art changes. Art transforms. Art cultivates.

She pauses and looks at me squarely.

We must remember that art is not easily quantified. So we need to treat is much in the same way that we treat a studio class. I art is acceptable for a college

experience then teaching and art, or teaching and the aesthetic, is a perfectly appropriate way to nurture the intellect and facilitate intellectual activity. That's my argument. I'm sticking to it.

Dr. David Collins: Forms of Energy Part 1

Forms of energy is the fourth and final core intention of aesthetically-minded college educators. Forms of energy relate to the art of teaching in terms of the energy, impulsion, and heightened awareness great educators facilitate in their classrooms. Forms of energy manifest as a result of inquiry, feverish dialogue, and an action-oriented approach to teaching and learning. This concept is likened to a contagious energy and, in turn, ignites total concentration from the student and teacher alike. In the classrooms of aesthetically-minded college educators, Forms of energy occupy different intervals and sometimes create waves, but are nonetheless always present. In the following interview, David describes his intentions as an aesthetically-minded college educator and how CRISPA inspires high levels of engagement and thus enhanced frequency. In his own words, “low frequency happens all too often in classrooms. Aiming to pair learning outcomes with a heightened frequency—now that's magic” (September 19, 2013).

When David talks about his intentions as an aesthetically-minded college educator, he talks about energy. He describes to me how the aesthetic creates energy and impulsion; both are important and real because they are scientific. He explains how we are all made of energy and that it is perhaps not an accident that his students share energy with him or with each other when in class. Moreover, he describes the concept of being able to facilitate it—to orchestrate that energy and to be able to change frequencies as a

result. “I think that’s something else aesthetics gets at,” he shares with me, “frequency.” He pauses, thinking. “Low frequency happens all too often. That’s when nothing is happening, when no one cares. Aesthetics can change that.” David’s energy is getting bigger. “Outcomes are important but outcomes without a heightened frequency don’t matter. Marry the two, and now you’ve got something. That’s the freaking magic!”

David is an assistant college professor at Lamott University. Lamott University offers students an experiential, intimate, and urban education within a personalized learning environment. The institution is known for being committed to using multiple approaches to intellectual development in order to prepare individuals for holistic lives of leadership and service.

I interviewed David in the summer of 2013, just following my time with Brittany. It’s raining again as I step out of a cab and through the iron gates that mark the signature entrance of the university. I am a few minutes early, and as I sit just outside his office, I hear two students talking energetically down the hall. They turn the corner and I see that David is with them as well. His boisterous voice matches their pitch. They are talking about an activity from a previous class session. David is engaging them about their thoughts and take-aways as they approach me. David smiles widely and says, “Welcome! How was your trip?” He introduces his students to me and I shake both their hands. He unlocks his office, takes a moment to set his books and a lunch bag down, and then turns back to the young lady and young man who have ushered him inside.

“Holly, John,” he addresses them. “Let me think a moment. I know I’ve got it here somewhere.” He’s scanning his bookshelves. He pulls at the spine of a couple texts

and pushes them back to rest among the others. He turns, looks under a few piles of papers on his desk, then back at the shelf. There he finds what he's looking for. "Got it!" He grabs a book entitled *Literature Circles* and hands it to John. "I think this will help with the small-group element of your lesson plans. Take a look and let me know what you think. Sound good? Need anything else? What else can I do for you?" David is smiling and talking fast. Both are common characteristics of his. His students thank him and take their exit, shouting back as they walk out of the room, "Nice to meet you, Amanda!"

Energy is a theme when it comes to David. Sitting with him this day, I think to myself how interesting it is that educators often choose to be conduits of one type of frequency or another. In one form, frequency can be likened to improvisation; it can be used to shift a sequence, to repeat, to reflect, or to mimic. Frequency can also act as a wave; it can engulf, enhance, disrupt, or impact things in a meaningful way. It is not difficult to identify both forms at work in the practices and intentions of aesthetically-minded individuals.

David and I sit down across from one another and begin to talk. He asks a bit more about my trip and my visit with Brittany the week prior. I take out my recorder and a notebook and scan the room as David hurries to eat a little lunch before we begin. The small study is a perfect reflection of his philosophy on scholarship. The same shelf he had touched just moments ago holds the works of Dewey, Eisner, Greene, and Csikszentmihalyi. Like Brittany, he too subscribes to a constellation of educators who have framed the body of literature that supports an experiential and transformative

educational model. His own research and contributions to the field continue to carry this and other's work forward. His passion and enthusiasm for both are always present.

David's teaching story begins in Manhattan. He was in New York working in advertising and writing a book when he met a girl he wanted to marry. They moved to Denver and David took up teaching so that he would have more time to finish his book. He laughs as he tells me this. "Can you imagine that? Teaching so that I'd have more time to write! Hilarious, isn't it?" He tells me that was it. He started teaching and fell in love with it, though he did not mean to do so. His passion grew quickly, though he came to find that the power of a teacher's voice on the ground in the context of the standardized testing movement and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was limited. He wanted to make broad and sweeping changes for students, and his inability to do so as a teacher was troubling. Instead of disenchantment, David felt a call to action.

David has a sincere and genuine need to make the world a better place, and being a teacher allowed him on a micro-level to feel like he was doing that. He knew that he was not going to reach everybody, but he did still feel like his scope was limited as a teacher. He felt trapped by what was going on outside of him and all around him. There were many mandates coming down at that time, and it was at that point that he felt that he needed to do something else. Ironically, according to David, this was the same point at which he was applying for his doctorate —when he was putting together his application materials, he realized that this was what he had wanted all along. Through research and teaching teachers, he would be able to get access to politicians and big decision-makers that he never had access to before. Getting those three letters behind his name and his

position at Lamott allowed him to feel like he might really be a driver of change. He tells me that he still feels small and that he knows he is just one voice, but he is now around influence and feels like he can make a difference.

David communicates with a sense of urgency as he describes his passion to be a driver of change and influence the future of education. I find myself thinking again of the word frequency, in particular of the word oscillation, which describes how energy moves from one position to another. In some cases, oscillation occurs as a single swing, moving toward a thing and back again. David does this as he reaches for future, a ceaseless determination in his expression—passionate about improving education for his students, and his student’s students.

David tells me how he was inspired from the very beginning. He describes it as a “light bulb moment” where he thought to himself, “These guys [Moroye and Uhrmacher] are really on to something here—this is big!” When asked how he began planning for CRISPA and whether it was supplemental or additive, David recalls an AP composition and honors course for 11th graders. He was teaching current events and, as a part of his lesson planning, he sat down with Moroye and together they started layering in CRISPA attributes. David smiles widely as he describes the changes that took place inside his classroom:

All of sudden I had all of this crazy stuff going on! I have role-playing and engagement out of students that hadn’t said a word all year. Those students—the really hard to reach ones—were all of a sudden play acting what they had just

read. It was just incredible. Really high level of engagements and I was like, “Done, I’m sold!”

David shares with me that he believes that public education is seriously misguided right now. We have a market economy model with an aim to get employees and improve the economy. He believes that these are worthy goals but not at the price of losing sight of the rest of the educational landscape. He reiterates that he cannot believe that people are surprised that we have standardization in the United States, but that we are also struggling with creativity and innovation. His demeanor visibly intensifies as he talks about his position on these matters. Taking a deep breath, he says, “I think that education is supposed to be meaningful experiences that engage us to think critically and to care and engage with one another in meaningful ways.” David is so passionate about this subject. He goes on,

We need to have meaningful discourse, meaningful relationships, and to be active members in our communities at the local, state, and national level. Ultimately, we are trying to help kids be the best people they can be. I’m doing this to make the world a better place. Period. And that’s my philosophy.

David’s description of where we are and where we are headed in terms of the nation’s educational landscape again grounds itself in the idea that energy and frequency occur at specific intervals—a pattern if you will—and can also be defined as a number of repetitions in a unit of time. Kozul (2005) accounts for these phenomena in education as well:

Childhood is not merely basic training for utilitarian adulthood. Listening to the stern demands we hear from inculcating worker ideologies in the mentalities of

inner-city youth—and, as we are constantly exhorted now, for getting tough with those that don't comply. . . . I am reminded of Erik Erikson, who urged us to be wary of prescriptive absoluteness in the ways we treat and think about our children. (p. 95)

David is intentional about breaking patterns and ensuring that the future of education is carried on the shoulders of forward-thinking scholars, rather than a repetitive structure of outdated ideologies.

Similar to Brittany, David tells me that CRISPA was always in his toolbox, though he did not perhaps always know it. He states that his intentions are juxtaposed to Christy's, given that she has always been very overt about hers but he never was—until CRISPA. For him, as a language arts teacher, he had always incorporated the arts into his teaching. He brought in visual representations, various art forms, music, and even dance, but he would not have said, *per se*, that he was an “aesthetics guy.” Where it changed for David was when it became philosophical. Now he sees the arts not just as a means of understanding content better (i.e., “Let's use poetry to try to get at the deeper themes of this book or let me give you a 2-Pac song so that you can understand verse better”). Instead, it shifted from outcomes to experience. For him, it's now more about the experience—that, David would say, is what matters most: “It's what you hold onto at the end of the day. It's what you remember.”

I tell David that I know exactly what he is talking about. Aesthetics is how you feel in the moment—it's thoughts and process; those little snapshots we hold onto are enlivened and enriched with aesthetics. David agrees. He tells me that, for him, it's nearly spiritual. Just like Brittany, he adds,

It's not that I'm a religious person by any stretch of the imagination, but I've been on my own spiritual journey. I believe in a creator and in heaven and I believe that we die and that we have a finite amount of time on this earth and that in the end it's all about experience. We're put on this earth and I think that we get to make a choice every day. We get to choose what kind of experiences we have. Things are going to happen and we get to decide how we are going to react. CRISPA brings all of its full circle and aesthetic forms of education or even creative forms of planning make those experiences meaningful.

Contagious energy permeates existential experiences. Such forms of energy are never far from the aesthetic. Tolle (2005) wrote that our inner purpose is to awaken. One might argue that purpose and awakening are inspired by the same types of choices.

David describes as he shares his thoughts on CRISPA. Choice requires action, energy, and at times, a shift in direction.

Thoreau (1963) also spent time reflecting on this essential element of our existence:

We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not be mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor. (p. 66)

David tells me that although he does not identify as an artist, he has always been passionate about music. He has a deep appreciation for music as well as visual art. While in Manhattan, he used to go to museums and galleries often. He admits feeling a little scared because while he appreciated art, he did not have a connoisseur's lens. He did not always know what he was looking at or how to talk about it. This felt really unsophisticated for him, which in turn made him uneasy. Nonetheless, he began to allow

himself to feel the discomfort and be okay with not having that knowledge. He instead embraced that staring at art created something purely aesthetic for him. David tells me that this is when the aesthetic started permeating his life, including his writing. He describes this time as a Bohemian village lifestyle, reading Kerouac and listening to the underground jazz scene:

It just started to fill my soul and then it went into my lessons—I couldn't separate them. I had to bring in art. I found myself asking how you can think about reading and writing and not have music and art. It didn't even make sense. So that's where it started to come in for me.

From that point on, David has integrated the aesthetic themes of CRISPA into his practice. He tells me that sometimes this is more intentional than others. Sometimes, this is just a mindset for him while other times, he thinks about it deeply and plans thoughtfully so that his students will be more imaginative, creative, and risk-taking. He wants to create passion for his students—to do this he does not so much look for places to integrate the themes but rather looks for places where the themes may enliven the curriculum and therefore the experience for students. He does not want lessons to be boring for his students. He wants his lessons to be clear, well orchestrated, well scaffolded, well sequenced—and never boring. He also tells me that though he does not always go right to CRISPA when he is trying to create deeper engagement, he does recognize that his chosen strategy tends to be nearly always aesthetic in nature. He transitions into a story to explain this in greater detail:

Teaching is like watching TV. Once it starts to get predictable, it's not fun. This is probably too much information, but do you remember in the 1990s—WWF and WCW? Mind you, I was a male in college, but man, that stuff was like a male soap opera! What was so fascinating about it was that it was so unpredictable. You never had an idea what was going to happen next. So I kept coming back to this guilty pleasure—this totally and completely anti-intellectual guilty pleasure—because I wanted to know what was going to happen next and it always lived up to my expectations. It's all about the element of surprise.

I sit with his description for a moment—the element of surprise and the concept of mimicry or improvisation David experienced when viewing the WWF. In theatre and literature, anticipation is a process that allows for inference, argument, refute, and resolution. It occurs to me that, similar to the idea of conflict, David's interest in anticipation can be viewed much like Brittany's interests in transformational catalysts. Both include Forms of energy that engage a nearly electric feeling that results in increased alertness and attentiveness.

There is a certain look on a student's faces when anticipation is present. They are dialed in, to put it simply. The expression often mirrors that of students taking part in risk-taking. It is interesting to consider the ways that biological and physiological states change when anticipation is present. Individuals experiencing either may have an increase in heart rate and breathing. Changes in heart rate, breathing, and neurological activity are in fact shifts in energy. Some research has been conducted on how gravitational and electromagnetic fields are impacted, either positively or negatively, in

relation to shifts in collective consciousness. In essence, the introduction of anticipation or suspense into a lesson or classroom may in fact add vibration or frequency the room. To use David's words—outcomes with heightened frequency is where the real magic in learning happens.

“Who would have thought we could learn so much from the WWE and the WFC back in the 1990s?” David nearly shouts the rhetorical question with enthusiasm. “Every good teacher knows what I'm talking about. It's jet fuel. It's revving the engine. Something is about to happen and it's all eyes and all ears. Everyone is ready.” David smiles widely and begins to laugh. He throws his hands up. “Yes! When your students are like, where the hell is this guy taking us next! I don't want my students to change the channel and stop watching me,” he says, “I want them to be all in—I want them invested. That's my aim.” David tells me that he works to get them engaged early, right out of the gate. He wants them to know that he cares, that he's passionate, that he knows what he's talking about. He also wants them to know that the work of a teacher is important. His students will go on to affect thousands of kids and the basics of engagement strategies and aesthetics are crucial.

David and I talk about transparency and honesty. We agree that aesthetics facilitates both. Aesthetics breeds honesty because it is transparency in its truest form: it shows all. The dialogue and representation that takes place in a classroom has a certain innocence to it. Students let their guard down in the face of what feels like risk-taking, and then care, belief systems, emotion, philosophy, and identity all can begin to surface. David talks about a student in his class named Casey. “She had stayed after today to talk

to me today,” he tells me. “She had wanted to discount this terrific work she had produced—this manifestation of her reflections and understanding. There was so much depth.” He pauses, “I wasn’t going to let her off the hook that easy. What she had produced; it was really good, and meaningful and thoughtful. After she got done, and after we talked, she realized how much was there.” David and I concur that with truth is realization and with realization are palpable memories—moments in time we do not often forget. That kind of truth stays with people. It stays with students.

Transitioning our initial interview in order to continue to interrogate the intentional, I ask David to share with me his definitions of the CRISPA attributes. David tells me that, for him, they are pretty straightforward:

Connections are how I get them to connect in meaningful ways using ethos, logos, and pathos to the material. It’s about asking how we get there and why we care. I think that every good lesson should have that, so for me it’s not really a definition, per se, but that’s how I use connections. With risk-taking, it’s about getting them out of their comfort zone—getting them to try something novel and different. My students may say “errrrr...” But they know they can do it. I know they can do it. I don’t want anyone to feel terrified—I’m sensitive to that too—but I do want them to take a risk and feel challenged in a safe way. Imagination: For me it’s a creative idea or concept that produces something of value. I guess that’s the definition I would use. Imagination takes a lot of different forms. Sensory experience and perceptivity: the two are super close to me. With sensory experience, I think of it on more of a basic level. How do I engage as many senses

as possible? If I can engage all five senses, great! If I can get four, that's great as well. What's important is how I get their senses into what I am doing. Active engagement: I almost see active engagement as a result of all of those things. If I've connected to something, then I'm engaged. If a student for instance is not engaged in the reading, it's because they are not making connections—they don't see themselves in it. They don't see the values and so on. If I'm working with CRISPA, and I'm taking risks, then my sense are heightened and I'm actively engaged. I guess then, for me, all of those lead into the notion of active engagement meaning that I'm in the moment. I'm there. So there's a lot of crossover for me.

I ask David if there is anything that has been left out for him: if there is anything else in the framework that needs visibility or to be identified. He answers me immediately, "Yeah—FUN!" We both laugh. He is very animated as he says this and continues boisterously, talking with his hands,

If its not fun, most often you don't want to do it unless you have to, and they have to, so why not make it fun. It's engaging. Laughter is engaging. We want to enjoy what we're doing. Moreover, I want my students to know how to make learning fun for their students, as well.

I find myself thinking again about Forms of energy, about the idea that energy in a room can be measured. Enthusiasm and engagement are suspended or propelled as a result of an increase or decrease of vibration in the room. Laughter, fun, light-heartedness, play—these things carry a unique frequency all their own, and like magnets, can increase in

charge, creating a strengthened bond. Aesthetics is concerned with the study of art and appreciation. Here, too, we find space to consider how a heightened sense of appreciation, and thus perhaps a heightened sense of awareness, might also be able to enhance or impact the physical inner workings of a room.

David tells me there is another intention he wants to be sure he states:

I want them to see that you don't just write a philosophy of education as a teacher, you don't just talk about all the great things about being a teacher in teacher ed and planning lessons and then leave all that over there. It translates into what's here. You take it with you. I want my students to know that I want them to take this with them. Their passion. Their beliefs. The importance of integrating their beliefs and passion into every lesson they write. This is what keeps us from burning out. If they don't stay close to their passion and what brought them to this work in the first place, they'll lose sight. Beliefs drive intentions, which in turn drive actions. If you start to believe it doesn't matter anymore, then you're done.

It is all of this and more for David: teaching is his calling. It is his purpose, his passion, and he truly tries to make the world a better place. When asked directly what his intentions are, David does not struggle to find the right words:

My intentions are to help create thoughtful, caring, inclusive teachers that are intentional about what they do. I want them to be learners as teachers with classrooms that are inviting, where they are guides on the side, not sages on the stage. I want them to be caring. I want them to have fun. I want their kids to have fun. I want them to challenge their kids. I want them to work hard to differentiate

instruction so that every single kid is getting what he or she needs. I want them to be reflective and be willing to be wrong and to make mistakes. I want them to be transparent about that when it's appropriate and to be okay with that. I always tell them that you don't have to know everything—it's okay to say I don't know, let's look that up. Don't be fake. I want them to be leaders.

He takes a moment to catch his breath. Emotion and sincerity are etched across his face.

He continues,

I want them to be looked at as instructional and curriculum leaders. I want them to also be transformative leaders that help change the system. Curriculum is your power. You lose your curriculum—you lose your power. I want—no, I need my students to go out there and fight for their curriculum. I need them to be agents of change. There has got to be change, and that's my little revolution—start it from grassroots.

We both laugh. Teaching in 2014: a grassroots revolution. I smile. I can't help but think that aesthetics and CRISPA are likely to be on the frontlines.

Dr. Michael Reed: Forms of Energy Part 2

“Nature uses only the longest threads to weave her patterns, so that each small piece of her fabric reveals the organization of the entire tapestry” (Feyman as cited by Ball, 2009, p. 180).

Michael Reed's intentions add depth and context to the fourth and final theme, Forms of energy. We see this theme evolve in the way that Michael describes his practice and purpose— “to carry the torch,” to “feel the rhythm rather than just count the steps.”

In the following interview, Michael shares the roads that led him to the classrooms of higher education and his journey, propelled by Forms of energy, impassioned him to create college classroom environments full of beauty, improvisation, disruption and creative, colorful acts of contemplation. According to Michael, CRISPA gives us all of these things, as well as artistry and, perhaps most importantly, permission to be deeply moved by such experiences:

I think there's a lot to be said for this notion of improvisation and contagious energy in the classroom and I think that CRISPA allows for this. It's like they're learning how to dance and they're counting their steps and I'd rather them just feel the rhythm. CRISPA gives you permission to do that. I think my colleagues would say they have to count the steps before they can feel the rhythm. I don't know. I think that some people can feel the rhythm and for some, counting steps gets in the way. And maybe you feel a beat that the dominant culture doesn't hear and it's really beautiful and we would not have noticed your dance if we hadn't done it this way. I would hope my students have a little bit of that artistry that they can think on the fly. I think we need this as much in our classrooms, and for our own learning, as we do for navigating our lives.

I find myself thinking about Sarason's (1999) work as Michael shares with me this elegant metaphor on life. Referencing theatre, Sarason (1999) wrote, "The written script is like a curriculum, the task of the actor and the director is to make it alive for an audience and that obligation is not discharged by knowing the script, by regurgitating it" (p. 4). In music or the theater, improvisation is borne out of careful observation and

attention to detail that, as a result, allows for alignment, mimicry, and flow. All three might be said to have a profound impact on the rhythms of group consciousness due to shifts in neurological, physiological, and spiritual frequency. No matter how one might decipher it, something seemingly magnetic occurs when artists, musicians, or actors find themselves in synch with their medium, producing from a place of imagination and intuition.

Michael Reed is an assistant professor for Arsdale State University, a charming university founded in the 1800's. Even in February and with two feet of snow on the ground, the campus and community are warm and inviting. Offering more than 60 undergraduate majors and several graduate degrees, education is one of the university's core programmatic offerings. In addition, the institution is committed to individual student success, and thus maintains a 14:1 student-teacher ratio in order to create an optimal learning environment. It was this and much more that brought Michael to the university where he has begun to make an incredible impact utilizing CRISPA and perceptual lesson planning in his pre-service teacher education courses.

Integrative, constructivist, and perceptual philosophies influence Michael's beliefs and theoretical frameworks about education. Michael believes students construct meanings from their own experiences, and this process shapes how students come to understand their world. Especially influenced by Eisner, Michael believes teaching is an art. As artists, teachers work toward creating nurturing environments where students actively participate in making meaning with content as well as with the other actors within the environment. In the tradition of Eisner (1988), Michael subscribes to the idea

that classrooms are governed by ecological dynamics, where intentional, structural, curricular, pedagogical, and evaluative dimensions interact with one another, which in turn creates the ecology of the classroom environment. While teachers cannot always control these forces within their classroom, they would do well to focus their intentions around caring for their students. Noddings' (2013) notion of care also plays a large role in Michael's philosophy about education. Michael believes the art of teaching is grounded in showing we care about our students.

It's 1:30 in the afternoon and 17 degrees below zero outside. Michael and I are sitting in a restaurant just near to the campus. The warm atmosphere and lunch crowd are a welcomed haven from the bitter cold and blizzard winds blowing just outside. Moments ago, we were at the university and Michael was wrapping up his lesson—drying paint brushes and stacking colored paper while reflecting on his practice as an aesthetically-minded college educator. Thirty minutes later we sit across from one another at a mahogany high top, brushing snow from our coats and caps and gloves as we reach for menus and napkins. He begins,

When I first went to college, it was for the college rodeo. I planned to become a professional rodeo cowboy and then got married shortly thereafter. I realized then that this was probably not the best family option. In addition to the rodeo, I had also taught in Sunday school. I took a look at my options and gifts and thought, okay, maybe I could be a classroom teacher.

Michael smiles and takes a big bite out of his burger. He continues,

Then this wild thing happened. I remember college being the first time I ever really loved school. I had such great professors and I thought to myself it would be fun to one day be a professor. I guess you could say it had always been in the back of my mind. So I got my Master's degree in an administrative licensure program and when I finished, it occurred to me that I didn't really want to be a principal but I also didn't want to stop going to school. I looked up to those guys and it kind of just made sense. Shortly thereafter, I was like, yes, I need to be in higher education and keep doing this amazing work. It's fun to be in front of the classroom and hanging out with kids all day.

Michael shares with me memories of teaching K-12 and how Moroye and Uhrmacher ended up having a lot of influence on his interests in CRISPA and higher education. He smiles broadly as he says this:

This was in August near the beginning of the year. I kept playing with it and it kept working and I kept getting more and more excited about it. I remember this lesson the first time I taught CRISPA. It was in world geography and I was focusing on food. I had integrated food into the lesson as students learn about cultures. I had been scared of it before because there can be stereotypes and I didn't want to assume things but CRISPA gave me a way to do it in a culturally responsive way and it was a big hit. Ironically, the class that it really worked well in was U.S. History. It sounds like a boring subject but I thought it worked really well in lending itself to the subject matter. So I tried to use those principles—risk-taking—in how we thought about the topic. A lot of time it felt like it was just me

taking risks and I found that when I did that, my students opened up a lot more. When I would share what I was writing, they would share what they were writing. The more I opened up, the more they opened up and we just got into these really deep conversations. It was an opportunity to be vulnerable with each other and safe with each other. I think the connections things as well—you can make a lot of things relevant and meaningful as timelines and dates. Music is really easy for instance—to connect modern names with what going on.

As with the interviews that came before with David, Brittany, and Clair, I'm curious how Michael applies the framework, whether it is an explicit or implicit technique. Moreover, I wonder if, for him, the themes are a template or an additive. Michael tells me,

I think the more I experimented the more I was willing to do it. I started a peace studies class and I went right to CRISPA for that. I taught peace studies for 2 years and pretty much relied on CRISPA throughout. It seems that for the teacher, when they experience the aspects of CRISPA, there is a mirrored experience happening. The students experience what the teacher experiences. Another example is in the peace studies class, there was this activity where you draw this line and you think about how you've changed. You have to write a poem about it. You think about it and then you act it out. I remember thinking this is scary but I'm just going to do it. The best part was that in the end, everyone loved it. They laughed and then they were all willing to take the risk too. They were like you know what, we're going to have fun with this too.

Energy is contagious and so is risk-taking. Artists, musicians, and actors feel their audience's reactions as much as the audience feels the performance or medium being shared. Again, we see "teacher as performer" and the art of improvisation and theatre in the classroom. Sarason (1999) said, "Audiences are silent performers. They are silent but not passive, at least they did not come expecting to be inwardly passive. They come expecting to see themselves and a slice of life differently" (p. 14). He also said that, "Audiences come with diverse expectations, but among them the most important is that the performer will get them out of themselves" (Sarason, 1999, p. 15).

I interject.

That's the part that I think is magic. It's immediate. You see it in the room undeniably. Even with your class today, when we first walked in the energy in the room felt flat—or pensive, it's hard to say. They were slightly slower to warm up than your second group. However within a very short period of time, there was that gradient in energy—you always see it. You can feel the energy lifting and you can see how people are interacting—the metacognition that starts to happen. They start making connections to things far back. Everything from childhood memories to cartoons—they go way back. They are building off of and incorporating all kinds of memories and all sorts of different knowledge. When you feel that buzz, you know it's there and you know they're ready.

Michael responds,

I agree. It's kind of that magic that we talked about. That goes from students shuffling into the room to take notes to what are we going to talk about today, or what crazy thing are we going to act out or taste or experience or do. Something else that CRISPA lends itself to, and I'm not sure that I'm doing it right, is putting together essential questions. When I switched from objectives to essential questions, that allowed me to bring in questions that before I felt kind of restricted in—if that makes sense.

I say, "I get it. An objective feels like it has an end point—like its closed. Whereas an essential question feels open. You can write them in an open-ended way." Michael is nodding in agreement. I consider this for a moment. An objective is predictable. It is routine. It has one destination and, generally speaking, requires taking one predetermined road to get there. Essential questions are open-ended: they are unpredictable and leave room for improvisation and perhaps even the theatrical. Sarason (1999) also noted this phenomenon when discussing the art of performing. He said that, "Audiences do not want to feel like they are being treated to a routinized performance devoid of the appearance of spontaneity and feeling (p. 13)." He goes on to say, "Audiences do not want to become aware of that the artist is acting; they want to identify with the role they want to 'lose themselves,' to be caught up in the welter of thought and feeling the role requires" (Sarason, 1999, p. 13).

We both take a few more bites of food and I ask him to tell me about his current philosophy of education and how it has evolved. I ask him if its changed over the years,

knowing that, of course, it has. “I have changed!” he says enthusiastically and then he laughs.

I was very much a constructivist. Even as I started working with this, I still considered myself one, but I have changed. I really do think that education is more of an art than a science, and consequently, when I think about how to engage my audience and give them an experience and connect with them—that’s different than trying to meet everyone’s need based on the pre-assessment. That was a game changer—Eisner really had a huge influence on how I viewed education and [that was] when I began to think about how I can appreciate the qualities of my students and who they are—not for a test score but to be a connoisseur as a teacher. When you do that, you have meaningful criticism. I was talking about this this morning with literacy: when you share an honest truth, they are willing to listen because they trust you and they know you care about them. That was big for me. I went from being a coach and someone they could relate to, to someone they didn’t want to leave until class was over—I always wanted to be that guy and I didn’t know how to do it until I did and it all made sense. You really appreciate them for who they are and not compare them.

Noddings is well known for her contributions to care and ethics in schooling: “Natural caring as Noddings asserts, is a moral attitude, a longing for goodness that arises out of the experience or memory of being cared for” (Palmer, 2004, p. 211). Care and emotion can also be looked at scientifically. Emotion, for example, is produced as a result of neurological chemicals and brainwaves. Joy is associated with alpha waves in the

brain, which function at lower frequency allowing for more mind utilization. Fear and anxiety, conversely, operate at a higher frequency, also known as beta, and block intellectual processing and flow. Theta waves are produced as a result of creativity, increased memory abilities, and integrative experiences as a result of positive outlooks about ourselves and others. Therefore, to facilitate care intentionally is to facilitate brainwaves and frequencies intentionally that allow for increased attention and engagement.

Michael continues, dovetailing into a reflection on connoisseurship and criticism: I know one of the things I heard about Eisner is that he brought a wine connoisseur to class one day. They sampled one wine and then the next. I think it was Flinders [who] said, “Oh, this one is sweeter than the last.” Eisner stopped him and said, “No, wait, you can’t do that. You can’t compare.” That was a big ah-ha for me—I realized that I was always ranking my students and comparing them or categorizing them. I thought to myself, what if I stop ranking my students and instead appreciated each one for exactly who they are? What if I stopped obsessing about where they fit in my continuum of objectives? My philosophy, in short, is to view education as an art. You can view each child as its own special creation. That was everything Eisner intended. That is what it’s all about.

Returning to our conversation on his philosophy, I ask him if aesthetics or arts-based education were a part of his practice prior to Eisner. “I always wanted it to be,” he answers. “I’ve always enjoyed being creative.” “Did you have an artistic influence growing up?” I inquire. Michael replies, “I believe so. I’ve always enjoyed art. I took

ceramics and was in the church choir—I just like art in general. I think it’s amazing. But I didn’t realize how much I could connect that to education.” “Were there artistic influences in your life?” I ask. His response does not surprise me. Each of the participants I interviewed had some sort of influence or exposure to the arts. “My family really encouraged it,” Michael pauses, “You know how I talked about the rodeo? I loved to write poems about rodeo as well when I was in high school. Sometimes I would draw.” “So it’s always been with you?” I suggest. Michael nods in response.

I continue, “Tell me this, how do you plan, design, or develop your curriculum using CRISPA? Is it an additive, is it the lens, or is it the template? What is it for you?”

Michael replies:

So last semester, it was not really on my radar because that’s not really what they do here and I didn’t want to confuse the students. I didn’t want to impose it—but then I went to a conference and was inspired by some of the Eisner’s and Greene’s [presentations]. I realized then that I didn’t come all the way here [Arsdale] to just fit in. When we got into lesson planning, this year I thought about what [I could] add. I found myself on the plane returning from that conference thinking a lot about reading and how connoisseurship can help literacy. Literacy is kind of violent and students can feel really bad about themselves based on how someone reads. There needs to be more connoisseurs in language arts. By the time I got back, I put it in the curriculum and it fit really well. We began doing lessons on connoisseurship shortly after that. It was all so fresh in my mind. I had Flinders and everybody who were telling these great

stories. It was one of the best experiences in my entire life. I felt this burden to not be shy but rather carry the torch and share these ideas up north. I kept thinking that these amazing ideas should be in more places! So that kind of got me going. I got mixed results.

Michael's phrase, "to carry the torch," struck me. I find myself again thinking about the concept of a wave—vibration, intention, and influence Michael's passion for bringing the works of Eisner, Greene, and Noddings home to his college campus would ultimately spread like wildfire.

I ask Michael what he means by "carrying the torch." He explains, My colleagues at first were pretty apprehensive about it and didn't understand what I was doing. About the time I was feeling kind of defeated about it, the students started giving me amazing feedback. It was right about the time we were starting to get our evaluations. The students' comments supported what I already knew. They were eating it up. That was it for me—I felt like, yes, I have to do this. I had enough of a critical mass and the Dean's support so I was like—we're doing this.

"Why the push back?" I ask, "Why are students not intentionally being taught both traditional and more integrative methods, do you think?" Michael replies,

I think it's because there's a general feeling that learning is linear and they have to eat all of their vegetables before they can have anything else. There's a process and you have to start with, "Can they do this really complicated lesson plan?" before we can introduce that. Others had said, "Well, that's for veteran teachers;

that's not for new teachers. They'll get screwed up if they don't have sequential order." That's why they were asking about substitutes. They're taught that anyone should be able to take your lesson plan and get the same result. Coming from that mindset I can see why they didn't love it. But the feedback was so positive from the students, I thought, well this is worth a shot. So then I printed that article for my colleagues [who] I knew kind of disagreed. And I don't know if they ever read it or not but they've been a lot nicer since. One of them—the chair—wanted to learn a lot more. This assignment that we are working on is a common assignment and I debated with him on it—but I was like, I really think they should be able to choose the lesson plan template that they want, including CRISPA, and he kind of pushed back on it. But I told him, like I told my students, I taught for eight years without this and this was a game changer for me—I wanted to help him realize what was possible. What's been really interesting is students' direct feedback on CRISPA. They keep talking about how much they learned. Initially I think some of my colleagues thought the students liked it because it's easy. Once he and others saw how much students were saying they'd learned, it started to shift.

He pauses and thinks for a moment.

If you brought in the objectives or outcomes—or the opportunity for outcomes—you automatically bring in the depth and breadth of learning, like the two are synonymous. You have a single objective—the learning is going to be as narrow as that objective. It's counterintuitive. Do you want students to learn this much or do you want them to learn this much?

He answers his own question, “Give them an opportunity to learn THIS much,” gesturing to the enormity of it with both arms out to his side.

“Talk to me about how you personally define the different dimensions of CRISPA.” I say. Michael offers,

So connections is being able to connect the content with what we’re learning—maybe connecting it to your knowledge or your perceptions. It could be so many things. In a basic sense, it would be knowledge and memories. We were talking about songs earlier. Can a song connect you to a memory, for instance, and how something like that can bring back a lesson you learned a long time ago. So it’s taking something you know and personalizing it for the student and making it relevant. It’s maybe culturally relevant and pedagogy—finding out where your students are at and meeting them there. It’s everything good. It’s powerful. Risk-taking—this is my favorite one since I’ve been experimenting with this. I think it’s teacher and students trying things they wouldn’t otherwise try, and I think in doing so they have these new experiences that kind of open up the world to them. I think that risk-taking is being open to possibilities—to put it in a concise way. Imagination—that one is cool. When you think of our world and what it needs, I think of imagination. It’s one of the most important aspects we can teach our young people. It’s being able to take things in the abstract and being able to create with them—being able to take ideas and concepts and invent new ways and blaze new trails. I’ll have to give you the flying buttress. The only way of doing painting a picture or doing a genre—whatever it is. Sensory experience—

involving senses in the classroom. This can be so powerful—whether it’s music or tasting. I keep adding food more and more. I think it started off while we were using popcorn and we were paying attention to how it smells and how it feels and how it sounds. It was so simple—it’s popcorn, and they eat it all the time, but they experienced popcorn in such a new way. That leads well into perceptivity. Once you are aware of what to pay attention to, you notice intricacies that once were mysterious. Active engagement. That’s kind of what happens when all this gets going. Students are talking and they care. They’re not just doing it anymore for a grade. And I love the way this happens. I don’t have to say—this is worth this many points. I don’t have to use a rubric and say you have to do this. They’re doing it—it’s just cool to say and they’re not obsessed with how they’re going to jump through a hoop. They’re just going for it.

“Full-bodied concentration,” I add. Michael concurs, “Yes, like the grade doesn’t even matter—it’s a secondary thought kind of thing.” “Does it surprise you that everyone is drawn to risk-taking?” I ask. Michael replies,

I don’t know, because I haven’t done this study with K-12 teachers, so I don’t know if they would say the same thing. But across the board, risk-taking is the one that everybody really hones in on and gets excited about. People explicitly say, this is the one I get excited about. Maybe it goes back to Noddings a little bit. How can I ask you to read out loud and write a paper if I’m not willing to do the same for you.

Again, I'm reminded of the laws of energy and how ideas, perspectives, and confidence can be transmitted, modeled, reproduced, and shared. Frequency, as discussed earlier, is associated with wavelengths or the distance between two peaks of a wave of energy. Waves originate from vibrations that are oscillating motions over a fixed position. Vibrations transport energy without transporting matter. How often, how frequently, how intentionally ideas are produced and shared can be likened to such oscillating motions. When speaking of the science of energy, how high and how low a wave crests or troughs is directly related to its amplitude or how strong the wave is. Similarly, when speaking to the art of teaching, how clear and purposeful—perhaps even how profound—the experience is, the larger the amplitude and, thus, the stronger the energy force.

That goes back to the framework itself—the use of the themes to foster the opportunities to honor people's strengths and successes. It's so important to be educating the whole person. Going back to my K-12 experience, the more I took risks, the better the answers got. You're vulnerable and they're vulnerable, and all of the sudden, you can be honest with each other. Michael goes on,

One thing that drives it was my experience with the school in New Mexico. I hate what standards are doing to people outside the dominant culture. With that I'm realizing that this is the way that labels are used to typecast people or overgeneralize things and not pay attention to qualities that are also there. I think that CRISPA especially addresses that. I'm kind of a social justice guy and that alone gives me a lot of hope. So if I approach it this way—not everyone has to fit

in my box or my rubric, that's a powerful thing. I know Eisner was not explicitly social justice but thinking about that was huge. We have a lot of different populations—if that keeps students proud of who they are and proud of where they come from, then it honors their story.

I ask Michael to share with me how his students respond to CRISPA. “I think of it this way,” he begins, “If they were to fire me, there would be a revolt.” We both laugh.

Michael continues with a chuckle:

I don't mean to sound overly confident but the kids like it and there's enough of a critical mass. I think they know that my intentions are good and pure. When I first started teaching this, I think people thought I was being easy on them. But that's not the case. In fact I'm measuring things they're not even thinking about.

Michael speaks to this in more depth:

The worst thing is when the lesson plan goes off track and there is fear in their eyes—like oh no, what now? I think CRISPA allows us to take broader strokes, to think on our feet—we need this to be successful in life as well. You're not just looking for a perfect lesson or a perfect score, but instead for an experience. I think to myself—this is what life's all about, and this type of living in the moment and being present and embracing the changes in direction (whether it be a lesson or a curve in the road of life) is what makes us more gritty and tenacious and able to stay the path even when it goes in a new or unexpected direction. I really think that the art of education is more feeling the rhythm rather than counting the steps.

Michael and I both take a moment to digest this and then he continues,

You were talking about the pendulum—I think it is starting to move. It seems like this has a lot of possibility and I hope to see it all over. The more that we become a melting pot across the nation and the world—this is a really cool way to bring us together. Thinking about it in terms of a social justice point of view or from economical standpoint. Gloria Langston Billings—why couldn't students create a hip-hop version of what they're thinking rather than write a paper? Why can't we have a lot of flexibility in how students express themselves? I think this gets at that. You can have so much depth expressed through a variety of ways. When I think about the world and what we need—living on an earth that is hot, flat, and crowded—we don't need more worksheets or people all being able to do the same thing. We need diversity; we need to be able to appreciate one another. I think this does that really well. We appreciate one another—[the] diversity of each other. Which is so beautiful. It has that caring-ness embedded throughout. If I can teach my students how to care—wow.

I respond to this:

You're honoring the quality of the experience and, in that, honoring the person who is having the experience—you can't separate the two. There is so much kindness in that. If we are going to ensure that the next generation has the ability to think outside the box and explore and discover in order to come up with new ways of doing things for things that we cannot even imagine, we're not going to be able to do it the way we are doing it now. We're not teaching our children to think that way.

Michael and I shuffle out of the booth and toward the door. We step out into the wintry subzero temperatures and prepare to head back to campus. Even with the wind against my face and the snow crunching under my boots, I feel the warmth and brightness of the day. I think to myself how all of this feels meaningful—the work and each participant’s connection to it. At that same moment, Michael turns to me and says,

What you’re doing is really important. When I found out you were doing a dissertation on this, and researching about it and talking about it, I got really excited. There is so much possibility in it. I just commend you and look forward to your findings, observations, and insights. It’s a cause worth living for.

Summary of Section 1

Four significant themes emerged from the seven interviews I conducted with aesthetically-minded college educators who utilize CRISPA in their practice. These themes encompass and are representative of the intentions of aesthetically-minded college educators. From Uhrmacher’s interview, the wow experience emerged. From Moroye and Brittany’s interviews, the concept of transformational catalysts was identified. From David and Michael’s interviews, a theme of Forms of energy was presented. From Clair and Bunn Olsen’s interviews, the intention to facilitate innovative practices in teacher education emerged. Though categorized in the aforementioned ways based on where they first most fully emerged, each participant encompasses a combination of the intentions presented and thus shares common perspectives, hopes, and aspirations in terms of their aesthetic mindedness, their use of CRISPA in college classrooms, and their passion for higher education.

In summary, aesthetically-minded college educators who integrate CRISPA into their practice deeply care about representation, the quality of discourse, meaningful experiences, and student's ability to develop deep connections both to their life-long journey as learners as well as to their life's work as it relates to one's purpose.

Aesthetically-minded college educators portray four core themes in relation to their intentions for college students and their practice in higher education. These themes are well organized within Palmer and Zajonc's (2010) view of essential domains for higher education including knowledge, teaching and learning (described in more detail in Chapter 5). The intentions that presented themselves as a result of the interviews described herein are as follows:

Creating the wow experience. The wow experience is a moment of awe, surprise, and fascination. It is bold, bright, and richly memorable. The wow experience builds perhaps upon what Ingman (2013) described as the *great experience* in that it highlights experiences in life that find their worth in and of themselves and, when compiled, constitute a life well lived. The wow moment is valued and treasured, and it might transform us and our perception of something on a deep level due to the way it challenges us to think, investigate, connect, create and synthesize. Easily recalled, the intellectual palette responds to the wow experience with awe, surprise, and admiration; it is both captivating and worthy of connoisseurship.

Facilitating transformational catalysts. Transformational catalysts help to launch us from one place in our lives to another as a result of what Greene (1995) called cognitive adventuring. They include a beginning, middle, and end and are full of

interconnectedness, integrity, and care. Transformational catalysts bring students to a place where they begin to feel that they are living their purpose. Transformational catalysts are based in meaning-making, and by their very nature facilitate a transactional space tethered between structure and freedom, where academic, personal and professional evolution can occur. This intention helps to facilitate deeply meaningful connections and an opportunity for individuals to imagine who they want to be as professionals, educators, life-long learners, and leaders.

Promoting innovation in teacher education. Innovative practices in teacher education ensure that our students—and our students’ students—are able to try on various narratives in order to look more clearly at themselves as well as at the larger world. This type of intention advocates for leadership, innovation, and care theory. Those who are intentional about innovative practices in teacher education believe that innovation begins with a community-based effort to impact legislation and the field of education by ensuring intrinsic motivation, positive psychology, integrative models, transformational experiences, and creativity for future teachers, future classrooms, and future students. Aesthetically-minded educators prepare pre-service teachers for the classroom by arming them with a framework that is resilient, adaptable, and flexible—each aspect of which will undoubtedly be required of them in their future work as teachers.

Generating forms of energy. Forms of energy relate to energy, impulsion, and heightened awareness. This intention challenges us to feel the rhythm rather than count the steps; it aims to carry the torch and push against the current while creating evolution in the field and growth for students and teachers alike in multidimensional ways. In

addition, this intention attends to the educational pendulum and, as such, is committed to addressing American education in the name of authentic learning and heightened outcomes. Those who are committed to this area draw from social justice models, grassroots efforts, and frameworks of care that drive change and act as launch pads of possibility. Forms of energy allow individuals to approach teaching and learning with broader strokes, improvising when necessary in order to facilitate meaningful experiences in college classrooms. This intention is in fact a conduit of experience in that it acts as a conductor that ignites, inspires, and influences teachers and students in powerful ways.

Section 2: The Operational

Dr. Brittany Robinson: Intentions Realized Part 1

“Undivided Attention”

A grand piano wrapped in quilted pads by movers,
tied up with canvas straps—like classical music’s
birthday gift to the criminally insane—
is gently nudged without its legs
out an eighth floor window on 62nd street.
It dangles in April air from the neck of the movers’ crane,
Chopin- shiny black lacquer squares
and dirty white crisscross patterns hanging like the second to last
note of a concerto played on the edge of the seat,
the edge of tears, the edge of eight stories up going over—
it’s a piano being pushed out of a window
and lowered down onto a flatbed truck!—and
I’m trying to teach math in the building across the street.
Who can teach when there are such lessons to be learned?
All the greatest common factors are delivered by
long necked cranes and flatbed trucks
or come through everything, even air.
Like snow.
See, snow falls for the first time every year, and every year
my students rush to the window
as if snow were more interesting than math,
which, of course, it is.

So please.
Let me teach like a Steinway,
spinning slowly in April air,
so almost- falling, so hinderingly
Dangling from the neck of the movers' crane.
So on the edge of losing everything.
Let me teach like the first snow, falling. (Mali, 2002, p. 34)

In the following vignette, Brittany Robinson demonstrates two essential subthemes that present themselves as her intentions operationalize in the classrooms of higher education: *orchestrating transposition* and *actualizing connoisseurship*. First, orchestrating transposition, both in music and philosophy, is the ability to shift an entire sequence and still maintain, if not enhance, its integrity. Utilizing CRISPA allows for transposition through experiences that cultivate transference, metaphor, and representation in the classrooms of higher education. Second, actualizing connoisseurship reveals itself as students become familiar with the Latin *cognoscere* or to know. In the arts, to know depends upon the ability to see, not merely to look. Operationalizing CRISPA actualizes connoisseurship in the classrooms of higher education by placing value on quality and appreciation.

Utilizing CRISPA as a framework for her lesson planning and facilitation, orchestrating transposition and actualizing connoisseurship emerge. Both themes encompass powerful engagement strategies for college students as the aesthetic themes come to life in the classrooms of higher education. My first set of observations captures Brittany's personal philosophy realized, as well as the dynamic dialogue that is essential to authentic teaching and learning. In this vignette, Brittany demonstrates how "the magic happens," a term Brittany is fond of, as well as the delicate tension between silence and

noise. She also guides us into a space where an appreciation for both is described as “palpable.”

My second set of encounters with Brittany and her students captures a part of her practice that she says has always been there—the knowledge of an aesthetic framework, even before it had been defined as CRISPA, as well as and her deep commitment to interrogating learning and one’s worldviews through symbolic representations, risk-taking, and sensory experience. Stemming from her intention to create space where transformational catalysts can occur, the things that she attends to most in her classroom result in opportunities for a critical appreciation and the ah-ha moment.

Vignette 1. There is a crisp, bright wind in the air as Brittany and I traverse the campus. Students and colleagues pass us and say good morning. Others, holding cups of coffee or their book bags, wave and smile. Brittany picks up the conversation one more time to provide a summary and background on the lesson I’m about to observe. She tells me that this is a first-year freshman seminar that happens to be housed in the education department. Students choose this class because they have an interest in education, whether it’s to become a classroom teacher or just an interest in education overall. Part of the class is intended to expose students to the nature of college academic life, how to do research, how to study, the importance of building community, and other general tips on navigating the collegiate experience.

I follow her into her classroom where her students are already waiting. They are a small but lively group. A few smile and make eye contact as I take a seat at the back of the class and open my laptop. I catch the tail end of light-hearted, cheerful conversations.

I am reminded of how young and innocent college freshman really are, as well as the bright and evolving paths before them and the simplicity of the world around them. As I watched the class unfold, I realized the students were catalysts, and through her intentions, Brittany propels these young adults into philosophical scholars right before my eyes.

Brittany's classroom is welcoming. Sixteen students occupy the space as she begins her lesson this morning on the personal philosophy of education. She stands quietly at the front of the room with a calm smile; her face is open. I am reminded of a conductor of an orchestra, standing center on the stage. There is something masterful about a stance that both releases a space and at the same time holds it in order that it can be framed. Casual conversations come to a close as Brittany begins. She greets her class and picks up where they last left off: "In our last session together, I asked you to think about what you believe to be true about the purpose of education. Today we're going to unpack that a bit." She pauses and then begins again,

I'm going to ask today that you render this purpose in different forms. I have given you pieces of paper and markers at each table and asked you to bring a statement that distinctly defines what you believe to be the purpose of education, and now I'm going to ask that you create a haiku of that statement.

Immediately, students begin to laugh uneasy and then someone says "Err..." Brittany smiles. "I always get this," she says, "What is that—what is the err?"

Transposition in music occurs when an artist moves a musical sequence up or down the piano keys, changing only the pitch, but not the melody. A shift in perspective

is essential in learning. Cassirer (1951) wrote, “Man must free himself from all idols, from all illusions concerning the original cause of things, for only by so doing can he succeed in ordering and establishing the world according to his own ideas (p. 70).” During our interview that morning, Brittany had explained that her students had just submitted a draft of their educational philosophy. They had been asked to write about what they believe to be true about the purpose of education. Today, Brittany’s intention is to have her students condense their ideas into a haiku and then render that haiku into a sculpture. She is asking them to shift the medium, shift the representation, while maintaining the essence of their thoughts—their learning.

Shifts in experience, in balance, or in what we perceive to be reality in any given moment are often accompanied by a feeling of risk. Brittany is intentional about facilitating this outcome as well. She had identified this response during our interview; she predicted some students would be scared and that some would be excited. She had told me that her students knew that they were going to be doing some art today, but they do not know why or for what purpose. Underlying all parts of this lesson, Brittany’s deepest intention is to have her students come away with how curriculum is developed and the kind of compromises that we make in educational ideals.

Reagan, a college freshman with long dark hair and freckles says, “I’m not very artistic, so that’s a problem for me.” Another student echoes the statement, “I haven’t written a haiku since like eighth grade.” Brittany says, “So tell me, what does it take to be artistic?” Kyler, a tall, slender young man dressed in a flannel shirt, jeans, and boots raises his hand and says, “Abstract thinking is artistic.” Brittany responds, “So do you

have to think of yourself as an artist or identify as an artist to think of yourself as artistic? That's interesting." People are nodding. Brittany says, "The reason I am focused on this is that it inevitably always happen—someone says I am not a writer, or I am not a teacher, or I am not an artist." She pauses. "So what does it take to think like an artist? To do art? Do you have to be able to define what art is? Should we begin there? What is art?"

There's trepidation in the room—the class is grappling with her questions. I recall that just an hour ago Brittany had looked me in the eyes and said that once we experience discomfort our next steps will largely determine what happens in our attainment of seeking knowledge. A student speaks up from the back of the room and says, "Art is based on a person's interpretation." It's Maria, a redhead with bright blue eyes, who continues, "I think you have to create something. You can't just say I'm going to interpret this information, because that information is there—and like everyone has access to it and can see that it's there—so you have to create it." Another student named Ellie speaks up. The pitch of her voice tells me that she's all in—she's excited and there's momentum in her words. "What about art forms like piano where you spend 90% of your time playing other people's works?"

Here, Brittany orchestrates transposition. She encourages her students to shift from a feeling of trepidation to a place of creation. Ellie's observation of how one can play someone else's piece and still call it art is an excellent representation of the concept of transposition—to transpose one version of music to another, just as to transpose one concept of understanding to another. Brittany responds to Ellie with a composure that

creates an image in my mind of an open and extended hand. I know this trick. In an orchestra a conductor's open hand, palm up—leads the crescendo and encourages the notes to get louder. Brittany does both. She asks the class to come with her, to trust her, and at the same time encourages a rise in intellectual pitch: “So what about that? You asked that question, so lets take that further.”

The conversation continues as Brittany and her class dialogue about things like the creation of art, what it means to make an original masterpiece, whether art is mimicry, and whether there are gradations of artists. Reagan states at one point that artists, like scholars, stand on the shoulders of giants. Against the backdrop of her lesson, there are hushed conversations, but as the room transitions from a soft prelude into a robust melody of interaction, the tempered conversations turn instead to sounds of laughter, smiles, and enthusiasm. Brittany transitions the group into their writing. Someone says softly, “I’ll just commit—let’s do this,” and then the room grows quiet.

Silence has a melody of its own. Music inherently depends on silence in some form or another to distinguish other periods of sound and allow dynamics, melodies, and rhythms to have greater impact. This is also true with teaching and learning. Brittany is masterful in the way that she orchestrates silence. In an early interview with Brittany, I’d asked her to use a metaphor to describe her teaching and she had chosen the image of a rubber band. She said that in teaching, you have to be able to be both tense and flexible, to twist it and turn it, to pull against it, and also hold things together. Perhaps silence does the same—for thinking and for nurturing the intellectual mind and art.

Brittany quietly walks around the room as her students begin to render their philosophy of education into a haiku. I notice a change in the energy in the room. The group is focused, thoughtful, reflective, and completely present. My eyes scan the expressions on these freshman faces. One can see imagination at work—eyes soft but focused, settling on some nonexistent location across the room, as the mind explores and creates. Pencils to paper, heads down—nothing interrupts the space or the flow of consciousness. It’s captivating: the intersections of thought and silence.

A hushed conversation percolates between classmates. Reagan turns to a boy named Austin, who is sitting beside her. She nearly whispers, “Are you done?” He doesn’t answer her directly as his eyes never leave the paper, though he does acknowledge the question. Austin responds as if talking to himself, “I don’t know if this works or not.” Reagan is still looking at her paper as well. “I’m going to just go with it,” she says. Brittany’s voice gently breaks the silence and she asks her class, “Okay, who would like to share?” A girl from the back of the room makes eye contact and then raises her hand. Brittany nods in her direction and she begins to read her haiku without any additional prompting: “Seeds sprouting with care/ Grows freely when tended to/ Pollinates the world.” Brittany is smiling, “I like it,” she says, “I have a lot of questions, but I’ll wait until the end.” She then adds, “I want you to really listen to each other’s haikus.” There are a few moments of silence. Brittany waits patiently. A student chooses to take the perceived risk and share their poem: “The question should be/ Why and how rather than/ Things that don’t matter.”

Again, Brittany smiles. “I like that,” she says. “So tell me, what was hard about doing this?” Three students respond to this question at the same time. Their voices break over one another as they rush to respond. It’s very real for them—the risk-taking and the captivating space Brittany so intentionally works to create. “Filtering your ideas into the structure,” one girl says. “Doing something that we’re not used to having to do—it was unfamiliar,” says a boy from the back of the room. “Struggling to put things in structure—deciding where to be lenient and where to focus on the more important aspects were,” says another student. A pause preludes the final comment, “Compromising.”

During my interview with Brittany, she shared with me that her philosophy of education includes a belief that the exchange is a transactional one. She said that for her, teaching and learning are complex and thus the dialogue regarding both must come in many forms. To really get at truth and knowledge, learning has to be interrogated from multiple perspectives. Like many works of art, intellect is nurtured between structure and freedom. Brittany demonstrates the importance of the shift, of space and transposition, to facilitate an opportunity for thoughts and ideas to grow, evolve, and take new forms while maintaining their essence.

“Alright,” Brittany begins again. “Now, I’d like you to create a sculpture of your haiku.” Again there is a brief air of unease. Students smile and for a moment look anxious. Brittany gently develops the tension in the room like an orchestra gently building a cadence—or just like the rubber band” the space between structure and freedom. To be captivated is perhaps to be in awe of something—to be taken aback and pleasantly surprised at the same time. She has the full attention of her students as she

begins to pass out small containers of Crayola Play-Doh. A lighthearted and child-like energy builds in the room.

Vignette 2. “I want pink,” Maria says. Another looks at Brittany, laughs, and says, “I love the smell of clay.” Even I find myself smiling. Everyone is taken back to their youth. My eyes scan the room. Here in front of me is a group of young college freshman, suddenly transformed into children by the introduction of a single element. “I haven’t played with Play-Doh in forever,” Reagan says. Kyler echoes her nostalgia, “It stays with you, doesn’t it.”

Brittany holds the class in this space like one might hold an orchestra in place—the right combination of reassurance and loose rein encourages instead a focused rhythm that is consistent, precise, and steady. “Alright, so let’s begin,” she says. “You’re welcome to mix these colors in any way that you want. As you’re creating your sculptures think about the material you are using—consider what it allows you to do and what does it not.”

There is something magical that happens when CRISPA is present. Adults become children again; individuals lose themselves in a reflective, nostalgic state. Memories surface. Deep, long-term connections are made. Recall becomes clear, concise, and profound. We can see this clearly in Brittany’s class: the way her students become enchanted with the medium, the finding, and creating—the process of discovering and rediscovery of self and world.

Reagan makes eye contact with Brittany. “How long do we have for this?” I love Brittany’s response. Quoting Picasso, she says, “There are no rules in art.” The class gets

to work and much like the haiku activity, an enchanted air settles across the room. I might describe it as a fevered pitch or a canon, which in an orchestra is a melody imitated by individual parts at regular intervals. Members of a symphony may enter these melodies at different measures or pitches, and like the scene unfolding in front of me now, they may be played at different speeds, backwards, and even inverted. In this moment, Brittany again orchestrates transposition. Her intentions operationalize to create a fluid space where thoughts ebb and flow, cast light on new dimensions, and allow new facets of ideas and dialogues to take place. In the midst of this movement, I see Brittany's mindful eye absorb the group and its interactions. "Why are you more comfortable with this than haiku?" She asks. As much a researcher as a teacher in this moment, she turns to face a student who responds almost immediately, though she does not lift her eyes from her clay. "I'm more comfortable with this because..." the student looks for the right words, "because I guess I can build things with my hands. I like that." Brittany leans right into this and asks, "Is that decision about preference or skill?"

Greene (1995) stated,

Aesthetic experiences require conscious participation in a work, a going out of energy, an ability to notice what is there to be noticed in the play, the poem, the quartet. Knowing 'about,' even in the most formal academic manner, is entirely different from constituting a fictive world imaginatively and entering it perceptually, affectively, cognitively. (p. 125)

And so it is with the inner workings of Brittany's classroom, recall and introspection are engaged, snapshots are bubbling up through conscious participation, and connections and imagery are rushing to the surface as philosophy synthesizes from memories. In the classroom, I hear a student say, "It brings out the child in you," and I smile. I too am

caught in the ambiance for a moment and I find my thoughts floating to shady walnut orchards and how I used to sit with my grandma and play with modeling clay when I was young.

Brittany asks her students to move around the room and look at each other's sculptures. She asks that her students think about the questions they want to ask the artist. Over the course of the next 8 minutes, students carefully and tenderly observe each other's work. Words and phrases float in the air creating a texture of its very own: "Ooh, I like this one." "That one's cool." "Very artistic." "Wait, stay for a minute." "It's breaking." "Of course it transformed." Meanwhile, someone is whistling. That sound, too, seems to be such an intentional and yet unexpected outcome of the exercise, so it should come as no surprise that a moment later someone says, "What do you call it when a song comes full circle?" And someone else says, "Can we do this more often? Who needs tests? Tests are overrated." Affirmation. Brittany smiles. "Your final paper is going to be much better than this." Again, there is a shift, though I don't think I realize it just then. I could have perhaps sensed it or predicted it, given the recognition that it had just taken place.

"I'm going to ask you a few questions about the sculptures that intrigued me. Tell me about this one," she says, pointing to a brightly colored sculpture on a table close to me. A student from the group looks up, looks at his peers around the table, and then back at Brittany: "You're supposed to be questioning life, right? In terms of our philosophy of education, I mean. So here's the haiku: Seeing deep inside/ Wondering how come or why/ We make the world thrive." There is a new level of perceptivity here. Another

student from the same group speaks up. Her name is Emma. “You’re supposed to be looking deep inside; trying to question what your purpose is in life, how can you make society better, how can you make yourself better, and the economy, an individual task.”

Vignette 3. “Where’s the economy in there?” Brittany asks the class. “The world itself is the economy that thrives,” says the girl who had just shared her haiku. A student from the back of the room begins to read their haiku without prompting: “Artwork and discipline/ Are good noncognitive skills/ Keys to happiness.” Palmer and Zajonc (2010) wrote, “Human knowing, rightly understood, has paradoxical roots—mind and heart, hard data and soft intuition, individual insight and communal sifting and winnowing. . . . Integrative education aims to ‘think the world together,’ rather than ‘think it apart’” (p. 22). Brittany’s intentions to facilitate transformational catalysts are operationalized through synthesized individualization. Her students, who bring many parts of themselves to the classroom, find therein how one cannot separate philosophy from learning, knowledge from what is already known, or childhood from the aquifer that nurtures us into adulthood.

The dialogue and metacognition continue. Brittany asks about the colors in the sculpture. “I picked different colors to represent non-cognitive skills—I chose yellow to represent education and to tie it altogether. Yellow is happy, and education should be happy.”

Well, there’s a little seed in here, and it sprouts and what it takes with it is its fundamental stuff—it pollinates, it’s going out into the world. It just shows the difference people make whether they recognize it or not—how you learn or where

you learn and how it all connects. So I used it in the form of a plant and how a plant pollinates—I don't know if that makes sense.

Brittany smiles and nods: “What I like is your use of metaphor and how if you neglect some aspects of the garden, it doesn't thrive. So what's happening there?” Maria answers this question:

It shows inequality in education—some people, when they are given all the pollen, they are of course going to have a better chance of thriving and growing. But if the soil isn't fertilized, they're not getting an equal opportunity and I guess that does make a difference. Also ignorance—if this guy doesn't want to learn from what people are teaching them, they are not going to want to grow.

Brittany is smiling, though her expression is pensive. She wants Maria to stick with this, to sew together her understanding, and to synthesize new realizations by making meaning of her world and the ideas that have been introduced. “I like that you're using the garden of the metaphor,” Brittany says, “so don't discount it. So the garden has been neglected? To make your metaphor, to sustain that metaphor, one would have to assume that the flower or the seed would choose not to thrive—or care not to thrive.” “I guess so,” Maria begins again. “I mean, when some kids are taught right from wrong they still choose to do wrong but also some kids are never taught right from wrong and then they don't know what they're doing.”

Palmer and Zajonc (2010) write of the importance of investigating our inner worlds:

We have begun to expand our understanding of the world, its intrinsic worth, and our own value as human beings. The inner world of subjective experience is

beginning to be considered as a domain of cultivation and research as valid as the outer. (p. 72)

Synthesis and meaning-making are imperative to our ability to navigate our world with a sense of confidence, assuredness, and joy. Combining the many facets, as Brittany encourages her students to do, paradoxically asks that students explore what it is to combine the many parts of themselves while maintaining the integrity of themselves.

The room gets noisy again—everyone is sharing and offering up their contributions. I can make out a flurry of infused statements against the backdrop of the rising ballad: “My world just got lost!” “Let’s do it—does everyone agree with that idea?” “We don’t know which ones good.” “Are ours flawed? Are they flawed?” “A lot of people don’t see it that way.” “If someone agrees with everyone else, there’s no individuality and you can’t grow.”

As I listen to the conversations, I’m aware that there are a lot of references to space, and I think back to my interview with Brittany, in which she said that she thinks a lot about space. She referred to it as a locus of control. Brittany had said that she’s obsessed with symmetry and that when she places students in groups, she’s concerned with how far apart they are or if they line up. “These things are important to me,” she said, “I think in terms of *feng shui* when it comes to communication. The only way for communication to be open or for there to be an open freeway is to have clear lines. Clean lines.”

Students are talking about space as well—both literally and metaphorically. Transformational catalysts are occurring on a moment to moment basis, operationalized through transposition, recall, and synthesis. The room is alive with the words of art and

childhood. I find it ironic and fascinating that their laughter seems in beat with the pendulum of their prolific thoughts. Brittany notices it too. She asks that single, simple, momentum-driving question once again: “So, what’s happening here?” Again, Brittany asks her students to transpose their understanding. If Brittany’s classroom were a song, those four words are its chorus.

Ellie responds with an engaged and thoughtful answer, “So we’re starting here in preschool,” pointing to the colorful display of clay statues, “and this is equality of opportunity for students, which is represented by this statue here that Kyler is trying to incorporate. This is seen as the starting point, and these are the preschoolers.” Kyler picks up where she left off, “A preschool teacher provided them with difference views of the world so that they could start at different points and have equality. This represents the challenges that they’ll face along the road (the yellow brick road).” Ellie points to the long yellow path that the group has created and adds, “This represents their struggles, but this represents them breaking free of the obstacles and persevering as well.” “But is this necessary? Do you have to work through all of this to get here?” Brittany asks. Brittany’s question is foreshadowing to the recall and introspection taking place. Greene (1995) captured the importance of this process when she wrote,

If we can teach our students to articulate what can be discovered in this way and to make it part of the dialogue in a classroom, this approach to reading may in time move us to wonder about going beyond reading the world to, as Freire says, ‘transforming it by means of conscious, practical work.’ (p. 116)

Ellie thinks for a moment. “I think that you have to work through some of this—you have to have some ups and downs. Education isn’t free.” Maria nods and says, “Yeah, it was like that for us too. It could be that we have been in the same class learning

the same thing so we are thinking in similar ways.” “Ahhh,” Brittany says playfully, “So you’ve been indoctrinated?” Laughter breaks out across the classroom. Students look at each other with camaraderie—they are all on the same team and the community here is as real as the introspective dialogue they are taking part in. Maria tries again, “If you look closely I think you’ll find a way to connect a lot of theories and ways—they’re all interconnected. In fact, it’s even more evident when we work together like this.” Brittany nods:

Did any of you really have to compromise the integrity of your sculpture? Some of your ideas got set aside. You had to make some decisions about what to keep and what to give away. If you were to make this one cohesive sculpture—like all parts touching—how would that have made it different? I think what I’m asking is, was it easier to place your sculptures next to each other than to create something new?

Kyler volleys the inquiry, “You said you had to keep the integrity.” “You did follow my rules, didn’t you—but you followed them in your interpretation of the rules. What do you make of that?” Brittany waits—longer this time. Everyone is listening, eyes bright, expressions thoughtful. Of Descartes’s “Philosophy of Nature,” Cassirer (1951) wrote, “Nature cannot be understood if it is taken merely as a sum total of phenomena, if one considers only the extension of its events in space or their temporal sequence (p. 50).” Speaking of fundamental principles, he highlighted that truth is founded in the laws of motion. Here we see transposition as an element of motion, where Brittany’s students and their thoughts are formed not from a sum of phenomena but from a deep understanding of

expression. Descartes would say that it is here only where all future knowledge is marked out (p. 50).

Austin shares next, synthesizing many aspects of who he is with what he is learning,

We might not all be teachers but we're all going to be a part of the world in the future, and even if we have different ideas we have to work together to make something—like that's going to benefit the world in the future. And even if we don't have agreeable ideas, we can find a way to make them work together for the better in the future.

“Do you think that this happens in schools?” Brittany asks. Austin replies, demonstrating once again how transposition, recall, and synthesis are taking place:

I think that this happens in colleges because there is so many different people that come from everywhere and we have to find a way to get along with each other if we want friends rather than the kids we grew up with our whole lives. I'm talking about on a diverse level—there's some kids who did not go to school with many minorities and some that did—going to college and being able to experience so many different people and so many different experiences is an example of the kind of mixing of ideas that happens in a school.

Brittany's expression is soft.

A lot of idealism goes into education. To teach is to believe that there is possibility—I have so much conviction about that. I have to accommodate different ideas and recognize the need for compromise. That can be difficult to do

when you're dealing with communities and society. We have a society that expects you to have this kind of knowledge but we have a side of society that expects you to have different attributes that might not be privileged in school.

The class is so lively as they enter the room this day that one might feel they alone are initiating the change in seasons. As much as the temperature has dropped over night, the energy of the class has raised. Brittany stands in front of her class while I sit again at the back. Her presence is quiet though everyone makes eye contact as they settle in and take their seats. She is modest in her interaction, yet nothing goes unnoticed. The last pair of students walk in together, one of which turns to close the door and therefore close out the wintery cold. Brittany scans the room. Many are still chatty and the image of a family Thanksgiving dinner crosses my mind. The clanking of things against tables, laughter, whispers, and casual conversation wrapped in the warmth of familiarity. These students know each other well. There is trust and relationships here. I find myself wondering if this group of individuals interacts the same way in every class or if there is something special about the relationships Brittany has helped to foster through her work with these students. Her lessons interrogate, challenge, and honor all of the things that have brought them to the education that is now unfolding for them. Again and again, we see the reoccurring theme of transposition take place.

Brittany opens by asking her students to think about what they are thinking about while they are walking to class—a quick warm-up in metacognition. She also asks how other teachers start their class and then she says that in her high school classes, she would give her students one full minute to be absolutely silent when they first got to class. Her

words alone change something. “For one whole minute,” she repeats again. And then the class falls completely silent. The class concedes and becomes very still. I look around the room. Eyes are soft and completely calm. Some students are leaning back in their chair. Some are looking down at the floor, at their fingernails, at the wall, or at Brittany. Some are closing their eyes. Brittany is masterfully facilitating recall and introspection, preparing and opening up her students, clearing and centering at the same time. “What does that do for you?” Brittany asks after 60 seconds have passed. Maria answers first, “It’s relaxing in a way.” Brittany lets her words hang in the air momentarily. “What do you mean by that?” Maria expands,

It’s like when you’re working and busy and running from place to place—sometimes you just have to take time to slow down and reflect. That can be relaxing. Taking the time to just think about what you’re thinking and what you’re feeling. That’s important.

Brittany quietly agrees, “What if you had experienced this every day in a class in high school?” The class is still a moment. Brittany looks around, smiling. I too sense what is happening and I’m affected by it. Like a great book or a powerful poem, sometimes it’s the white space—what’s there between the lines—that says the most.

Brittany brings this to the attention of her class. “Your energy has changed a lot,” she says matter-of-factly. “It’s a community of silence, would you agree?” She then says, “We’re going to activate our senses in other ways. I have a painting here that we are going to talk about. But first, can someone give me some of the criticisms that people have about classroom evaluations of teachers?” Student’s respond with a flurry of

statements: “You don’t get a full picture of the class and what’s going on.” Another, “Student evaluations might be misguided or misjudged.” Yet another says, “You can’t judge a teacher off one or two observations.” Another still says, “The observation can also draw energy from the teacher and serve as a distraction.”

Brittany is writing these responses on the board. She’s nodding her head and listening. She expected these responses. “There’s a scholar who happens to be my favorite person in the world—he proposed the concept of educational criticism and connoisseurship. So let’s break that down a little bit—what does it mean to be a connoisseur?” she asks. Ellie responds to the question almost immediately, “It’s an enjoyment; there’s an appreciation.” Brittany says, “What kinds of things might someone be a connoisseur of? What if for instance you are a connoisseur of cheese? What are you doing when you’re sampling cheeses from around the world?” Austin answers, “You’re making observations about texture, the density, the smaller details.” Brittany says,

Yes, yes—details that for example a non-connoisseur of cheese might not notice.

Another example might be wine. The amount of sweetness, the color or richness—someone who does not have that same level of appreciation might miss altogether. To appreciate something is an internal experience. One has to have the finesse and appreciation for subtly and detail. It’s not necessarily something you are going to share with someone else. It’s something you do yourself. [Pauses]

Are any of you connoisseurs? What is something that you appreciate to its finest degree?

Again, Brittany lets this question hang in the air. Around her momentum is building.

Gravity: Brittany had talked about it in a previous lesson. I imagine that the entire room is a whirlpool, all of its contents now moving in the same direction.

Ellie offers, “Fire-dancing.” The class and their full attention turn in her direction. She continues—her face completely serious, thinking about what it is to be in that moment, perhaps. “I’m a fire-dancer and because I understand it, it’s less than a performance art for me and more of an understanding of what’s going on with the body.” Eisner (1998) wrote that, “Human knowledge is a constructed from of experience and therefore a reflection of mind as well as nature” (p. 7). Brittany threads this into the discussion. She doesn’t flinch, adding, “It’s less than an aesthetic understanding and more of an intrinsic understanding.” This is a statement and not a question.

“Baseball,” Kyler chimes in. “It gets under my skin when people say that baseball is boring because there are so many intricacies and so many little things that people don’t understand.” “Competitive skating,” Reagan jumps in, “I feel the same way about it that Kyler and Ellie feel. The things that matter most are the things that the audience can barely see. The way you hold a pose, your balance during an arabesque, or the things you are thinking about as you do an axel or a jump sequence.” “Good,” Brittany says. In this moment, she is operationalizing her intentions and using connoisseurship as her springboard. She continues,

Now, think about teaching and learning as an area for connoisseurship. We’re going to practice connoisseurship using visuals in a bit—but before we get into this we need to think about what criticism is. Elliot Eisner would argue that

criticism requires not that you be a connoisseur but that you are able to articulate what you appreciate. I want to stress that appreciation doesn't necessarily mean that you like it but that it's a finer appreciation for the details. A critic is able to disclose those details.

She pauses to make sure that everyone is following. She looks at Kyler, "For instance, I can appreciate the subtleties of baseball but if I can't articulate that to a wider audience I cannot provide a critique—a critic has to have the ability to disclose."

"Let me say it this way. Let me know if this makes more sense," she continues, looking around the room. "You can be a connoisseur without being a critic, but you cannot be a critic without being a connoisseur." She smiles, and I see Kyler, Ellie, Maria, and others smile too. They're getting it.

Okay, so let's bring this back to teaching. How might you apply this to an evaluation of teaching and learning? Subtlety, detail, and complexity? Would you recognize these in an evaluation? An educational critic and connoisseur would be able to enter a classroom and understand the subtle details of what's happening—this is the theory of Elliot Eisner. We're going to practice this with art. We are going to make the assumption that you are connoisseurs of some of the arts—you have a deep appreciation or some subtleties. You don't have to be a connoisseur of art to apply a critique. You can apply a critique based on your own appreciation of some aspects—but to have a critical lens is to apply an understanding of a situation. Similar to connoisseurship—you are putting a lens on. So let's try this out. We are going to go through a process—first we describe, then we interpret.

She is teaching with Eisner. “This is exactly the same way you write your reading responses. First you describe and then you interpret.” Eisner (1998) asks the connoisseur to “attend to everything that is relevant either for satisfying a specific educational aim or for illuminating the educational state of affairs in general” (p. 71). Brittany does this as she draws her class to an image of a painting. “Let’s begin with a description—tell me what you see here? I want you to really give me the details.”

Interpretation: on this topic, Eisner (1998) wrote, “If description can be thought of as giving an account of, interpretation can be regarded as accounting for” (p. 95). A student raises her hand and then thinks about her answer momentarily. She begins to describe the tombstones and notes that they are adjacent to the ground level and that people and children seem higher. She talks about the tombstones and stairs and asks if maybe it’s a connection between life and death. She notes the balance of color is located around the bottom but that the colors get lighter near the top. Brittany restates what she says in order to help her and her class both understand. Then she goes deeper—perceptivity. She’s looking for something more. “So are you saying that there is a theme of elevation?” Brittany asks. She is using Eisner’s language—the language of connoisseurship and criticism. “I’m fascinated with the concept of elevation; the juxtaposition of light and dark, optimism and possibility.” Every student is listening, there is deep eye contact between Brittany and her students—she respects each student’s contribution and they respect hers in return. Brittany listens, nods, reframes, gives back, subtly weaving in educational, academic language—aesthetic language. Her style is natural and full of intention.

Kyler joins her discourse, “They’re reaching for something and at the same time being comforted.” He pauses only to ask himself a question, almost inaudibly, “Comfort versus darkness?” Maria picks up the line of thought,

This indicates something to me—they’re selling something. Or perhaps that there is a market for tombstones? Or that if you live in this building you are constantly reminded of death—that some are going down and some are working their way up.

Reagan makes a connection to New Orleans—she says that she sees a lot of new Orleans there. Brittany understands that her connection is influencing her interpretation. Reagan goes deeper into her observation. Framed by stream of consciousness, Reagan is in a state of reflection, connection, and memory. She says that after Hurricane Katrina, all the buildings were regular and people were hanging out outside and the ground was always dirty. “Just like the painting, there were tombstones are everywhere.”

Brittany takes this in. She’s listening carefully to Reagan. Not undermining one word, she says gently, “What intrigues me the most is this woman.” Brittany points to the image on the wall. “Her posture—almost a little seductive—her red dress, her hip, her arm out to the side.”

A student says she might be a prostitute and Brittany says, “Wait, why do you say that?” The student responds and in doing so makes a connection to the Harlem renaissance and the ‘blocking colors’ as a component of the message. Another student notes the smeared water and debris at the bottom of the painting—these too perhaps symbolic of the message.

Brittany asks for the lights to be turned back on and then shares that the painting, by Jacob Lawrence, was done in 1945. A Harlem renaissance painter, he often painted scenes of African American life in Northern cities. Brittany pauses to let her class absorb the information, the painting and the nuanced subtleties that are, in this case, as delicate and informative as the connoisseur's palette. "Alright, so now that you have the context, how might you depict this painting?" She's introduced an important aspect of the methodology: structural corroboration. In doing so, she asking that the students consider what important ideas, concepts, or theories can be used to explain the major features, which helps to ensure that the facts are consistent and that one form of the research validates another. "Now you have other facts, more background—what is the argument that is being created here?"

More interpretation occurs, and over the next few minutes she facilitates this seamlessly, weaving back and forth between the methodology, the teaching, and the outcomes she wants students to takeaway. I watch her, listening carefully and observing her students. She is comingling the teaching of criticism and connoisseurship with the experience of criticism and connoisseurship. I think this and simultaneously think that this is also what art does. We observe, experience, and thus, learn at the same time. Eisner (1998) would say that we place it in context, explain, and unwrap. We take it apart and we put it back together; we break it down into small parts in order to understand its greater sum alongside the present moment. We have to experience the lesson to know that the lesson is first and foremost about the experience. Against quiet thoughts, Emma

says, “Knowing that, I look at the painting and I think to myself that one comes in at the base level and there’s sadness and death.” She pauses,

However, you can make your way up—there is a pathway. You know it’s not going to be easy—it’s going to be tough to get up the stairs—but once you’re there you’re going to look around and know that even though you worked to get where you are, you maybe are never really very far from where you started—from where you came from.

Brittany transitions her class and asks her students to create an exhibit by combining these items and then discussing their commonalities. She calls her students the “docents” and says, “I want to hear from you all how you have brought these pieces together in one cohesive exhibit. Tell me how you came up with your story; provide us an overview of the artifacts.” A group volunteers to present. Kyler begins on behalf of his classmates,

In one picture there is a group of children who are holding their names written on signs, so we kind of brought these together—the child becomes largely what he is taught, hence we must watch what we teach and how we live. In this particular photograph, for instance, the students are being taught American ideals but they are still keeping (and treasuring) part of their culture.

Brittany is listening carefully and nodding, “How does that connect to America’s future? Does it determine the home and the school?” She waits a moment, scanning the room, adjusting her energy and delivery. “What would you say to the idea that the child becomes largely what is taught hence we must watch what we teach and how we live?”

Kyler continues, “Well, they’re being taught American ideals so they will remember that, but they’re also mixing those lessons with their own. Hopefully they’ll bring that to their families in the future and they’ll teach their own children as well.” Brittany leans in again—she is not going to let the dialogue settle there. This is not about agreeing or concurring—it’s about analysis and interpretation. She says this, actually. “It’s interpretation. It’s good to talk about it. It raises questions.” And so she asks the question—directly. “Is it all happy making or is there some critique?” Here, we can see Brittany’s intentions operationalized and as a result, connoisseurship actualized. All at once the critic, the teacher, and the masterful artist, Brittany leads her students into a space of evaluation. As Eisner (1998) might define it, “If we do not know what we have, there is no way of knowing what direction we ought to take. If we can’t tell if we are moving ahead or backward, we are without both a rudder and a compass” (p. 100).

Another group joins the conversation. Austin reads a quote aloud: “The instability and hardness of the world is due to the lack of imagination which prevents the realization and the experience of other people.” He shares his group’s observations,

This was during a time when a lot of people were coming to America and had both very different experiences because they were coming from different places, and yet at the same time, we’re having very similar experiences because they were all making a major transition.

He studies the picture next to the quote carefully before continuing,

We have two different classrooms here being presented; one is this classroom that looks very good—it has a blackboard, it has plants—but you’ll notice that they

are all in uniform. They are all reciting lines. It's very much structured. They are all looking at the teacher. There is not very much imagination going on. Whereas in the other one, it is not as nice as a classroom but they're all painting and drawing—they're very comfortable. They're not sitting in rigid seats, they're lounging on the ground and they're not in the same outfits. My interpretation—our interpretation—is that these are the outfits of their old cultures. They have very different styles so that connects back to the quote about painting and imagination. One is a more lenient culture in the classroom and one a more rigid, structured uniformed culture. One allows for more imagination and that allows them to see each other's experiences. As a result, they can see how they are different and how they are the same. They have the realization of experiencing others.

Brittany continues. "Thank you, very good," she says. "Tell me, is it just about our intentions and getting along or is there something else that Jane Adams wants us to think about? What is she referring to when she refers to the "good?" Ellie answers her:

Maybe it's a sense of obligation—that it should be good for me because I have money or people that say it should be good for me because someone is going to help me. People have to work towards it and only then will it become equal. In order to truly articulate a common good then we need to all participate in the common good or that common good isn't worth anything.

Ellie makes a significant connection: “Would this be similar to the ideas of Washington?” Brittany’s intention is realized and interpretation composed. The ah-ha moment reveals itself in deepening connections.

Brittany smiles as if recalling a memory with old friends:

She would have not have been a pal of Booker T. Washington. She and John Dewey were close friends as she adhered to the progressive ideas that education is not only preparation for life but it is an appreciation for the here and now and it must be based in practical experience. We’re going to talk more about this when we talk about Dewey but just keep in mind that traditional education expected students to move. They saw students as different in kind.

She pauses again, “I don’t know if this is going to confuse you but think of it this way. Here’s the child. Children need to be transformed into adults. The idea of education is that [children] are almost different creatures of sorts.” Once again she is setting the stage for transposition, synthesis, recall and interpretation. Perhaps most of all, she is setting the stage for connoisseurship. I think about Brittany’s intentions and she is ensuring they are realized. Her desire to facilitate transformational catalysts that in turn ask her students, in her own words, “to depart from that apprenticeship of observation—to disrupt the structure—the expectation of what teaching is, the expectation that teaching is always going to be this way or that.” In our interview, she said, “I want to turn the tables for them.”

Brittany announces that she is out of time. She smiles widely and says, “Have a great afternoon everyone. Tomorrow is going to be fun—you’ll enjoy what we have

planned.” I am left thinking of Eisner’s reference to Dewey and the educational experience. Indeed, Brittany has succeeded in actualizing connoisseurship. “Educational experience,” Eisner had said of Dewey’s work, “is the third kind of experience—it fosters the growth of the human intelligence, nurtures curiosity, and yields satisfactions in the doing of those things worth doing” (p. 99). Indeed, that is the type of experience taking place here—a type of experience that presents itself within the nuances of the themes described: transposition, synthesis, recall and introspection, interpretation, and connoisseurship.

Brittany tells her class that she really appreciated each one of the representations and interpretations. She tells her class that they were a lot of fun— that she expected fun, but they were even more fun than expected. Emma pipes up then and says, this time on behalf of the class, “I could never fall asleep in this class—we write poems and play with Play-Doh.” I am moved by her statement—the introspection, the gratitude. Quoting Dewey (1934), Greene (1995) had said that without such realizations, there is only reoccurrence and complete uniformity; the resulting experience is routine and mechanical. Consciousness always has an imaginative phase, and imagination, more than any other capacity, breaks through the inertia of habit (p. 272).

In the very next instant, the entire class comes alive with a gasp and laughter. A single green caterpillar has stolen away and found itself on Maria’s desk. The entire class becomes inquisitive again, like children, playful and curious, gentle and concerned. Someone says, “Leave it.” Someone else says, “Lets set it free.” Still another says, “I think that was the cutest thing I’ve ever seen.” Brittany rounds off the statements. She

laughs and says, “Well that certainly was apropos!” Indeed, I think to myself. A caterpillar, after all, is always a sign of the butterfly—of growth and metamorphosis. These are the things happening right here in this classroom and within these students. “A freshness in the chest” is much more than a line in a poem. It is the meaning itself, the essence of the transformation taking place in this class.

Dr. David Collins: Intentions Realized Part 2

“Two Kinds of Intelligence”

There are two kinds of intelligence: one acquired,
as a child in school memorizes facts and concepts
from books and from what the teacher says,
collecting information from the traditional sciences
as well as from the new sciences.
With such intelligence you rise in the world.
You get ranked ahead or behind others
in regard to your competence in retaining
information. You stroll with this intelligence
in and out of fields of knowledge, getting always more
marks on your preserving tablets.

There is another kind of tablet, one
already completed and preserved inside you.
A spring overflowing its springbox. A freshness
in the center of the chest. This other intelligence
does not turn yellow or stagnate. It's fluid,
and it doesn't move from outside to inside
through conduits of plumbing-learning.

This second knowing is a fountainhead
from within you, moving out. (Rumi as cited by Peat, 2007, p. 47)

In the following vignette, David demonstrates yet another essential subtheme as his intentions operationalize in the classrooms of higher education: *synthesizing individualization*. This occurs as a metaphor of the art of alchemy and has appeared in many cultures across many time periods. A key component is that transformation is

ultimately self-transformation. Utilizing CRISPA allows for personal meaning-making in the classrooms of higher education, while honoring inseparable dimensions of physical, sensory, emotional, and spiritual consciousness. Utilizing CRISPA as a framework for his lesson planning and facilitation, synthesizing individualization presents itself vividly. Palmer and Zajonc (2010) wrote that when students thread together the many facets of their lives, they come to have a greater understanding of their self and their world. This core concept encompasses a variety of engagement strategies for college students when the aesthetic themes are utilized in the classrooms of higher education.

Vignette 4. My first set of observations captures David’s passion and enthusiasm for teaching and learning. One might call David a pioneer, paving the way and doing so with an unmatched energy—a contagious air—that centers itself in integrative and transformative education, perceptual lesson planning, and a grassroots commitment to swinging the pendulum “the other way.” My second set of observations also captures his dynamic approach to teaching and learning, and we see David engage and honor the artist, asking students to explore their thinking through a creative medium while also facilitating metacognition, deepened connection-making, and meaningful experiences. The following vignettes reiterate themes introduced throughout my observations of Brittany’s classroom. These include the presence and operationalization of transposition and actualizing connoisseurship. It also includes synthesizing individualization in the form of self-reflection, growth, and deepened connection-making. Each are the result of the realization of the intentions of the aesthetically minded.

I meet David at his office and we walk together to his classroom. As we do so, he shares with me his intentions for his class that day. He tells me these particular groups of individuals are third-year students taking what he calls a methods or pedagogy class. The course is designed specifically for individuals who are interested in language arts, be it middle-child education or adolescents and young adults. David tells me that they are in Session 8 and his job is to teach them curriculum. He reiterates that they do not encounter this anywhere else: there is no introductory-level course. Thus, the first time they ever touch lesson planning is in his class. By design, lesson planning is a completely foreign concept to many, stretching their thinking, for example, from an abstract level of essential questions all the way down to what supplies should be used. He hopes that aesthetics can help his students make the journey.

The word *aesthetics* means a lot to David. In our interview, he said, From an experiential standpoint, it means, everything. Yes, experience is everything. Aesthetically. I can't live without it. We need to enjoy experience; we need to know it matters. Aesthetics sends messages. It creates feelings. It impacts the way we interpret and synthesize our world.

David tells me that to help his students make these important connections. He chooses an anchor text and does a lot of modeling in order to demonstrate to his students what his process looks like so that they can apply it to their own work and, thus, their developing sense of their educational philosophy and identity. Their job is to create their own mini-unit on a text of choice in what David describes as a limited amount of time. He explains that he only has 7 weeks—his students do not know pedagogy and he has to teach them

how to teach English. We both laugh at the daunting size of this task as we walk into Room 102.

David greets his class and asks that they get into groups of three or four. There are 13 students in his class, 7 boys and 6 girls. White boards on either side of room still contain notes from the last class' session. David erases these as students settle in and get out their supplies. I take a seat near the back of the room, open up my laptop, and turn on my recorder. David begins,

What I want to do today is finish the conversations from our last session and then get you to the place of identification and an understanding of Blooms. Then we'll work to move you up a notch to an application.

Already, he is operationalizing his intentions, creating a shift, creating space for transformation, if not alchemy.

We'll begin with an activity around writing and grammar instruction—then we are going to step out for a moment. This will be the direct instruction part of the show—as you know I don't like to do more than 15 minutes at a time (per brain research). Let's kick off by review the unit plan. We've talked about it in steps.

Now you are developmentally ready to wrap your heads around it. I want to also connect back to a new lesson plan template that we are piloting.

He pauses and half laughs, “We are guinea pigs here, but I think you're going to like this.” He smiles again and his students smile back. There's the contagious energy. I think to myself, he certainly has a gift. He continues,

So here's the thing: We've worked really hard to put this together as a department so we're going to use it. I'm going to pick your brains on the other side, in fact, and see how that worked out for you. From there, we are going to begin the actual workshopping of our first unit together. All of this is today intended to help scaffold you. This time it's for real. I want you to engage but know that you still have me here for reflective questions. What questions do you have for me before we get started?

I recall our interview and my questions about sharing CRISPA with colleagues. David had told me that the framework is in the curriculum now. "Every student will have to learn Hunter, EEL DR C, and CRISPA. So that's kind of neat. It's been well received," he told me.

Small groups of people have looked at it closely and asked questions and said, 'Wow, that's really cool—we've never thought about it that way.' I'm the one true curriculum person here. I mean people get it, but they weren't reading the stuff we were reading—they weren't coming at it from that direction. They don't see it exactly the same way. So now it goes to implementation in the sense of, okay, so now how are we going to teach with it?

David continues speaking to the class,

Can we get into our reading groups? Here are the questions that we were talking about: first, what are some grammar strategies that you might incorporate into your lesson? [Try] to make those connections, what holistically are a part of a writing program. So I want to talk about some ideas and questions—what are the

instructional and curricular relationships among writing, grammar, and texts? I want you to start to see the bigger picture. How do these things interact and how do they manifest in our curriculum and instruction? And then finally how do we differentiate in our writing instruction? Now I want to know what does it look like in this context. What questions do you have for me?

Someone says, “None at the moment.” David waits a minute or so to see if anything surfaces. When nothing does, he says, “Okay I want you to concentrate on the following questions.” As he states the questions, he writes them on the board:

1. What might you be able to integrate into your classroom?
2. What are the elements of an effective writing program?
3. What is the relationship between grammar, writing, and text? and
4. What does differentiation look like in a real context?

Students move to their reading groups and settle in. Over the groups, David says, “Let’s shoot for 10 minutes. I’ll shut up—you talk.” I laugh and so do a couple of students. I too move out of my seat and join a group in the center of the class. They are beginning to talk about the four questions they’ve been asked to consider. Immediately, students grapple with connection-making, building on their backgrounds. Gavin, a young man in jeans and a down jacket says, “Okay, so grammar is kind of like a medium, right? We know that grammar is the medium between writing and text.” Zach answers him. He is well spoken and instantly engaged:

There’s research on grammar as a medium but there’s also literary aesthetics. As English teachers, we have a responsibility to say, this is beautiful, this is art. I’ve

been talking to a couple teachers and they are saying there is big push to using nonfiction texts rather than fiction and fantasy. I think it's unfortunate because while it provides useful information—it's dry. As a student, I wouldn't want to read it. I think that in terms of creating lasting lifelong learners it has to be more interesting.

Jessica, a petite girl in a Cornhusker's sweatshirt and a French braid replies, "With creative writing, there is typically more risks with grammar, period. If you are promoting higher learning, you might want to have more creative texts but if you're promoting workforce units then you would need creative nonfiction."

David overhears this and challenges the students to consider the Common Core, which encourages nonfiction text. He asks the students, "What then does this say about the system? What's its intention?" A young man named Ashton responds,

I think [the government is] seeing what jobs are available and they're looking to education as a medium to get a job. Essentially, our sole responsibility is to learn to get jobs to get money—which from an artistic perspective is sad.

Jessica jumps in again,

From a computer science perspective—learning that stuff takes a lot of dull reading. I know this from experience but if it's always like that I'm not going to want to read forever. That model was entrenched at the time of the common school. It was embedded in the industrial model and we're trying different models now like online, hybrid, and STEM. It feels like a delicate balance. Preparing students for a job and the workforce but also making them lifelong learners.

Palmer wrote about joining one's ideals and their craft and, as such, shared his perspective on the synthesis of meaning-making—that is, to thread together the many facets of our lives in such a way that we have greater understanding of our self and our world. I consider my own work and my deep desire to do both of the things Jessica has just described: provide access and prepare students for a career—for work they love—but to also help prepare them for life. Once again, we see how recall is stimulated and individualization synthesized. Jessica, for instance, relates her learning and the use of imagination to her own experiences. Zach and Ashton consider their own experiences and the complex questions posed to them now.

A girl named Charlotte reads a question from the board. “How do you see differentiation manifesting in your writing instruction?” Zach responds,

I think this ties into our text. When we talk about writing, we often talk about standard English—but if we look at our students especially if we are in a rural setting or racial setting or where there is a lot of cultural diversity, I think that we are going to see students speaking the same dialect of English that is considered to be acceptable. I'm not sure that I agree with the idea of code switching; that in order to be successful you have to speak standard American English, but I do think that it's important to realize that not all students are going to have the same home experience of subject verb agreement. Do we teach it as right and wrong? I think it's a fine line.

Caleb joins the conversation, “I think that you have to distinguish the fine line between professional language and modern language. That’s always hard to convince students of what’s important.” To this Zach responds,

I think that if we’re transparent with them that we don’t necessarily think that it’s right that you have to speak this way to be professional, but that’s the way that it is. I think that’s the beauty of creative writing, which takes us away from the nonfiction. Say for instance that someone wants to speak using Black English or Ebonics. I think that when it comes to differentiation and writing instruction that it’s important to understand that there is more than one way to speak and write English.

David brings the class back together, “So lets talk about some of the techniques that sound effective.” A student discusses using different texts and how that helps individuals move away from the idea that he or she is just learning about grammar. David agrees, using the word *contextualized*: “There are scores of research studies done on grammar and isolation, you might have been victim of this, in fact.” David laughs and then his face becomes more serious:

Here’s the thing, if someone asks you, how you teach vocabulary and grammar, your answer is: I teach it in context. If there is a follow up question, you need to have something to say. So tell me this. What are the elements of an effective writing program, in your opinion?

Jessica begins, speaking on behalf of her group: “Lessons relative to our lesson plan, teaching with intention, analyzing their development, and realizing that their errors guide

our instruction.” David nearly shouts, “Love that! It’s student-centered. Very good!” His intentions to generate enthusiasm, resolve, and passion for the field are apparent. I think back to our interview and how he had shared that his focus was to ensure that the future of education is carried on the shoulders of forward thinking scholars, rather than a repetitive structure of outdated ideologies. Operationalized, this intention presents itself in transposition, if not an actualization of connoisseurship—to either reframe or transform what has come before. David challenges his students to do the latter: “Remember that when you grade writing you are going to do a lot of different things—so I’m going to give you a Collins tip,” His enthusiasm is infectious.

Here are my essays and here is my notepad—my little notepad is designed for patterns that I see while I’m reviewing student work. It helps inform what whole group lesson I’ll do next. Does that make sense? [Pauses] That is not an example of differentiation. Remember that. What I just described is an example of student-centered instruction. Differentiation comes in when I realize that this kid cannot write a transition—and then I find one or two more—if I’m lucky—and I pull them into a group to do a little mini lesson with them. That’s differentiation. That is tailoring instruction to the individual.

Students are taking notes and reviewing their preliminary lesson units while David is talking. He has everyone’s attention. He pauses and looks around the room. “Other things you think about during your writing instruction?” Charlotte responds again, “One way to go about it is collaborative writing—partnering.” David agrees:

Yes, partnering can be very valuable—for instance, if you’re focusing on argumentative essays together, you could just have them write the retort together. Most of you are good writers—and that’s a blessing and a curse because you have to deconstruct your process in order to be able to teach it. You don’t have to grade everything—you can do targeted instruction where you are making it smaller—master it on a smaller level and then apply it to a bigger context. Make sense? What else did you come up with?

Gavin shares an ah-ha moment he had earlier:

Grammar is kind of like the medium. Not only do you use it to express and write, you need it to understand others—in terms of relevance, it plays itself out. We said that to make the text relatable—and to teach with a purpose—that we should teach them curriculum but tailor the instruction to the student’s needs.

David’s intention to create frequency and, as such, to generate waves of change presents itself here in the form of interpretation. Gavin composes meaning, sewing together previous elements of thoughts and experience until the connections overlap with the type of critical mass that is powerful enough to evoke wonder, satisfaction, and awe. David smiles widely. Everyone is listening to one another. Like Brittany’s class, there is mutual respect here: a community of scholarship and care. David replies to Gavin:

Very nice—that’s beautifully put. You’re absolutely right—remember to let the text drive what the grammar lesson is. You also have this thing called the Common Core Standards and curriculum and if you’re finding that things are not in there, let’s try to find companion pieces. You do not want to get into a situation

where you're trying to teach something and it just doesn't fit. What about differentiation—I guess we already hit that but what else would you want to add to that?

Jessica answers, “There’s something to picking your text in general because different types of text use different kinds of language. I always think of differentiation as classroom management and a way of framing the class.” “Absolutely,” David concurs:

Choice is great—we might have a shared novel but we also had group novels. Here’s another one, literature circles. That’s a really specified model on how to have group study on a particular text and it works on a lot of different literacy skills along with engaging content with any group of kids that you may have. You can differentiate by their forms of expression. That’s an Eisner term by the way.

I smile—he has introduced Eisner to this group. His constellation, like Brittany’s, never separates from his practice.

“What are the themes that we keep shoving down your throat?” he goes on to ask.

This is unique to David’s style. He has a way of being completely abrupt and entirely sensitive at exactly the same time:

Individualized instruction, multiple intelligences, different learning modalities, different personality types—tailored to the individual, culturally responsive teaching, right? Now I’m starting to tell you about differentiated curriculum and instruction! Now see the humor in the standardized teaching model? We take all of these things we know about human development and human learning and the

brain and the individual and then try not to laugh at standardized assessment!

Okay, I'm off my soapbox.

He pauses, considers his words and then says, "It will go away at some point—I believe that with all of my heart."

We might consider this moment as akin to the image of an actor on the stage, engaged in a robust and grandiose delivery. Discussing the role of teacher as performer, Sarason (1999) wrote that teachers

do not see the career in static terms—instead the would be actor knows that the roles appropriate and available to him or her in their early years will change as the years go on. The singer knows that time is the enemy of the voice. The dance knows that time is the enemy of the body. . . . But if time is the enemy, it is also the spur to continue to learn and do as much as one can to nourish and sustain the sense of growth. (p. 136)

David evokes a similar transposition for his students as his intentions are realized in the classroom.

David continues,

What questions do you have about any of those things before we go into application? You're going to work in two groups. My gut is just telling me that's the way to go. You are going to write a 50-minute lesson plan—you're going to co-plan one lesson plan per group and you're going to use the Alchemist. Your lesson is going to incorporate grammar and some writing element. You are going to use either EEL DR C or Hunter and you also have to bring in at least one element of CRISPA. You have 30 minutes to write this lesson and then you're going to share.

David is talking fast again. He's amped up. He is so passionate about this work and the challenge and the change his students can make in the world if they can begin with something as essential as mastering lesson planning. "Alright, you have these really cool ideas—now go apply them," David pivots making eye contact with each group. "See how I did Blooms there? It's all about Blooms. Okay, what questions do you have before you start?" Zach asks, "Do we need to use the Common Core Standards?" "Good question," David responds, "You can reference the standards. Standards referenced, not standards-based."

As his students get to work, David takes a seat next to me, talking offline about the paper he wrote on lesson planning and CRISPA. He continues to discuss the tragedy of standardized testing and the common core intermittently. These are true injustices for him and ones that he feels compelled to educate his students on, on all sides of the matter. Our conversation turns to CRISPA, and he tells me how he'd like to see the framework used not as an additive but as a foundation. David talks to me about elementary schools being the middleman and his concern for the direction the country is headed. He is quick to admit that the system is flawed and he personally is equally passionate about the idea that he can help to change it and influence it by exposing students to different ways of thinking about the problems and questions that plague the system itself.

David and my attention shift back to his class. We both take in the deep conversations and collaboration that have now added a lively pitch to the previously quiet space. My ears pick up the words, "connection-making" and "CRISPA." David walks around the classroom for the rest of the duration of the working session. He stops to

answer questions, sits from time to time to review works in progress, listens carefully to each group, and laughs in agreement to play his part in the intellectual work taking place. “Alright folks, are you ready to share your genius? Let us know what element of grammar that you bring in and how you plan to operationalize your intentions. Who wants to go first?” Charlotte begins, and in her group’s lesson plan, we can see David’s intentions realized. In our interview, David had said that his intention is to help create thoughtful, caring, and inclusive teachers who have intention about what they do. We see this operationalized in the form of recall and introspection, transposition, interpretation, and synthesis in Charlotte’s reflections. She begins:

Okay, so we wanted our objectives to be able to use simple and compound sentences by writing their argumentative essays. That’s our grammar. Our anticipatory set is that we would have a class discussion around the question: Is there anything that you wanted to do but were scared to do so you took the safe route instead, and why? Then we’d ask our students to predict how their life would have been different, which was to bring in the CRISPA and that imagination aspect. Our instructional input was to basically go over what a simple compound and complex sentence is and how authors use it. For modeling, we, as the teacher, wanted to write sentences on the board using the sentence structure we just went over and then have students talk about which one was simple and which one was complex. For the check for understanding, we’d ask students to help those that are struggling and then to share with small groups in order to give each other some more ideas about how they could develop their ideas. For guided

practice, we wanted them to go through the Alchemist together as a class and find the simple and compound sentences together and to note that sometimes when the author uses a simple sentence, it's for style. We'd ask our students to consider how this contributes to the writing overall. For independent practice, we'd have them begin with their essay in class arguing whether or not it's good for everyone to pursue their personal legend or instead choose to live a safe life. We'd ask that they include contextual evidence to support their argument while also using simple and compound complex sentences.

David is smiling and processing—it is etched in his face:

Very nice. Excellent, in fact. I can see two things: One, if you went in for another round of revision, you might want to consider where we can combine activities and which need to be focused on in a more concise way. Two, you may also want to consider how these things would show up in a rubric, which would help to inform and clarify your outcomes throughout the lesson. Great stuff, I love it! I love it!

“Alright folks, talk to us,” he continues, moving to the next group. Zach shares,

Alright, well we used the EEL DR C model and we started out with a relevant connection to student's lives. We chose a question based on the book. To women, we'd ask: How long would you wait for your date to show up? Then we'd ask how long would you accept to be waited on by your date?" The group smiles and laughs lightly. The rest of the class does too. "Then we would move to the experience step through the text to self-connection by drawing upon the gender

construction between the characters in the text about the personal destiny. We'd then move to our label step, which is where we introduce the idea of an argumentative essay.

Zach continues. His presentation has a certain cadence and I'm struck by his composure. He is undoubtedly a creative thinker.

Specifically, we'd focus on the rhetorical devices of ethos, pathos, and logos.

We'd want to talk about our use of grammar, whether diction or rhetoric, and how either really influence our credibility. As we move into the demonstrate step, we'd come up with the teacher written argumentative sentence and we might consider taking a gender construction argument—or something about relationships.

Zach looks to David for affirmation that he is on the right track. David nods and Zach continues.

We would then write a sentence on the board demonstrating how grammar influences our ethos. The teacher would still be writing a second sentence but it would be influenced by student responses—we'd have them choose the argument and the grammar but the student would be writing it—and after that we'd have each student write a sentence on their own. We'd move to a review step and then have each critiqued by the class together to show that we are all moving toward a common goal. After, we would celebrate, of course.

David smiles, and says, “Yes, and what about grammar?” He facilitates this with an opening gesture, palms up, offering the idea, not demanding it. Like Brittany, he has an awareness of give and take. David guides his students back to the objectives of the lesson

and continues unpacking Blooms, differentiation, scaffolding, and essential questions, gently probing his students to go further and get closer to the lesson, the connections, and the experience. Zach continues,

I think that it would be difficult to write the entire paragraph and then focus completely on perfect etiquette and accountability. We'd want to make sure they are capitalizing, using periods and colons, making it look crisp, making sure it's phrased in a professional way. It's really hard to do it without examples. We are almost talking about code-switching when we talk about ethos in terms of how we transition language into professional standards.

The dialogue between students occurring here reflects aspects of recall and introspection. Charlotte and Zach move between new and existing knowledge as they make personal connections to the lesson plan that they are developing. Their ideas and discourse are fueled with imagination. Their thinking is deep and pensive. David's students are fully immersed in the activity and thinking about what this activity, if not the experience itself, really means to them. David pauses. He's pensive and processing, "So I'm just thinking with my teacher hat." I am seeing the same thing David is. Zach's ideas are nearly there, but he has missed just slightly. David begins,

One place I'd want to get you to is more levels of specificity on what are the elements of grammar. It sounds like you are saying that grammar in general creates ethos, pathos, and logos. That's really big. I'd say let's look at how these influence ethos, pathos, and logos. Don't get me wrong. Conceptually, it's brilliant. But it's big.

David smiles. “The trick is deconstructing what we know, what we take for granted.

Where did you bring in your CRISPA element?” “The connection piece. The text-to-self connection,” Zach says. “How was that for you?” David asks, “What did you struggle with?”

“I felt stressed, I think,” Zach states, “I felt like I needed more time—I want to make sure that I had all my bases covered. I feel like I went over it as being the instructor and not the student.” Zach’s critique of himself is larger than David’s. This time, the pensiveness is etched on Zach’s face.

David responds:

Understood. One clarifying question. First, that’s a good mindset. I know I keep saying this to you, but don’t worry about the time constraint. The only way you’re going to learn it is to do it; and the mindset of what it’s like to be in the student’s shoes is so valuable. Whenever you write lesson plans, I really encourage you to be a person sitting in that classroom. That’s so important. That’s the ethos, logos, and pathos. To see it all from multiple perspectives, to look at it in different ways, to ensure that it is speaking to students in the way that you intended to. To know that it will also speak to students in ways that you can’t even imagine.

Zach is nodding, watching and listening to David carefully. That is the thing about risk-taking—it makes us powerful and vulnerable at the same time. Zach is completely engaged as David continues,

Don’t ever stop looking at the lesson plan through the eyes of the student. Ask yourself, ‘If I was in that room, would I want to do this? Would it be interesting?’

Would I get lost?’ That’s a really powerful way to write the curriculum and I love that many of you are doing that. What else did you struggle with?

Like Brittany, David orchestrates transposition as he moves his audience—his class—between perspectives, asking that they consider the experience of the teacher, the docent, and the student without losing sight of what matters most.

The honesty present in this classroom continues to take me off guard. The lessons are reaching this group on every level—personal, emotional, and logical. Caleb says, “I’m not as fast as I want to be—I feel slow at this process.” David concurs,

That’s completely normal—part of that is that you just haven’t done this a lot—but you should know you are thinking at a very rapid pace. You all are getting this. It’s almost eerie how fast you’re catching on. There’s a lot to take in, there’s a lot to consider, so yeah, that’s completely normal.

David is talking with his hands, arms now extended out to his sides, communicating how big all of this really is. Once again, his intentions take center stage. “What else, what did you struggle with?” David asks. Jessica speaks up, “I know we didn’t use standards for this mini-assignment but do the standards tell you what needs to be taught?” Standards—I look to David to see what his response is going to be. “Absolutely!” he says with confidence. I laugh to myself.

The standards can be your friend in that, oh wow, this text can help me teach semicolons—or, hey I can bring a companion piece—which also helps to teach semicolons and the symbiotic relationship. Does that make sense? Again, think standards referenced, not standards based.

David continues now, moving towards the end of his lesson:

So this is now where you're synthesizing all of these small pieces in pockets—now I'm getting you to the highest level of Blooms. That's where the assessment comes in—choosing content. Ways to communicate, using oral and visual media are critically analyzed so bring in visual media somehow. I didn't tell you how to use it; I just want you to bring it in. Language utilized for a variety of purposes and usages. Opportunities for making meaning throughout the lessons—we talked about the connection piece, we talked about CRIPSA—that's becoming your lens, which makes me a happy human being.

“Great points,” he pauses dramatically.

Is there anything else—now it gets really real. Okay so the next time I see your face—and believe me—I'm waiting with baited breath, you are going to write me two lesson plans—just two and that that is going to drive my instruction. Alright so that's all I've got for you. Bring everything next time, all your goodies.

And just as if he was concluding a great hour of comedy or a live newscast, he signs off with, “Thank you folks and have a wonderful, fun, and exciting weekend.”

Vignette 5. David and I meet before his class to discuss today's lessons. As we talk, I think about the intentions of other aesthetically-minded educators: the wow experience, transformational catalysts, and innovative practices in teacher education. They are all here alongside David's intentions to engage with Forms of energy. David tells me,

So we have multiple intentions today. We are in a place where students have been introduced to lesson planning. They should be showing up with two lesson plans that include identifying, unit planning, brainstorming documents, reading, writing literature, speaking, and then their assessments. They are looking at how these experiences come together and what kinds of activities do they have to try to teach in order to reach those concepts. I'm going to start with them symbolizing the concepts they are coming across. I want them to get their heads wrapped around the bigger picture.

David goes on, speaking of his intentions to foster innovative practices in teacher education:

I want them to think about their role as teachers and the role of their students. We've been talking about student-centered instruction and teacher as coach or guide. I also want them to look at appropriate culminating assessments: differentiation; a variety of activities that hit on Blooms and multiple intelligences. I'm going to bring in the standards and see what standards they are referencing. I'm teaching standards referenced not standards based. I want them to see where there are gaps and where there is work that needs to be done. They can go into smaller groups and talk about it later on. We're going to look at summative assessments. I'm going to ask them to consider what they need to see in order to know what their students know. I want to work them through that today. At this point, they're going to have to go back in. Quality not quantity.

The wow experience, I think to myself. David continues without missing a beat,

How do they know what their students already know? Pre-assessments. How do you know what they've learned? Summative and formative assessments will show us that. Afterward, I'm going to give them some space to independently practice what they just came across. I'm going to ask them to consider where they would bring in CRISPA. I want to give them space with someone else to look at that for 10 to 15 minutes in order to make changes and take notes and answer their questions. One of my other intentions is that I want them to see the lesson planning as well as the lesson planning operationalized. I want them to see that EEL DR C operationalized. I'm going to explain to them about their anticipatory set from our class. I want them to look at the intentional and the operational. I'm going to teach them about reflective practice and what that looks like.

David starts to chuckle and then breaks into full-fledged laughter. "Okay!" He shouts, "So we have a lot to do!"

I'm laughing as well. As mentioned previously, David's energy is contagious. Everything he does, he does with a fevered pitch. I engage him to share some additional aspects of his intentions for today's lesson, "So tell me, the CRISPA piece, can they articulate why they are using it?" David responds,

I would say yes—but they may or may not. I do want to get at the notion of why is this valuable. The thing that is hard is that I teach it as an additive. I don't teach it as a standalone thought—I would like to do that at some point. I don't know what it would look like to teach it as a standalone. I always teach here is EEL DR C, here is Hunter, now here's CRISPA. What if we do a CRISPA stand-alone? I

do a colors inventory—you probably saw that. The people who were like, I don't like rules, I don't like structure, were like, 'Yes! This is great.' The people who want those were like, 'No, that freaks me out, don't want it.'

I think about this for a moment. I reply:

I could see that. If I'm new to the field, it would be difficult for me to plan with CRISPA as a standalone. But as a layer, as a lens, that in and of itself is a substantial question. Is it a layer and a lens or is it a standalone piece?

Now David takes a moment to think. "That's a great question," he says, "It's not really a template, per se—as a student it could really be helpful. So one question might be—what does it look like as a template?" He pauses and looks at me for a moment from across the study before continuing,

I'm really interested to see what you come up with. We keep playing with CRISPA like it's a model. But it's not really a model. It's a kind of lens. If you're saying that Hunter and EEL DR C are models, then this isn't a model—it's not a template. Is it adherently an additive or can it be transformed into something more tangible that you can use in teacher ed to say here, plan your lesson like this?

Here are some boxes to fill out but it doesn't have to be linear.

Again, David takes a moment to think about his work and about his teaching intentions.

He adds,

So here's something interesting. I just did this thing on CRISPA with my reading students. I teach them the models as a part of teaching them a unit for

accreditation. None of them know how to lesson plan going in, so I have to teach it start to finish.

David smiles. The intention to facilitate transformational catalysts is also here. “What was really interesting was that when I introduced CRISPA, they were just like, oh, yeah, this helps me understand lesson planning more easily. How cool is that!”

David enters the classroom. He smiles broadly and addresses his students. “I have coloring supplies. I have scissors, I have glue, I have tape, I have rubber-bands. I have all kinds of fun stuff: permanent markers, a sharpie.” A student giggles. He continues,

Here’s what I’m going to ask you to do with one or any of those pieces of paper—and I’m being somewhat ambiguous here on purpose. I want you to write, draw, origami, paste things together, collage, whatever you want to do—I want you to put some sort of visual representation together that represents a few things. First, concepts you are trying to teach but I also want you to create some sort of visual representation in there symbolizing the role of the teacher in the unit as well as the role of your students in the unit. I want you to create what you have conceptualized in your head now. I’m going to give you 10 minutes or so, maybe 15, and I want you to think deeply about this—wrap your head around it. Now what questions do you have for me?

David walks over to me and says, “The stunned, nervous looks on their faces is a beautiful thing, isn’t it?” He laughs. I reply quietly as I watch the students work, “This is what we talked about this last time, remember? That’s the glue.” He is watching his class carefully. He speaks up and says, “I can’t tell if you’re having fun or if you want to shoot

at me.” A student says, “I’m stressed. I’m really stressed.” David says, “Don’t stress. You can’t be wrong—you can’t screw this up.” The same student says, “I feel wrong already.” David replies, “You could spit on the paper and make something out of it—have fun with this. This is safe. You’re in a safe place.” I find myself thinking about Uhrmacher’s (2012) work where he highlights the importance of the chase: “Students chase knowledge and degrees. Teachers chase students so they may learn. Researchers chase an understanding of the educational process and in doing so present images of their inquiries (p. 2).” David’s students are doing the same: chasing interpretation, chasing introspection, chasing individualization, and perhaps most of all, chasing a type of intrinsic connoisseurship—to grapple with, taste, and detect the texture and nuances of their intersecting thoughts.

Five minutes pass. Then ten. Sensing that his students are ready to share, David brings his classes’ attention back to the center of the room and engages in transposition. As individuals take turns moving between the imaginary and perceptive, from places of deep connection-making to places of application alongside risk-taking, we can see an integral shift occur. Ideas are moving from one space to another—one medium to another—and yet maintaining their form. Ideas transposed authentically. A student shares:

So here is my beautiful drawing—the entire story takes place on a ship, so I decided I’d make a boat. Here is my crew of students—I would call them Jack because everyone in the book is called Jack. So here’s the question; you’re all alone with no friends, the crew hates you and the captain hates you. You’re being

tried for murder but you saw the murder take place, so you'd have to consider who has done it.

David smiles. "Nicely done," he says. Another girl begins,

Well, mine is not as exciting. So I guess the concepts I'm trying to teach is dialogue and tone. I drew some speech bubbles and I have two students looking different ways because I'm also trying to teach point of view. For the role of the teacher, I drew a welcome mat because I want us to work together. I also drew hands because I want there to be mutual trust. I drew a heart because I want us to be caring. I drew a ladder because I want to help them get to where they need to be. For the role of the students, I drew a thinking bubble because I want them to think outside the box and I wrote things around it because I want them to know it's a safe space. I want them to feel free to dream, speak, care, question, think, decide, struggle, but most importantly to succeed. For my overall concepts that go along with the book, I want to teach them to speak out and I want my students to know they have a voice.

Another girl explains,

I purposely drew students in the center of the circle. This is the educator down here with pompoms cheering them on—always the cheerleader—still part of the scene, but it's all about them. Here there is an arrow showing student interaction and doing lots of work together to move from these question marks to the light bulb. Just around the circle, I put words like dialogue, drama, analysis, poetry—this is just some of the basic things that are a part of the lesson and story.

David responds enthusiastically, “Awesome! I like that presentation—that’s very powerful. That’s a clear mindset—nicely done.”

Someone else raises their hand and begins to share:

Mine is a bit more chaotic. I did more concepts that I hoped they’d take from the class rather than concepts from the book. I want them to stop and show respect to be empathetic but also be able to put things into words. I have speech bubbles and action lines and little cute people and a sun that says potential and a teacher though the teacher doesn’t matter as much with all the other things that is going on. [Pauses] There’s a lot that goes on in a classroom that doesn’t automatically just fall in line. And I’m not very linear in my thinking.

David thinks for a moment and then responds thoughtfully, “Is the next part in this process around unit planning feeling chaotic? Does that create dissonance for you?”

Here, he is helping his student to compose interpretation through his questioning techniques. The student responds that no, it does not, because she feels that she has a set process for interviewing a fill-in-the-blank process. “Sometimes that creates dissonance,” she adds. “I’m not very good at following a piece of paper.” “It will be interesting to see how those things operationalize,” David says to his class. He then calls on another student to share.

Ashton begins,

Okay, so I wanted to create something, at least structurally, that appears to be 3-dimensional. I think it’s really important to take the literature off the page and make it come alive for students, particularly because I’m doing drama. I want it to

be at least spoken if not acted rather than read silently. My unit focuses on identity and not just recognizing who we are but also focusing on how we become who we are and why it matters. Those are three identity-focused questions that I want the students to be able to answer. So I have the ‘I,’ which stands for identity. As a teacher, I look at myself as a foundation particularly in a unit that focuses on identity—you can’t really push them, you have to let them find their own.

Ashton is deeply reflective in these statements. He is introspective and making profound and meaningful connections. Ashton continues,

So I have four guiding principles that I want to follow. One being love. I just want to love on the students. Wherever they take these questions, I want to direct the students in that I don’t want them to be so disengaged philosophically that they kind of lose track of what the purpose of everything is. I want to model for the students—about identity and who I think myself to be because unless they have an adult in their lives or someone they look up to who has asked and thought about these kinds of questions, then why would they care to ask themselves the same. The last is to encourage these students because these questions are not only big for a student or an adult but because they are very difficult. Sometimes it brings you to wrestling with thing that you might not really want to think about.

David responds, “Absolutely. There’s a lot of depth there. To get them to a place where they are really comfortable and ready to examine those things I think is going to be really cool.”

David thanks the class and asks how they felt about doing this activity—what it was like as a learner. A student responds, “I don’t think anyone has let us do this kind of stuff since middle school and I think that’s sad.” Here again, we can see a child-like side of the students emerge—something tender is awoken through the activities an aesthetically-minded educator facilitates. “That is sad,” David responds empathetically. “What else? What did you get out of it?” Another student responds enthusiastically, “I loved it. I’m an artistic person. I think I’m an artistic kind of person. I learn better that way and it helps me think about my thinking process with how I want my class to go.” “I think that’s key,” David says. “Just the representations themselves, for example—you were dealing with a lot more than just content. You’re talking about how you got there, the environment, your passions, what great teaching and learning looks like.” You’re talking about a shift, I think to myself; the beautiful sequence of transposed thoughts and the experiences of life. David continues,

Sometimes when we sit down with that template in front of us we forget those things. It’s really important to remember to look through, to plan with that lens, and to get to the concept of theme a hundred different ways—but these are the ways that you get to these things and I want you to remember this as you’re writing these lessons. I encourage you to not ever think about lesson planning, like, there, I’m done. There’s so much more to it and so much more you can bring to the table. There is a message of care, of communication, of love, of joy in all of your representations. Let there be a message of care and communication and love and joy in your teaching.

Dr. Michael Reed: Intentions Realized Part 3

“Frail Paper Etched with Words”

Whether poets, showmen or philosophers,
Or mere cowboys who follow herds-
They all want to leave behind a lasting mark-
More than frail paper etched with words.
But the cold, hard truth still lies in the doing
And all but a blessed few will fail-
But on we go like bison over the cliff-
Hoping our wings sprout and we sail.
And like restless sleepwalkers we do wander
From one thing and then to the next-
Till we find what it is that will then save us
To put life in proper context.
So on we scribble and strive for the right phrase-
Catch meaning and life in birds-
Put emotions and feelings we briefly hold
On this frail paper etched with words. (Enloe, 2015)

In the final set of vignettes, Michael Reed demonstrates the last two essential subthemes that present themselves as a result of the intentions operationalized in the classrooms of higher education. First, *composing interpretation* includes the moment of insight and has been found to be the result of a culmination of a series of brain states and processes operating at different time scales. Utilizing CRISPA allows for the synthesis of explorations resulting in the ah-ha moment in classrooms of higher education. Second, *stimulating recall and introspection* occurs as a result of aesthetics, which have been found to arouse several areas of the brain, including those responsible for joyful reflection and episodic memory. When elements of CRISPA are present in the classrooms of higher education, metacognition and building on background is deepened in relation to learning. Utilizing CRISPA as a framework for his lesson planning and facilitation, composing interpretation and stimulating recall and introspection emerge.

Both themes encompass additional engagement strategies, which in turn provide evidence of the application of the aesthetic themes for the classrooms of higher education.

Vignette 6. Michael and I are sitting in his office in the education corridor of Arsdale State. The building is a warm and a welcoming haven from the icy walkways of the college campus. I ask Michael to tell me about his intentions for today's lesson. "Originally I had a different plan, but the weather is quite cold," he begins. We both laugh and look out the window at the snow that has begun to fall again.

This is a pre-practicum kind of time and soon we'll be in practicum. They don't have a lot of experience with lesson plans. They are working on an assignment called author illustrator. They've always used more of a behaviorist and now a constructivist model. I wanted to give them a little different taste and so twice throughout the activity, I model a lesson for them. We're going to be referring to the article "Process and Product" by Uhrmacher, Conrad, and Moroye. I'm going to set the stage that maybe there is another way to think about lesson planning. Some students will be familiar with that and some won't. There will be a range. But we are going to talk about that a little bit. I'm going to model a lesson for them using CRISPA. We'll probably get through the first half of the lesson today. I want them to see that learning can be an adventure as opposed to lessons and outcomes. While those have advantages and disadvantages, sometimes they miss the essence of learning. Also I think that CRISPA does a great job encouraging the improved action of teaching where you think on your feet a bit more. That was something that I wanted them to continue to focus on. The freedom in the lesson

and not just that if something gets derailed from the lesson plan that it's not a failure or anything else—you just do what you can and it's about the art of teaching rather than trying to be perfect.

I think back to our initial interview as Michael shares these things with me. Generating Forms of energy—forms that move, transform, and carry forward—is very much a part of Michael's intentions. Like Clair and Kristen, facilitating innovative practices in teacher education is another of Michael's intentions as well. As with all of the participants, each share in many ways a combination of goals and approaches. Concepts of the wow experience and transformational catalysts also permeate Michael's teaching practices. I consider these as Michael continues to talk about the class he will be teaching today. Michael continues,

These students are just about to student-teach. They will graduate next fall, so they are kind of a senior in a technical sense. This is our second model lesson and I have used CRISPA before. I passed out the lesson plan and I used some of the principles. We used food and the sensation of food. I used it as a strategy but didn't teach it explicitly. I gave them the lesson plan template—the CRISPA template. In my Reading Foundations course, I do a piece on connoisseurship and I take them to the local brewery. That group is more into it and has a bit more background. Half the class has had it and I think the other half thinks that I'm weird.

We both laugh hardily at this. Every participant I have interviewed alludes to being perceived in a potentially strange way in light of teaching with an aesthetic mindedness.

Each participant dismisses the idea just as quickly knowing what I know— that it is not absurd, but absurdity that exists in these moments. Each of the participants has the knowledge that something wonderful is about to happen that you can't see just quite yet. Some might also call this the definition of captivating.

A few moments later, we enter Michael's classroom. The space is large and well-lit. The building is fairly new and the classroom reflects this. There is a Smart Board at the front of the class. Books line the shelves along the big bright windows and there are a number of round tables arranged in no particular order. Another professor is wrapping up his lesson as we enter the room. A couple students say hello to Michael, and as they do so, he introduces me. He also introduces me briefly to the other professor who is now exiting the classroom. As this transition takes place, I am immediately aware of what feels like a deflated energy in the room. It is nearly lunchtime, and the snow is still falling outside. The room is warm and I wonder if the students are a bit tired or hungry.

Michael counters this energy quickly, as if he has just walked in and set off a firecracker. He is nearly bouncing as he welcomes his students and moves around the room. He claps his hands and smiles. With an enthusiastic cadence, he begins by asking his students about the article they read over the weekend. The pitch of his voice alone has his students' attention. Like David and others, Michael's energy is also contagious. I think of Sarason (1999), the concept of frequency, and the following sentiment: "That between teacher and pupil is a demanding process requiring the teacher to be a performer, ever sensitive and adaptable to what his or her audience is thinking and feeling" (p. 159).

Michael smiles, lifts his arms to his side, and addresses his class. He begins:

Alright, let's pick up where we left off yesterday. Different teachers will want you to show that you are competent in different methods of lesson planning. But I think that there are different ways we can go about it that I want to share with you. So for me, I'd been teaching for eight years and I was pretty good at it, but I felt a bit confined and often as if I couldn't entirely be myself.

He references the "Brick in the Wall" song by Pink Floyd. "That's how I felt," he tells his students.

I just couldn't really take it—the feeling of being boxed in and taking the joy out of learning, if you will. My dissertation chair helped to develop this model and in my last two years I stumbled upon it and thought what, you can do this? I played around with it and found a number of ways that it really helped me. One was that my students really liked class more than I was having them do it before. If you're always thinking about objectives and if you always have to go from point A to point B in a linear process, learning can be kind of stale, if you know what I mean. I hate labeling students but I often find myself having to—are you partially proficient, are you proficient or advanced? I just hated that struggle—my dissertation was on labels but how you cannot help but label if you are always focusing on objectives. Another thing that changed for me was lesson planning, and it got way more exciting. I used to hate lesson planning—it was just something that I kind of had to do, but when I started getting to use my creativity and enjoying it, it was a big ah-ha for me. I talked to some of my friends about it

and about brainstorming. We would have a beer and talk about it and my creativity would just cut loose.

Every student in the classroom is listening to him intently, composing interpretation perhaps—considering the sincerity of his message, what has brought them to this place to learn about the art of teaching, and to consider what they have come to know so far about the field in light of the curriculum. Michael seems immediately relatable, human, humble, and impassioned. I sense that the students see him as a refreshing change from their day-to-day collegiate experience. He continues talking, moving around the room, talking with his hands:

So I thought it would be a tragedy if we went through this whole program and we never did [CRISPA and perceptual lesson planning]. I coached football, kids liked me, I was nice and all—and once I switched to this, I had to start turning kids away because there weren't enough seats and I started winning awards. Kids were hanging out after class, so it really just changed the way I thought. So you have the author illustrator assignment and kind of the bigger goal behind this assignment is that I want to give you a lot of freedom in how you lesson plan. In many of your assignments, you are told what kind of lesson planning you have to do, but I want you decide here. You can use behaviorist or constructivist or this one, which I'm really going to try to introduce for you today. So that's kind of the idea. I want you to experiment and see if this is a good fit for you.

Michael's candor and authenticity is appreciated. The energy in the room has changed and everything seems lighter. Students are smiling. It is recognizable that there is trust in this space.

So the way I like to do readings is to have natural dialogue rather than a blog or discussion board. I don't want to make this feel like an assignment; rather I find that authentic conversations can be powerful. So I asked that you come with two questions. I gave you a piece of paper and on it there is a self-evaluation. You are on your honor and you sign it to confirm that this is what you deserve. I encourage you to have a rich dialogue. Please indulge me by having a rich discussion and prove to me that this can be a more powerful model than a discussion board.

Michael takes a moment to read the questions he is asking the class to consider: "Based on the article, should there be a teachers' workshop on creating lesson plans, and how can those workshops be beneficial to the lesson plan process itself?" Here, he engages his students similar to the way Brittany and David had. He asks them to utilize recall and introspection, synthesize individualization, and compose interpretation through a discourse on a topic that advocates for all of the above.

In groups, his students turn to one another and begin to dialogue about the questions. The noise level quickly rises as voices engage and students connect with one another. It is evident that they feel conflicted and perhaps challenged in relation to the topic and the reading. They have, up until this point, learned one way of lesson planning using two types of templates—the behaviorist method or the constructivist method. The

introduction of a third is stretching their thinking and philosophies. This is a good and fertile space to plant ideas, I think to myself as I walk around the room. One student says,

Writing a math lesson plan is completely different than writing a social studies lesson plan. If a principal, for example, expects you to write a lesson plan, it would be nice to hear what he is expecting and what he wants. I think when it comes down to it, the schools should set up workshops for lesson planning. I think it's powerful when teachers come together to share ideas.

Another pair are talking about perceptual lesson planning:

Do you think that writing or using a perceptual lesson-plan model would be more difficult than writing or using a constructivist lesson-planning model? With CRISPA, you don't use the standards—or at least you don't put them in the plan.

Two more students in this particular group chime in and respond to the question their peers had just raised. One girl says,

I think that's the tough part. We are so used to following a guideline and following the standards—it's just what we have done. When they give us all the options, it's like, yes, this sounds fun but what am I supposed to do with it next?

Her partner agrees and says,

How do you know that it's meeting the standards? Maybe when using CRISPA you can look at the standards even though it's not on the paper, and then you create your CRISPA lesson plan using that. It was hard, for example, in our Foundations class to think of something when you are not using the standards. It's just hard because it's what we've always done.

Still another says, “Why don’t professors implement this lesson plan in earlier classes? I wonder if it’s because it doesn’t meet the standards or require the standards? I also wonder if teachers get to choose their own lesson plans.” Another student in this group responds, “I doubt it,” she says, and then they call Michael over to address their inquiry. Michael gladly responds. He sits down with the group. He gently warns, smiling all the while,

Well, if I’m being observed, and I know my principle likes x, I’m going to do x, but day in and day out, a teacher has a lot of freedom. It depends on where they teach, I suppose. There are some schools where you have to turn in lesson plans everyday—but I wouldn’t apply there.

Boundary breaking, according to Eisner (2005), is defined as the rejection or reversal of accepted assumptions thus making the “given” problematic. Eisner (2005) says that the highest level of cognition often characterizes this type of behavior.

Michael’s intentions for his students to know that teaching, learning, and lesson planning can be a worthy and valuable adventure are realized during this class. As a result, his students move into a space of risk-taking and again we see essential subthemes emerge—transposition, introspection, individualization, and connoisseurship. Michael continues, “Let me ask you this. From the descriptions of the three different modes, which theory or mode do you most relate to and would you incorporate into your methodology?” The students tell him that they relate to all three of them—and perhaps the most to the constructivist mode. One student from the group calibrates her peers’ responses with the suggestion that had they, perhaps, been exposed to perceptual lesson planning earlier,

they would have related more to it instead. As it stands, the model they have had the most exposure to, and thus perhaps the greatest comfort level with, is the constructivist approach to teaching and learning.

Michael asks the group another question, “If you were not required to make lesson plans—regardless of the type of lesson plan—would you still make lesson plans?” Michael is subtle but pointed in the way he asks his students to shift their thinking from one dimension to another. A student from the group directly behind Michael’s chair responds and Michael turns to look at her. She says,

I would draw pictures. I’m more of a visual learner. It leaves my head and it comes down. Writing it out helps. I get so confused and things get lost. I think if I had my choice, my lesson plans would be pictures. I would use visual charts.

One of the few boys in the class joins the conversation. He says that he really enjoys following a guideline. He asks Michael what are other ways of implementing the perceptual lesson plan for learners like him. A student from Michael’s table addresses his question:

Maybe you could do more of a constructivist lesson plan Monday through Thursday and on Friday try the perceptual lesson plan. On Fridays—the kids want to get out, right—they are still learning but they’re doing it in a more fun and engaging way. It’s nice to be given the choice to create whatever you want in order to show what you’ve learned. I think we need to give students choices in their overall learning. In fact, I think that choice in general engages students. Kids want to write and learn about things that they are interested in.

Michael rises from the small group discussion and walks to the center of the room. He asks everyone to wrap up their discussions and then checks in with them. “Okay, so great discussions,” Michael starts, “We’re just going to go around and I’m going to ask you to share a big idea or a conflicting idea. Let’s kick off with Avia.” Avia begins,

We talked about how you can make every lesson plan perceptual. Maybe there’s a specific lesson plan you need to write, but by engaging your students and seeing where they open up—you can bring that into the lesson plan and just watch your students. If you use that throughout your lesson.

Michael responds, “So there are elements of the perceptual lesson plan that can fit into any part of your lesson and lesson planning? To make it more concrete, you can doubt.”

Michael then asks, “Do you think that’s possible? What if we have conflict? In what situations may behaviorist and constructivist modes be more appropriate, and could this model be used for all ages and grade levels?” His system of inquiry is centered on engaging his students to think about the practice of teaching in new and extraordinary ways. A girl named Gloriena responds,

So for math, for example, it has to be more step by step—it’s harder to add in a perceptual style. I think in areas where the subject matter is not my strength as a teacher, it also is helpful to use a more structured lesson plan. I think too with math, you can be creative, but sometimes there really is only one answer and you need that step-by-step process.

Michael responds to his class:

Do you think that learning is linear? Do you think it's sequential? Does it need to follow some kind of specific order? I think often people think that math and science need to be that way, too. You can find examples on a CRISPA website for example—often times you're given a math curriculum and it goes into a logical order.

A student named John then says,

Often, we're just given a lesson plan to use—from college to now, we've had one way. Some of us think yeah, this is an excellent idea—but it's harder because we haven't seen it until our senior year of college. Like Gloriena had said, if we had been given the lesson plan early on and had been told we had the freedom to use it, we would most likely choose it and moreover very likely would have preferred it. That was one of my questions, actually. You just moved here Michael, so you haven't had much time to implement this. But if it had been shown to us earlier, we may have all be opposed to constructivist and behaviorist lesson plan.

Michael's students' comments strike a chord—if they had been shown this earlier, they may have been opposed to other types of lesson plans. At this moment, I think about the way students synthesize individualization and make meaning while standing at the intersections of imagination and remembering. Paradoxically, imagination and insight are characteristic of boundary breaking. Insight, according to Eisner, may help an individual grasp relationships among seemingly discrete events. It may also enable students to

recognize incongruities or gaps in accepted explanations and descriptions. Michael's students do both here as his intentions are operationalized.

Michael asks his students if they think it would be beneficial to have improvisation for teachers. He tells them he has been brewing on this at night and his students' laugh. He continues, saying that so often, lessons go off course and that they are not predictable. "It could be fun," he says, "I think there is a value in the art of teaching, which is sort of what this gets at." He pauses, "So, getting back to your point, take this metaphor for example." Once again, Michael orchestrates transposition and his students follow.

If I were to take my children camping and say [to you], your job is to build a fire. Building a fire is the objective of the camping trip. And I do the process in the right way. There is a logical order to how to build a fire. And at the end of camping, Miles, my youngest, can't build a fire but Virginia, my oldest, can. Miles is unsatisfactory or partially proficient or whatever because he can't build a fire. Let's say on the other hand, however, [Miles] had all these other meaningful experiences. He takes risks and he goes on a trail he never would have gone on and he climbs a mountain and he paddles a canoe. He may have other experiences that don't fit in the narrow scope of my objective that I don't want him to miss out on. Moments like this make us ask what the objective has to look like and what success looks like. He doesn't build a fire, but he had all these other experiences that were super meaningful.

Michael waits a moment to let the students think about this for a moment. “It wasn’t a failed lesson, in my mind,” he says.

I’m not going to say you’re partially proficient and you need remediation. But if you think of a broader scope of an objective, maybe there’s value in that. I think you’ll find that your math and science teachers would like things more sequential. When I did my dissertation, my subject was math and they were very preoccupied with passing these tests because they didn’t want to have negative labels. You had to do A before you could get to B. I was looking at the literature and I have to say that I object that everything is linear—I don’t think it is. Even things that seem linear don’t have to be linear. Take fractions for example—maybe you see something long before you learn about fractions where fractions are being used—traditionalists would perhaps object.

Michael observes his class and their expressions, which are both open and concentrated.

He continues,

I don’t want to confuse anyone. For the author-illustrator assignment, you can use the standard blocks or whatever works best for you. But I don’t want you to miss out on this. I was mad at myself for not knowing about this until eight years into my teaching. There’s ways you can get it in, maybe you can sneak in elements—even in the traditional lesson planning.

Challenging Michael to answer the question he posed at the beginning of class, a student raises her hand and asks, “Do you think we should have a teachers’ workshop for lesson planning?”

That's a good question and where I want to take this. Once upon a time, this was all homework and you just brought your finished lesson plans in at the end for a grade. Now we, your teachers, want this whole lesson to be about lesson planning and we want to give you support in this process. That's kind of like a workshop, right? I think it's fair to say that a lot of us come in not knowing how to write a lesson plan. I'm hoping that maybe this can help us bridge that gap a little—our number one job is to help make you successful going into practicum.

His students think on this a moment. John raises his hand and says,

We were kind of thinking about the essential questions and how CRISPA lines up with essential questions—they are not exactly like standards in that they are about getting the student to think. We thought then that essential questions align with CRISPA well—perhaps better than objectives—even though the essential questions are like the objectives. What do you think about that?

Michael responds that essential questions are like objectives but that they are more open-ended, and therefore perhaps provide for broader outcomes. His students see the space and freedom that CRISPA allows for deepened thinking and meaning-making—they're experiencing its effect in this moment, in fact. Eisner says that we become increasingly able to know the qualities of the aesthetic by our developed ability to experience the subtleties of form. We come to know aspects of music and literature and science by being increasingly able to experience their nuances. So it is, also, with the aesthetic form of our thoughts and intellectual development—we come to know aspects of ourselves, our

experiences, our interests, and our intentions by being increasingly able to experience them through essential questioning, meaningful dialogue, and integrated discourse.

Michael goes on, “I feel like it gives me some guidance but you can answer outside of that question. We may spend a couple weeks on something—there are different ways to get at it.” A student says, “It’s not like there is only one answer.” Another student asks, “Would a teacher aim to write the essential question in such a way that it lends itself to finding a common answer between students?” Michael smiles and nods.

Think of it this way. This week, my goal for you—my intention—is to help you decide which lesson plan framework is the best for you. And why? My intention is that you have an idea of these lesson plans and you are able to determine which one might be a good fit for you. Is that an objective or an intention? For me, it’s more of an intention. It’s a little broader. The article I gave you talks about broader strokes and that is my intention. I don’t know if you caught on to why I did that or not, but when I switched to this framework I felt like it opened me up. If, at the end of the week, you think about your personality and preferences and you are able to determine which lesson planning structure is best for you, then I will feel that our time together was a success. It’s like going camping—maybe instead of saying, students will make fire to succeed, I might say, students will gain valuable experiences at the end of our trip.

He allows his class to sit with this a moment and then says, “I’m not trying to say this is the right way. I only want to say that this worked for me and I wanted you to experience it.”

Forms of energy, in physics, means the number of regularly occurring events of any given kind in unit of time. Conversely, it can also mean the number of cycles or complete alternations per unit of time of a wave or oscillation. Michael is intentional about generating a wave—one that will carry the framework, its profound impact, and thus the development of an aesthetic mindedness forward the way the wind carries clouds. With this, Michael transitions and asks his students if they like to be read to. His class enthusiastically and quite charmingly responds with smiles as well, and says yes. He lifts the paper he has been holding: “I have a poem for you.” He begins to recite the children’s poem, “Best Kinds”:

The best kinds of people are warm and kind,

They are always there and they never mind.

The best kinds of people smile and embrace,

They support you with strength and grace.

The best kinds of people love and cherish,

They lift you up when you're near to perish.

The best kinds of people share your joy,

To laugh with you, to joke and enjoy.

The best kinds of people stand up tall,

No matter how hard they fall.

The best kinds of people are honest and true

The best kind of person, my dear, is you.

“A little poem for the kids,” he jokes as he finishes reading. “I would probably teach this lesson to third or fourth grade.” He addresses his class, “Do you know people who are kind and true? Your grandma?” The students laugh. He says, “For me, my children inspire me. I just love the way they see the world. I think we can learn from them. It’s amazing to me how they prioritize things.” Michael is transposing here. Right before my eyes, students are transforming, their hearts full of imagination, their heads full of childhood memories. Recall and introspection begin to unfold and alongside it a joy-filled energy that quickly fills the room with yet another type of frequency—total engagement.

Michael asks his students again if any of them know this kind of person. One of his students says, “I know someone named Dr. C.,” and again, the students laugh, though this time in an affectionate manner. Michael smiles affectionately back. “Thanks, I’ll take that,” he says. “So what I’m going to have you do now is to take a bit of a risk and work with someone you don’t know. Look on the back and you’ll see an interview template of adjectives.” He pauses and checks in, “You all know what adjectives are right?” His class nods and a few say, “Yes, of course.” He begins again, “Okay, I want you to interview a partner. Go out in the hall if you want. I’ll check on you in five minutes.” As students get started, there is a lot of commotion. The room explodes in a familiar enthusiasm. I hear two girls begin to talk: “Do you want to interview me or do you want me to interview you?” Within earshot, another girl says to her partner, “So what are the adjectives that

describe you?” “I am organized,” her partner replies, and then she adds, “I don’t know if that is good or not.” They laugh a little. The partner continues, “I am protective, I think. Protective of my little sister and my friends and stuff.” She pauses, “And I am reliable.”

Vignette 7. I stand and walk around the classroom. The room is bubbling with conversation and statements. Just a half an hour ago the space had been filled with the gray energy of a mid-day lull, and now, instead, colorful adjectives shoot around the room. Frequency fans the fire. Interpretation emerges, as does individualization and transposition. As student share, create, and imagine, we also see how they delve into a private act of appreciation, and in that space, connoisseurship is also borne. “I am creative, I think.” “I am a kid at heart.” “What are some activities that you like?” “What is a word that describes that?” “I like to go to sporting events.” “I would say I’m athletic.” “I like to hang out with my friends.” “I like to bake.” “I don’t do much.” “What makes you a good friend?” “I am always concerned about my friends doing the right things.” “I also enjoyed bowling.” “Some of the other ones too—like caring and reliable.” “Do I have a nickname?” “Some people call me Kyler.” “What else do you enjoy about life.” “This is hard,” followed by laughter. “I cook when I feel guilty.” “I am superstitious sometimes.” “I am an auntie.” “Do you like to read?” “I think we all have a lot in common.” “I like to do laundry.” “I fold and I sort.” “Should we do the next one?” “I like to be with my friends.” “I also like to knit.” “I don’t mind staying home by myself.” “We are both like that.” “I am open-minded.” “You are hilarious.” “I would say I am trustworthy.”

Michael is walking around the room, listening in to conversations and making observations. “I can see that some people are finished,” he begins gently, and some are still going. I want to give you some direction. There is a framework at the bottom of that page. Your job, when you are finished, is to put together these words into that format. When you are done, I’m going to have you paint something that represents what you wrote. It doesn’t have to be a picture of the person but it needs to be a representation. If they like basketball, for instance, perhaps it is a picture of a basketball. Does that make sense?

For a moment no one moves. Instead they are looking around. And then someone gets up, and a few others follow. They walk to the paint station and grab colorful pieces of 11x14 construction paper, paintbrushes, watercolor, and jars to dip their brushes.

As students begin to paint, the classroom space also transforms. In the air there are bright and colorful words, reflections and statements shared between students as they immerse themselves in this simple, artistic moment. Few look up from their papers while they talk. Their words seem to float gently across their tables. As they synthesize individualization, we see how Michael’s students sew together many facets of memory into a quilt that becomes a rich discourse of joy, engagement, and connection making. “So I’m going to paint a book that looks like a diary.” “Where’s Carly when we need her?” “You can read it but it’s full of secrets.” “She draws and paints things.” “When the kids ask me to draw things, I’m like really?” “Scrapbooking—it’s a thing that I do.” “One time a kid wanted me draw a dinosaur.” “I don’t ever get time to do it.” “I was thinking that the paint wouldn’t show up well.” “What would you like your diary on?”

“Bowling?” “Mothering.” “There’s enough over there, we can share.” “I love art.” “That extra sticky thing.” “I burnt the cookies the other day.” “I don’t need paper.” “Diary? Book.” “I can make it an M&M cookie.” “If there is one thing I learned in art it’s how to use watercolors.” “How do you make a book not look like a box?” “There’s something satisfying about doing laundry.” “I like bread too.” “I’ve got a good book for you.” “People start singing—they call it mellow yellow.” “I’m really struggling with the shape of the book.” “It kind of looks like a massive fruit-cake.” “You actually made a basketball?” “And so it comes full circle.” Laughter, and more laughter.

Michael pulls the attention of his class back to the center of the room:

I think we have about 3 minutes—let me make a few announcements. If you are so inclined, we are going to put on a theatre at the local elementary school to thank them for their involvement in our practicum. If you would participate in this event I would greatly reduce what is on your final.

There are gasps of shock and awe. “Really?!” someone says. “Yes, really,” Michael says, “because I think that this will be more valuable than your final, in fact.” Students are still immersed in the job of painting their adjective poems when Michael says, “Okay if you want to set your papers on the back table I will preserve them. Thanks for taking some risks today and trying painting. Let me also know if you have questions on author-illustrator.”

The class exits the room slowly—some taking more time than others to tear themselves away from painting and put their art supplies away. Michael and I take a seat near the back of the classroom to debrief the lesson. “All of them wish they would have

learned it earlier,” I say. “They didn’t learn this, so their experience is outside of this.” Michael says.

Did you hear John earlier? He said he wasn’t sure he knew how to do it. What they don’t get yet—and maybe this is an opportunity—is that they have been doing this their whole life. The reason that it speaks to people is because when you are having this experience, you are having an experience, that has always been a wow experience. Any time you have ever been fully engaged, fully present—you were doing something you loved, [and] you were having that experience. You just haven’t had that experience facilitated intentionally perhaps by your teachers. It’s not like it’s something you’ve never done before. You’ve been doing this your whole life.

Michael reflects on his camping story and asks me if he thinks the point was made. I say, I don’t think that it was fumbled at all. You can go camping and never have that experience at all. I mean who cares if you make the fire. If you were to just take the whole thing and shake it upside down; if you set behaviorist and constructivist aside—and you started all over from scratch if you could, would we not consider doing it this way first? Would we not consider using criteria that facilitated joy and engagement and the quality of those experiences. How much did you enjoy that and how much did you learn over did you learn the thing I said I wanted you to learn? Perceptivity. How deep did you go into that thing that you learned? Was it true authentic learning? If we could really honor that path for our students, we would be so much clearer on what our talents are. We would be so much more of

joy-filled, self-fulfilled society if what was valued was actually the things that we valued and that we found meaningful and real. Back to your stuff with labels, right? I haven't read your dissertation yet and I look forward to reading it—as soon as you put a label on something and it's a, b, or c and you then you convey the message that I only value you if you are the thing that I say is valuable. That creates all kinds of stuff—shame and fear and discouragement and acting out—all of these things. If I'm not good at the thing you say I should be good at and I put a label on it—then I label that, and accept it, and define myself by it. CRISPA is just the framework—we call it this thing because we have to give it a word but it's really about the aesthetic experience and that honors every part of the person.

“I totally agree,” Michael says.

When I first got started on the label thing I visited the worst school in Mexico—it was a public school that serves primarily Navajo but it's outside the dominant culture. They are like on the fringes. It is not the worst school. They don't do well on standardized assessments but that's because it's not important to them. It blew my mind and I thought to myself, they need an artistic way to express themselves. I met Christy shortly thereafter and then there was Eisner and from there it all started to reconnect really well for me. It was beyond just Navajo—it was like—if you don't fit into this little mold.

I had heard this too with David and Christy on some level. You said today, “You can sneak it in. There's a part of me that wants to say, “I don't want you to have to sneak it in

I want you to go out and teach with that. I want you to know that this is the stuff that's real—we'll sneak in the other stuff."

Michael recalibrates, "Maybe I shouldn't say it that way, but I think I have to." "I get it," I say. "Maybe I'm more idealistic, having had the opportunity to sit back and just observe. I think of Bruce, you know. He's so intentional about how he plays things down. This is a big deal—same thing with Christy." I laugh fully and with passion. I say again, raising my voice,

This is a big deal, to visit David's classroom, to visit your classroom, to listen to Christy talk about it, to listen to the students talk about it—now it's in their toolbox. For them, this is one of the three. Now it's one of three. Let's fast-forward 10 years from now. There's this way, there's this, and then there's the transformational. There's the integrative and this is honored as much as the others are honored. I genuinely believe it could have traction.

Michael says,

At the end of the day, the thing that really matters is when your child comes home from school is did they really learn something and were they excited about it. I'm not sure that the traditional format always offers that. I know sometimes when my kids come home, I have to pry it out of them. If they have the wow experience, it's going to be the first thing they want to talk about it. If they are painting and writing poems," he smiles, "well then, we have happy customers.

The wow experience—I smile at Michael's choice of words while recognizing that the research has perhaps come full circle. Michael's passion is contagious and his

words are sincere. Moments students remember; happy customers—that is what it is all about. Brittany knows it and so do her students. David knows it and so do his students. Michael knows it and, in turn, so do his students. There is a terrific quote by Stockmon that comes to mind when I think about this progression: “The larger the island of knowledge, the longer the shoreline of wonder.” This statement perhaps summarizes intentions realized when aesthetically minded college educators integrate CRIPSA into their practice. CRISPA and aesthetics are both the island and the shoreline. It honors transposition, synthesis, interpretation, recall and introspection, as well as connoisseurship. It honors these things as do the college educators who attend to them and who in turn operationalize them in classrooms of higher education across the country.

Final Thoughts

Five significant subthemes emerged from the three sets of observations I conducted with aesthetically-minded college educators who utilize CRISPA in their practice. These themes are representative of how aesthetically minded college educator’s intentions are operationalized in the classrooms of higher education. Similar to how each educator’s intentions are common to all, the subthemes that emerged were present across the practices of each aesthetically-minded college educator observed while utilizing CRISPA in their classrooms. In summary, the subthemes operationalized in the following ways:

Orchestrating transposition. Both in music and philosophy, transposition demonstrates the ability to shift an entire sequence and still maintain, if not enhance, its integrity. Representation in all forms conveys information in powerful ways through one

or more of the sensory systems (Eisner, 1994), while also helping students to flourish as a part of a developing a construct of aesthetic truth essential to the college experience (Young, 1997). Thus, CRISPA allows for transposition through experiences that cultivate transference, metaphor and harmonic understanding in the classrooms of higher education.

Stimulating recall and introspection. Aesthetics have been found to arouse several areas of the brain, including those responsible for recall and introspection, while also facilitating episodic memory retention. Introspection cultivates wakefulness (Zajonc, 2009) or by Greene's (2001) definition, "wide-awakeness" and allows students to reflect on self and world in a way that enhances their ability to draw from powerful personal background experiences while making essential connections. Activated by the aesthetic and thus associated with sensory perception, recall and introspection allow individuals to move between the past and present while making essential connections to their learning. Thus when elements of CRISPA are present in the classrooms of higher education, memory and reflection are more strongly stimulated and engagement deepened.

Synthesizing individualization. The metaphor of the art of alchemy has appeared in many cultures across many time periods. A key component is that transformation is ultimately self-transformation. Synthesizing individualization is much like a process of alchemy for learning and living. Also referred to as individuation, deepened consciousness in this state allows for imagination breakthroughs and the unexpected (Greene, 1995) while also facilitating exploratory environments that foster student success (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010). Thus, CRISPA allows for personal meaning-making in

the classrooms of higher education, while honoring inseparable dimensions of physical, sensory, emotional, and spiritual consciousness.

Composing interpretation. Insight and interpretation have been found to be the result of a culmination of a series of brain states and processes operating at different time scales. Also referred to as the ‘ah-ha moment’, interpretation is the result of having engaged with an expressive object (Dewey, 1934) and in turn, conducted an evaluation that provides for an evolution of understanding. In turn, the beauty, utility and intrigue of the questions themselves are honored (Bain, 2004) as individuals render deepened meaning from a series of crystalized connections. Thus, CRISPA allows for a unique range of personal take-away’s through the use of deepened perceptivity resulting in the ah-ha moment in classrooms of higher education.

Actualizing connoisseurship. Connoisseurship comes from the Latin *cognoscere*, to know. In the arts, to know depends upon the ability to see, not merely to look. Connoisseurship for teaching and learning results in increased perception that requires a particular sensory memory (Eisner, 2002b). This symbiotic interaction cultivates deepened attention and contemplative practices that support a variety of best practices for college classrooms (Bain, 2004; Doyle 2013; Kinzie, 2005; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010) including student’s ability to identify, interpret and appreciate the uniqueness of one’s personal and professional path. Thus CRISPA actualizes connoisseurship in the classrooms of higher education by encouraging students to unearth beauty, quality, appreciation, talent, passion and purpose as a result of their college experience.

As presented in the opening of this chapter, I have organized the data to respond to Eisner's (2002b) three questions: "What does the situation mean to those involved? How does this classroom operate? [and] What ideas, concepts or theories can be used to explain its major features?" (p. 229). To examine aesthetically-minded individuals' stated or unstated instructional goals or objectives for their students and for their practice in general, I turned to one of Eisner's (1992) dimensions of schooling: the intentional dimension. Through this approach, I was able to present the interviews of seven aesthetically-minded college educators and as such extrapolate four core intentions related to the beliefs and philosophies that guide their practice.

In order to explore how the classroom operates, I drew upon additional dimensions of Eisner's schooling—including the structural, curricular, pedagogical and evaluative in order to address what is being "created" in the college classroom when aesthetics are present. As a result, I was able to identify a second set of themes or engagement strategies present when CRISPA is operationalized in the college classroom. Both sets of themes are evaluated in more detail in Chapter 5. In addition, the significance of the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded educators are inferred through bodies of scholarship, which attend to aesthetics, student success, and an integrative model of higher education.

CHAPTER 5: THEMATICS, EVALUATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Overview of Study

Aesthetically-minded individuals are those who: (a) express interest in the lived experience and the quality of that experience; (b) attend to sensation or perception; (c) are drawn to the creation of the expressive object for artists and observer; (d) are motivated by the search for meaning; and/or (e) find familiarity, context, and/or relevance for the aesthetic themes (CRISPA). Those who teach in higher education and who incorporate the aesthetic themes (CRISPA) as a part of their beliefs, philosophy, and practices as college educators facilitate meaningful experiences for students as a result of the themes identified in Chapter 4 (i.e., wow experience, transformational catalysts, forms of energy, and innovative practices for teacher education). These intentions result in a set of engagement indicators including: (a) enhanced recall and introspection, (b) deepened interpretation skills, (c) the capacity to readily transpose information, (d) the ability to synthesize personal connections, and (e) a heightened sense of appreciation for learning as a result of classroom connoisseurship.

In turn, the intentions of aesthetically-minded college educators support Palmer and Zajonc's (2010) presentation of an integrative form of higher education in terms of knowing, teaching, and learning. Moreover, the educators' practices result in additional subthemes (i.e., engagement indicators) in alignment with the authors, reaching beyond vocation and citizenship to cultivate an individual's full humanity through experience,

contemplation, and transformation. As such, this study addresses how the aesthetic themes support the goals of higher education and education in general.

Currently, there is a broad trend in American higher education where some 400,000 students drop out every year (Selingo, 2013). Today, only slightly more than 50% of American students who enter college complete their studies and graduate. At the same time, nearly the same number of American educators leaves the profession each year (Bennett, Brown, & Kirby-Smith, 2013). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2015), 40 to 50% of new teachers leave their career within the first 5 years on the job. Both reference points force us to consider the current and future state of the U.S. educational landscape, and the strategies, frameworks, and best practices we might employ to change its seemingly downward trends.

Aesthetics and aesthetic mindedness in college educators, as well as transformational approaches to teaching and learning, potentially provide a thoughtful solution to address these concerns. As discussed in Chapters 1-3, the literature examines aesthetics as a particular field in philosophy; one that provides human beings not only with an aquifer of learning, but also with a profound set of universal elements by which to define and evaluate one's experience. With this in mind, the aim of the study was to observe CRISPA in practice to evaluate the experience of students as well as the framework, and to determine how educators' intentions are operationalized in classrooms of higher education. The literature provided much insight into how the aesthetic themes impact K-12 classrooms, but shed little light on the implications of the aesthetic themes for higher education. I chose to study the practices of aesthetically-minded college

educators purposefully utilizing CRISPA in classrooms of higher education to better understand the applications of the aesthetic themes for college classrooms.

To that end, three research questions guided this study: (a) What are the intentions of aesthetically-minded educators who purposefully utilize the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (CRISPA) in higher education institutions? (b) How do the aesthetic themes (CRISPA) operationalize in the classrooms of higher education? and (c) What is the significance of the intentions and the practices of aesthetically-minded educators for higher education and for education in general? In order to respond to the above questions, I utilized educational connoisseurship and criticism, an arts-based qualitative research method developed by Eisner (2002b).

Educational criticism and connoisseurship recognizes differences that are subtle but significant in a particular qualitative display (Eisner, 2002b). As evidenced by its name, the methodology consists of two components: connoisseurship and criticism. Connoisseurship is the art of appreciation and requires the researcher to have an advanced understanding of the nuances of a classroom. Criticism, on the other hand, is the art of disclosure (Eisner, 2002b). It allows the connoisseur to point out areas of improvement alongside intention and causation. The ability to critique a setting, much like the ability to critique music or literature, is established through experience and an intuitive recognition of what is seen and unseen to the observer. The ultimate goal of this method is to communicate the complex, ambiguous, and artful series of events taking place in schools and classrooms in order to improve education (Eisner, 1998). The intent

of this method also matches the intent of my study: to improve outcomes in higher education by examining applications of the aesthetic themes for college classrooms.

In this study, and in Chapter 4 specifically, I highlighted the frequently complex, ambiguous, and artful events that Eisner (2002b) described as the goal of his research methodology. All seven of my participants embraced aesthetically-minded philosophies, which I sought to capture in my research. To accomplish this, I chose to apply an aesthetic lens as an aspect of the critique in order to evaluate the ideas, concepts, and theories that explain the major features of “captivating college classrooms.” Through careful transcription and review of the study’s interviews and observations, an aesthetic lens allowed for an assessment of the data’s subtleties. Connections, risk-taking, imagination, sensory experience, perceptivity, and active engagement became a sieve through which the aesthetically-related themes emerged, both in terms of the intentional dimensions as well as the operational.

Educational criticism has four major dimensions that form a system of inquiry: description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics (Eisner, 1998). In Chapter 4, I provided descriptions organized by both the intentional and operational. In Section 1: The Intentional, I organized each of my seven participants interviews by key takeaways and themes. In Section 2: The Operational, I organized three of the seven participants’ classroom observations by key takeaways and subthemes. In the present chapter, I discuss those themes with accompanying interpretations and connections to the literature. I then offer an evaluation of those themes in response to my third research question: What is the

significance of studying the practices of aesthetically minded educators for higher education and education in general?

Discussion of Themes and Response to Research Questions

In presenting and interpreting the data in Chapter 4, I referred to two questions: “What does the situation mean to those involved?” and “How does this classroom operate?” (Eisner, 2002b, p. 229). These questions allowed me to view the focus of this study with the eyes of both a connoisseur and a critic, resulting in the ability to perceive what is subtle, complex and important (Eisner, 1998, p. 215) about the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded college educators. As a result, I was able to extrapolate two sets of key themes in relation to the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded college educators.

In the present chapter, I respond to a third question: “What ideas, concepts, or theories can be used to those explain its major features?” (Eisner, 2002b, p. 229). In order to more clearly determine (a) what the literature indicated I would find, (b) what I actually found, and (c) the differences between them, I refer to educational literature on the aesthetic and arts for learning, as well as research-based retention and engagement strategies for students and teachers alike, in relation to the three research questions of the study.

In order to highlight better how the findings of this study apply to college settings in general, I have used the ideas of Palmer and Zajonc (2010) heuristically in order to help us think about the implications of the themes for higher education while considering the following guiding questions: (a) What steps can we take to make our colleges and

universities places that awaken the deepest potential in students, faculty, and staff? (b) How can integrative learning be effectively woven into the culture, curriculum, and cocurriculum of our colleges and universities? and (c) Do current education efforts address the whole human being—mind, heart, and spirit—in ways that best contribute to our future on this fragile planet (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010, p. 5)?

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked, “What are the intentions of aesthetically-minded educators who purposefully utilize the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (CRISPA) in higher education institutions?” To address this question, I asked participants to share with me their intentions. As previously discussed, while their answers varied, four key themes emerged from their responses: (a) facilitating the wow experience, (b) providing a space for transformational catalysts to occur, (c) generating forms of energy, and (d) promoting innovative practices in teacher education. In this section, I will present each of these themes in relation to the literature, showing how the intentions of aesthetically-minded college educators provide support for an integrative form of higher education.

The wow experience. As discussed in Chapter 4, the wow experience is the first of four core intentions of aesthetically-minded college educators. The wow experience is a moment of awe, surprise, and fascination. It may be likened to that of the *great experience* (Ingman, 2013), in that these moments in life may be described by their enjoyment, worth, and significance. However, the wow experience is also an intentional

experience: it is a manifestation of meaningful education and, thus, may also be described as the bright, bold, and richly memorable moments that change and transform us.

Of the seven participants in this study, Uhrmacher talked about the wow experience the most, though readers might find evidence of this theme in other interviews as well. In reviewing Uhrmacher's story, philosophy, practices, and research, the wow experience presents itself in numerous ways, particularly as Uhrmacher talks about the development of CRISPA and his intentions as an aesthetically-minded college educator:

If you look at my story, there was this interest in creating meaningful education that manifests or could have manifested in various ways over the years of my life. I think this idea of a wow experience of aesthetic experiences has been a part of me since being a very young kid. I think that it found its outlet finally in CRISPA—or at least that is how I would look at it at some level.

Based on Uhrmacher's description, one might say that the wow experience is personal, fundamental, and intuitive. Likened to Palmer and Zajonc's (2010) description of knowledge in terms of its relational, bodily, intuitive, and emotional constructs (p. 36), the wow experience results in the same—a way of thinking and experience not done solely by the brain, but rather by the mind, which is not an organ but a process that is distributed throughout the body and draws on every faculty we have (p. 41).

In relation to knowing, aesthetic experiences that permeate our lives are, in and of themselves, ways of coming to know our world while expanding our universe. Palmer and Zajonc (2010) talk about this as they describe the significance of an ontology that attends to purpose while supporting a way of knowing that involves much if not all of the

whole self in discovering one's world (p. 32). Borne out of Uhrmacher's passion for transformational models of education, his real interest was doing what was best for students and determining how theory and application could support these endeavors. As we saw in chapter four, Bruce's intentions centered on the desire to create deeply meaningful and memorable experience for students:

I was just bringing in language and a philosopher to say what it is to create these . . . wow experiences.

Uhrmacher referenced the wow experience further when he shared with me how he got his start in teaching. Again, we see examples of how the wow experience cultivates an exploration of knowledge in terms of truth in order to understand better both inner and outer worlds. Uhrmacher provides support for this as he shares with me that early on in his career he realized that teaching and learning are about how we think about knowledge. As discussed in Chapter 4, Uhrmacher inferred that becoming a curriculum person allowed him to investigate and develop pedagogical practices that enhanced the way we embrace knowledge. The aesthetic themes, which would develop from his research and contributions, ultimately presents an enhanced experience of knowledge and, thus, the wow experience.

Ethics are an essential part of an integrative form of higher education. According to Palmer and Zajonc (2010), addressing the needs of higher education through a transformative model in turn addresses ethical decision-making, morality, and truth. Uhrmacher's draw to autonomous educational models that helped struggling students in his early career was fueled by a passion to do what's right and ethical—what's best for

students. Out of this clear intention emerged curiosity and then research on applications of aesthetics for teaching and learning, leading to the use of CRISPA and resulting in the wow experience. The following statement best captures Uhrmacher's intentions, heart, and purpose as an educator:

Why am I in this game you ask? That's probably for the same reasons, which is to say that I think that in the long term we can make this world a little better. Our ambitions have to be much more modest than where I started out but you can make things for the better. It's pushing against some systems that are slow to change but when you do, great things can happen.

The core of Uhrmacher's practice is woven into his philosophy and, thus, his intention to create deep and meaningful experiences for students and teachers, moving beyond the ordinary to extraordinary, transformative moments in time. Aesthetically-minded educators, as mentioned previously, demonstrate this in many ways; not only for students and for teachers but also for the field itself. For Palmer and Zajonc (2010), a truly integrative education engages us by honoring the relationship between our studies of the objective world and the purpose, meaning, limits, and aspirations of our lives (p. 10).

As presented in the research, the evidence shows that individuals who are intentional about their aesthetic mindedness and integrate the aesthetic themes into their practice have the potential to create the types of rich and meaningful learning experiences described in this study (Moroye & Uhrmacher; Uhrmacher, 2009). In addition, many have examined the importance of the lived experience for teaching and learning (e.g., Dewey, 1934). As previously mentioned, Ingman (2013), for example, discussed how

integration of the aesthetic can result in the great experience (p. 177), an evaluation of an experience by the student with respect to three criteria: enjoyment, worth, and significance. Uhrmacher's intentions and thus the wow experience add dimension and affirmation of these things:

If there is a gem of experience, there can be a wow experience. It's those wow experiences that will stand out. When they're good, when they're really good then those are the things that will propel you and move us all forward.

A number of studies have examined the significance of how aesthetics not only support the cultivation of meaningful experiences but also how the integration and application of the aesthetic themes can enhance the overall quality and value through which we view human life (Aguirre, 2004; Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 1998; Greene 2001; Hohn, 2013; Panzarella, 1980; Smith, 1981; Webster & Wolfe, 2013). Other scholars have investigated the aesthetic in terms of attending to quality as well (Curtis, 1981; Parsons, 2002). These and other studies provide evidence of the power of the wow experience and the incredible, transformative ah-ha moments students can have as a result.

For Kristen and Clair, CRISPA helps to ensure that their students—and their student's students—are able to try on various narratives in order to look more clearly at themselves as well as at the larger world. This type of intention advocates for leadership, innovation, and teacher education. Conversely, for David and Michael, teaching with CRISPA is about generating energy—a heightened awareness or varying forms of energy. They had shared that in some ways, it is as much about pushing against the

current as it is about creating a new current. For David and Michael, CRISPA and their aesthetic mindedness is aligned with the concept of conduits; integrating and implementing in ways that shift, repeat, reflect, engulf, disrupt, and impact people, places, and things in meaningful ways.

Again, we find applications for the aesthetic themes in the intentions of participants. Innovative practices in teacher education as well as forms of energy support Palmer and Zajonc's (2010) integral approach to education. More specifically, the intentions of these individuals are bold enough to address the following charge, head on. Palmer and Zajonc (2010) wrote: "The responsibilities of our colleges and universities are immense, especially when we consider the complexity and fragility of today's world economically, politically, socially and environmentally" (p. 17). Aesthetically-minded college educators understand this and consequently aim to be drivers of change.

In essence, at the heart of the themes described in this section is a grassroots effort to impact legislation and the field of education. Participants aim to ensure intrinsic motivation, positive psychology, progressive models, transformational experiences and creativity for future teachers, classrooms, and students. It is here once again that we see the intentions of the educators intersect with Palmer and Zajonc's (2010) descriptions of pedagogical assets in higher education.

Innovative practices in teacher education. We see support for an integral model, or what Palmer and Zajonc (2010) described as "the wisdom and experience we need to meet the challenges of the century ahead" (p. 17), in the Kristen's excerpts

provided in Chapter 4. Here, she offers guidance on sharing what we know and taking the risks that transformation requires:

My hopeful side is that we'll start, as a society and a school system, to realize that there is more to learning than what we're measuring. It's been a really interesting path for me to think about different perspectives—to really push for the aesthetic part in my classroom and with my colleagues and then going to the district level and realizing that there are a lot of teachers that need more basic stuff than that.

In another instance, she shared the following:

A lot of teacher evaluation and credits are happening at the district. Teachers and principals are not meeting those credits, and that is changing the face of professional development. In the last couple of years a lot of the work I have done has been about getting people excited and getting the word out there. CRISPA has helped to facilitate this.

She went on to say,

One thing I would say is that my natural inclination would be to be against standardization and the common core. However I've been able to look at it from an aesthetic (CRISPA) point of view, which allows me to consider not what to teach but how to teach. Having that set and knowing what the goals are for the kids allows you to plan lessons that are pretty amazing and really creative.

Topics related to innovative practices in teacher education appear in the literature as well, though there is little evidence of how such practices are facilitated by aesthetic-minded educators in college classrooms. Those who approach teaching and learning with

these intentions are able to encourage students to utilize various narratives in order to look more clearly at themselves and the larger world. This type of intention advocates for leadership, innovation, and care theory. Well aligned with views of integrative education, current studies show that learning becomes individualized at the most fundamental level when meaning is created through representation, professional community experiences, and new perspectives that shape and form identity in relation to one's future practice as a teacher (Polizzi, 2009).

Clair also talked about the importance of CRISPA, and how she utilizes the framework to enhance her teaching practices:

I'll never forget when Bruce introduced me to the six dimensions of CRISPA. I remember thinking, "Wow! This is the educational speak that learning should be invigorating and refreshing."

Like Kristen, Clair shared that CRISPA gave her the vernacular to describe teaching as an engaging experience for kids as well as for teachers. It is important to her that those in the field fulfill the leadership and advocacy required to carry the work forward.

According to Clair, CRISPA gives teachers the power to talk about meaningful experiences in a research-based way. It also gives teachers the words to describe their practice as that which it is intended to be: a dynamic, multisensory, joy-filled experience.

Again, we see applications of the aesthetic themes for college classrooms revealed through Clair's intentions. Clair's commitment to teacher advocacy and facilitating meaningful experiences that empower future educators further supports integral education practices. Palmer and Zajonc (2010) described these same intentions, outlining

integral education as a model that explicitly demonstrates the following: (a) opportunities to explore multiple perspectives; (b) opportunities to combine critical thinking with experiential feeling; (c) facilitation of multiple ways of knowing; and (d) the weaving together of domains of self, culture, and nurture among others (p. 10). Combined, these elements create a springboard for transformation and growth as well as personal and professional development.

Research also supports that those who intentionally aim to facilitate innovation in teacher practices are also more likely to present transformational learning experiences to their students and, thus, may be more inclined to support integrative, interdisciplinary approaches to student success (Barbezat & Bush, 2014). Such approaches have been found to be highly effective in higher education classrooms (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Schreiner et al., 2012; Young, 1997, Zhang, 2014). Innovative practices in teacher education, as a result of aesthetic mindedness, thus combine positive psychology and transformational experiences with a grassroots social justice style that impassions students and future teachers to be the drivers of their own success. As such, barriers to equality, including wealth and privilege are bridged as a result of practices that advocate, empower and inspire individuals to connect their inner and outer worlds, thus propelling them towards greater self actualization, autonomy, and purpose.

Forms of energy. David and Michael talked about teaching with CRISPA in similar, yet slightly different ways. For Kristen and Clair, CRISPA is about driving change. For David and Michael, it is about starting an educational revolution. The following excerpt details sharply the passion aesthetically-minded college educators have

for advocacy in terms of students and teachers. During our interview, and as described in Chapter 4, David had shared that he wanted his students to be thoughtful, inclusive, transformative teachers and leaders. He had talked about curriculum as a powerful resource and catalyst, one that could be leveraged as an agent for change. Palmer and Zajonc (2010) similarly talked about the impact of curriculum and intention:

We have all had the experience of a conversation shifting and becoming a deep, free exchange of thoughts and feelings that sees to reach into and beyond the individual participants. Something new emerges, a transcendent communal whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. (p. 12)

David's intentions are layered with this type of purpose-driven passion and the desire to impact the future, with a grassroots mindset and a ceaseless determination. I choose the word grassroots with intention, as by definition the term describes a movement driven by a community. For David, community is a group of passionate, forward thinking teachers whose message, model and momentum is fueled by a toolbox that includes CRISPA among other interdisciplinary practices. Members of a community such as this help to ensure the future of education as a field most interested in developing the whole person—mind, heart, and spirit. In David's words,

I think that's something else aesthetics gets at—frequency. [Pauses, thinking]
Low frequency happens all too often. That's when nothing is happening, when no one cares. Aesthetics can change that. [With increased energy] Outcomes are important but outcomes without a heightened frequency don't matter. Marry the two, and now you've got something. That's the freaking magic!

Enthusiasm is widely regarded as one of the most essential and desirable qualities of effective teachers (Zhang, 2014). Teacher enthusiasm has consequently been linked

with effective teaching and optimal learning for postsecondary students (Young, 1997). Moreover, recent studies have shown that enthusiasm, energy, and a genuine passion for teaching increases positive emotions and intrinsic motivation for students (Cohan & Honigsfeld, 2011; Onwugbenu, 2013; Zhang, 2014). Speaking both physically and metaphorically about frequency, energy is indeed contagious and the way that a wave crests or troughs is directly related to its amplitude or strength. When speaking to the art of teaching, the more profound the experience, the larger the amplitude and, thus, the stronger the energy force.

Michael, like David, talked about how his intention as an aesthetically-minded college educator was underscored by his passion for social justice, and that which would allow him to be an agent of change while inspiring his students to do the same. For Michael, CRISPA gave him a vernacular to describe and unpack this intention in the name of equality, advocacy, and student success:

So last semester it was not really on my radar because that's not really what they do here and I didn't want to confuse the students. I didn't want to impose it—but then I went to Tampa Bay and was inspired by some of the Eisner's and Greene's [presentations]. I realized then that I didn't come all the way here [Ardsdale State University] to just fit in. When we got into lesson planning this year I thought about what [I could] add. I found myself on the plane returning from that conference thinking a lot about reading and how connoisseurship can help literacy. Literacy is kind of violent and students can feel really bad about themselves based on how someone reads. There needs to be more connoisseurs in

language arts. By the time I got back, I put it in the curriculum and it fit really well. We went to the brewery shortly thereafter and did lessons on connoisseurship. It was all so fresh in my mind. I had Flinders and everybody who were telling these great stories. It was one of the best experiences in my entire life. I felt this burden to not be shy but rather carry the torch and share these ideas up north. I kept thinking that these amazing ideas should be in more places than Denver and Stanford. So that kind of got me going. I got mixed results.

The way Michael describes what inspired him to “carry the torch,” can be likened to that which Palmer and Zajonc (2010) described as what seeds fundamental change in institutions. In essence, real and authentic change always come from planting small communities of vision and practice within these (higher education) settings; communities can grow from good conversations. Indeed, there is a sense that aesthetic mindedness and those who utilize CRISPA in their practice present their intentions in such a way as to ignite change while fundamentally addressing how higher education can—and should—support students. On this topic, Palmer and Zajonc (2010) wrote,

The great need of the integrative education movement is not for new and better techniques but for an ongoing exploration of the philosophical foundations of this movement—from which we can responsibly challenge the conventional pedagogy, hone and deepen the methods in our current catalogue, and invent new methods that honor our fundamental principles. (p. 31)

Those who encompass innovative practices in teacher education and forms of energy as an intention of their aesthetic mindedness are able to serve an integrative movement while honoring the principles of which Palmer and Zajonc spoke. This is done as a result of outcomes which both align to the aesthetic research as well as the literature on best

practices in higher education. Connections, risk-taking, imagination, sensory experience, perceptivity and active engagement not only help students to see and think about the world in unusual and important ways (Uhrmacher & Moroye, 2009), but also provide for transformative experiences essential to the outcomes of one's college education (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010).

Such experiences are fundamental to the type of learning environments that ensure college students thrive. The research supports that when high levels of emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing are introduced in college classrooms, greater productivity, meaningful interaction, and deepened engagement occurs for students (Schreiner et al., 2012). Frequency, as a component of method and delivery, is an important part of this equation. Frequency is elegant. Like art in motion, or perhaps like improvisation, it can be used to shift a sequence; to repeat, to reflect, or to mimic. Emerging fields, such as that of energy psychology (Wolf, 2012) suggests that frequency in the classroom has the power to impact people's behaviors, cognitions, and emotional responses, as well as their sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Thus, educators like David and Michael who intentionally use frequency to shape and heighten outcomes may help students to feel more confident, centered, stimulated, and focused (Zhang, 2014).

Transformational catalysts. Christy and Brittany talked the most about transformational catalysts as they shared their personal philosophies, aesthetic mindedness, and intentions. In the following highlights, we once again see the importance and application of the aesthetic themes for higher education in ways that are supported by Palmer and Zajonc's (2010) vision for educators and learners alike—those

that operate with the passion of a scientist and the precision of a poet (p. 22).

Transformational catalysts launch us from one place in our lives to another. We identify them because we are ready for them. There is a sense of things coming together—an epiphany where both conflict and resolution play a part. Transformational catalysts are based in meaning-making where the quality of the experience is a founding principle and a tether between structure and freedom, silence and noise, allowing for a profound space where evolution occurs on many levels.

According to Palmer and Zajonc's (2010) view of higher education, the examination of learning is not simply a matter of mechanism but is full of relationships and dynamic processes. This model (2010) encourages an exploration of the internal and external dimensions of existence. Christy and Brittany's descriptions of their intentions for the aesthetic themes provide support for the types of conversations that create free exchange of thoughts and feelings and, in turn, reach into and beyond individual participants and the various facets that must come together to make meaning of one's path, passion and purpose. Moreover, such intentions allow individuals to experience unexpected insights that are not only personally energizing but also energize the space between self and other caring and thoughtful human beings (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010, p. 12).

When speaking about aesthetic mindedness and her use of CRISPA in the classrooms of higher education, Christy shared that the experiential part is what matters most for her: the desire to create the conditions for an experience. In another instance, she stated that to create sensory experience fully is to create the opportunity to explore in a

different way. The intention to facilitate transformational catalysts is a part of the CRISPA framework itself. For example, when describing the element of risk, Christy shared that risk is really intentional: “It’s not just about enlivening, or waking you up, it’s about moving you toward something.” Integrative higher education presents learning in this way. Instead of separating vocation from purpose, this model encourages educators to help students keep site of a life where work and ideals are united, and purpose and values are a part of how they earn their daily bread (p. 55). In essence, these moments in time are about the very thing that Moroye describes: catalysts that wake you and move you toward something.

For Christy, aesthetics and CRISPA have the power to move individuals beyond any kind of experience they can imagine while also exceeding their objectives. She emphasized that this type of catalyst is different than that of Madelyn Hunter and the anticipatory set and, as such, also differs from the constructivist approach that encourages students to “go on a scavenger hunt” for one right answer. Like Palmer (2010), Christy was adamant that the best education unifies students’ inner and outer lives (p. 61); this type of existential education complements CRISPA. In Christy’s words:

I don’t think they’ll have the best possible education if there’s not a spiritual element to that. By spiritual, I mean you feel like you’re living your purpose. That’s the kind of teacher that I am with my students. For those who want to be leaders or faculty members or educators of any kind—it’s important to me that they are becoming who they want to become and that I’m not just filling their head with knowledge. That’s a function of my discipline. . . . I want them [her

students] to figure out what they are good at and throw themselves into that 100%.

She also talked about risk-taking as a catalyst, again providing support for conduits of learning within an integrative higher education model. In such a form, education becomes more than the sharing of information concerning objects. Rather it is a path by which to guide students through risk, reason, and experience to places of epiphanies and ah-ha moments.

Brittany also talked about teaching with CRISPA in terms of providing her students with transformational catalysts that launch them into a new chapter, perspective, or dimension of experience. “Transactional” and “transformational” were words that surfaced often in our conversations. She shared that the transaction can only occur through multiple modalities, and that the aesthetic themes provide educators tools that help students get there:

Complexity is what underscores teaching and learning. To interrogate a truth or knowledge is to engage it from multiple perspectives. Community is essential to this as it provides a space where ideas can be shared freely. Community both flexes and holds ideas. . . . It is a backdrop as much as it is a net or stage. It’s the auditorium and engineering that both absorbs and expands the acoustics of space and thought.

She then went on to describe these kinds of catalysts as “magic.” Brittany, like Christy, also perceives her practice through the existential dimension. She said that it was here she came to realize that in order to get at the aesthetic attributes, an individual really

has to have an existential experience. Palmer and Zajonc (2010) enumerated these values to be inseparable from integral higher education. Their work identified multiple perspectives and ways of knowing as essential for students to experience the relationship between their studies and the purpose of their lives. Brittany's intentional use of CRISPA in college classrooms attends to this:

There needs to be a transaction of ideas through multiple modalities. Teaching and learning are complex and we need to have experiences as complex as teaching and learning are. So if we are really going to try to get at truth or knowledge, we need to interrogate it from multiple perspectives.

What brought Brittany to higher education is an example of a transformational catalyst as well. Her commitment to unanswered questions in her academic life and her passion for developing preservice teachers are akin to the intentions, beliefs, and motivations identified in other participants. Preservice teachers are precisely who Palmer and Zajonc (2010) were speaking to when they encouraged a call to action in support of an integrative education that deepens the field's understanding of the challenges, prospects, practices, and pedagogy that promote campus vitality. Brittany had affirmed this when she shared the following:

I realized that there were some questions that remained unanswered for me in my academic life and I wasn't going to be able to answer them being a classroom teacher. That's why I began my doctoral pursuit. I never really thought consciously about becoming a college classroom teacher, but that's sort of what happened. Mostly I was interested in curriculum and curriculum design and

especially the category of the null and the complementary as Moroye had coined. But I found myself more and more captivated by working with future teachers. So through my experience working with pre-service teachers, I realized this is an area I get a lot of—I get fed—in working with pre-service teachers. It inspires me. It’s a healthy place to be.

As an aesthetically-minded college educator who intentionally utilizes CRISPA, Brittany aims to get at those transformational opportunities and questions as often as she can. She intentionally talks with her students about having epiphanies and when/how ah-ha moments occur as a part of her facilitation style:

I try to get to those ‘why’ questions as often as possible. I talk to my students about epiphanies and places that they are when they have one. I assume that they have had one. But those ah-ha moments—I ask my students to try to put themselves in that place and bring that with them when they need to be recharged, when they need to be inspired, when they need transformation.

“The aesthetic,” Brittany further said, “includes conflict so that we may seek resolution.” As referenced in Chapter 4, conflict in art, literature, and learning allows for advancement and transcendence of the human experience.

The literature provides ample evidence of this theme, though current research has not presented how the intentions of those that utilize CRISPA in college classrooms may facilitate those deeply personal ah-ha moments. A major focus point of Palmer and Zajonc’s (2010) work, transformation, is also well supported by the aesthetic literature (Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 1998; Greene, 2001; Uhrmacher & Moroye, 2009), thus creating a

dynamic space for continued dialogue regarding the intersection of these topics for college classrooms (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2009; Booth, 2011; Khan & Law, 2015; Scott, 2002; Sill, 2001).

Applications of aesthetic mindedness. In summary, the intentions of aesthetically-minded college educators complement the goals of integrative forms of higher education and, thus, best practices for college classroom teaching and learning. The outcomes are as follows: (a) the wow experience that facilitates richly memorable moments in time that change and transform students; (b) forms of energy that infuse the college classroom with passion and enthusiasm; (c) innovative practices in teacher education that drive change within the profession; and (d) transformational catalysts that not only enhance the way individuals think about teaching and learning, but also how they work to align their academic pursuits with profession and purpose.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked, “How are aesthetic themes (CRISPA) operationalized in the classrooms of higher education?” To answer this question, I observed three of the seven participants—Brittany, David, and Michael—in their college classroom setting. Five significant themes emerged in relation to how these individuals’ intentions and, thus, the aesthetic themes operationalize in the classrooms of higher education: (a) orchestrating transposition, (b) stimulating recall and introspection, (c) synthesizing individualization, (d) composing interpretation, and (e) actualizing connoisseurship. In connecting the themes to the literature, I once again use Palmer and Zajonc’s (2010)

ideas to illuminate outcomes and propose further investigation in relation to the implications of the aesthetic themes for higher education.

When aesthetic themes are operationalized in the classroom, deepened recall and introspection, as well as interpretation occur. As discussed in Chapter 4, these themes surfaced as aesthetically minded college educators operationalized CRISPA through their teaching practices. Both themes were present most clearly in Michael's practice, providing support for the cultivation of experience according to integral models of higher education. Recall and introspection as well as interpretation offer students formal opportunities to pursue experiential learning in college while giving them the chance to live life's great questions in real time. Reflection is a key aspect of the integration of experience or service learning, and the intellectual framing that introspection provides enables real and lasting meaning-making.

Stimulating recall and introspection. Stimulating recall and introspection presented itself as CRISPA came to life in the classroom. Illuminated in this study as an engagement strategy that enhances reflection and memory retention, this concept also shares distinguishing features of the aesthetic experience. Dewey (1934) wrote that

aesthetic experience is thus not experience as transaction; it is not concerned with cause-effect or means-consequence relations rather that all the elements of our being that are displayed in special emphases and partial realizations are merged in such a way that there is an experience of immediate wholeness. (p. 274)

As the purpose of the aesthetic is to take us deeper into experience and meaning-making, by its very nature we are drawn more deeply into metacognition, connection-making, and a process that honors our memories and realizations.

For integrative higher education models, CRISPA allows for recall and introspection, internalizing divergent points of view for students while they author their own independent ones. Michael facilitates this process in the classroom. In Chapter 4, I illustrated this theme through classroom vignettes. In the following examples, Michael discusses perceptual lesson planning and the CRISPA framework:

“Think of it this way” [he might say to his class], “this week my goal for you, my intention, is to help you decide which lesson plan framework is the best for you and why. My intention is that you have an idea of these lesson plans and you are able to determine which one might be a good fit for you. Is that an objective or an intention? For me it’s more of an intention. If at the end of the week you think about your personality and preferences and you are able to determine which lesson planning structure is best for you, than I will feel that our time together was a success.” It’s like going camping—maybe instead of saying “students will make fire to succeed,” I might say, “students will gain valuable experiences at the end of our trip.”

In this excerpt, Michael is facilitating an opportunity to have a new experience, which according to Palmer and Zajonc (2010), may in turn result in a moment of transformation. Pedagogies of transformation honor experience and hold that intense, sustained, active, and experiential modalities of engagement are required to effect deeper changes for a new way of meaning-making (p. 105). College educators like Michael do this by intentionally asking students to grapple with previous perspectives and paradigms through introspective practices.

Various excerpts from Michael's practices reaffirm his commitment to honoring transformative pedagogy and thus concepts of experience as well as the outcomes of an aesthetically-minded practice. As detailed in the literature, Dewey's (1934) discourse on the aesthetic centers firmly on the awareness of what constitutes an aesthetic experience. Dewey also emphasized the process we go through to get there, saying that "under conditions of resistance and conflict, aspects and elements of the self and the world that are implicated in this interaction qualify experience with emotions and ideas so that conscious intent emerges" (p. 35).

Dewey (1934) went on to say that experience as aesthetic (of perception and enjoyment) is the conversion of resistance and tensions, of excitations that in themselves are temptations to diversion, into a movement toward an inclusive and fulfilling close (p. 56). We see Dewey's sentiments reflected in the responses of Michael's students as they move toward understanding, fulfillment, and learning that aligns their outward beliefs with their inner worlds:

Maybe when using CRISPA you can look at the standards even though it's not on the paper, and then you create your CRISPA lesson plan using that. It was hard, for example, in our Foundations class to think of something when you are not using the standards. "It's just hard because it's what we've always done." Still another says, "Why don't professors implement this lesson plan in earlier classes? I wonder if it's because it doesn't meet the standards or require the standards? I also wonder if teachers get to choose their own lesson plans."

The operationalization of recall and introspection is further illustrated in the following excerpt from Michael to his students:

Essential questions are like objectives but they're more open-ended therefore perhaps providing for broader outcomes. Eisner says that we become increasingly able to know the qualities of the aesthetic by our developed ability to experience the subtleties of form. We come to know aspects of our experience, interests, our intentions and ourselves by being increasingly able to experience them through essential questioning, meaningful dialogue and integrated discourse.

As Michael shares Eisner's (1998, 2002a, 2002b) teaching while purposefully integrating CRISPA, he operationalizes ideas presented in Palmer and Zajonc's (2010) transformative, contemplative, and experiential domains, allowing for a space to attend to meaning-making, purpose, and spirituality. Students in such settings become more fully present while also exhibiting deepened connection-making.

The research supports that engagement strategies such as those described above and which include enhanced recall and introspection may result in more reflective practices, as preservice teacher college students develop into professional educators (Allen, 1998; Balli, 2011). In addition, studies show that attrition and poor retention in higher institutions can be traced to low levels of reflective engagement and, thus, decreased abilities to retain critical subject matter (Johannsen, Rump, & Linder, 2013). Strategies and innovative frameworks such as CRISPA provide opportunities to enhance the development of episodic memories, deepening connection-making and reflective practices to influence outcomes in higher education in a meaningful way.

Composing interpretation. Operationalizing aesthetic themes also deepens educators' abilities to compose and apply interpretation for teaching and learning. Again, this is a prominent theme in Michael's practice. The ability to encourage interpretation, reflection, and contemplation for college students holds great significance for the goals and objectives of today's higher education institutions, as well as for society itself. Freire, as cited by Lewis (2012), echoed the sentiment, arguing that curiosity is transformed into epistemological reflection on the self and the world:

Thinking critically about practice, or today or yesterday makes possible the improvement of tomorrow's practice—in addition the more I acknowledge my own process and attitudes and perceive the reasons behind them, the more I am capable of changing and advancing from the stage of ingenious curiosity to epistemological curiosity. (as cited in Lewis, 2012, p. 29)

Freire's attention to curiosity as a catalyst for epistemological investigation provides evidence for how CRISPA in college classrooms can assist in developing individuals in holistic and meaningful ways. After all, the purpose of the academy, as Palmer and Zajonc (2010) wrote, is to offer a place where whole people, with whole minds and hearts, can lead us into tomorrow (p. v). These worthy goals are only possible through transformative practices such as that which the practice of composing interpretation allows for, alongside others that CRISPA helps to facilitate.

As noted previously, the concept of composing interpretation includes controlled, purposeful, or intentional approaches to the development and culmination of a series of connection-making events and, as such, provides support for the development of the *self-authoring mind* (Kegan, 1994). The self-authoring mind is traditionally a goal of higher education that challenges the unconscious cognitive structures in order to encourage the

development of new epistemologies (Kegan, 1994, p. 103). Composing interpretation is an application of the aesthetic themes that allows college students to reach this level of awareness.

Michael's classroom provides a stage for this type of awareness to take place. Utilizing composing interpretation, we see how Michael's use of CRIPSA helps students to think about the development of new epistemologies and, thus, Kegan's definition of the self-authoring mind. In the following instance, Michael shared transparently with his students his own process for composing interpretation and how the lessons he learned from teaching have been just as valuable than the lessons he taught:

So I thought it would be a tragedy if we went through this whole program and we never did this [referring to CRIPSA and perceptual lesson planning]. I coached football, kids liked me, I was nice and all—and once I switched to this, I had to start turning kids away because there weren't enough seats and I started winning awards. Kids were hanging out after class so it really just changed the way I thought.

As detailed in Chapter 4, Eisner (1998) said that what can be interpreted depends initially on awareness (p. 97). Quoting Freire, Lewis (2012) wrote on the subject as well, specifically describing interpretation as one that reawakens our curiosity by directing it toward the world, by revealing the truth of our social relations, and by articulating theory and practice so as to transform the world (as cited in Lewis, 2012, p. 30). Michael's practices demonstrate a passion for higher education models, where students are challenged to explore cross-cultural studies and worldviews radically differ from their

own and are thus encountered and appreciated (p. 107). These things only happen as a direct result of experience in relation to the objects and topics examined. CRISPA allows us to come into contact with this type of experience.

Throughout these areas of Michael's lessons, he utilizes many strategies to help his students deepen their interpretation regarding lesson planning. In one instance, Michael told a detailed story of taking his children on a camping trip. His use of storytelling and visuals allows his students to grapple with what it means to measure outcomes or learning more generally. He emphasized experience as well, providing support for the importance of interacting with one's learning—that learning is not always a clear path from A to B, but rather a personalized journey of connections and meaning-making:

If I were to take my children camping and say, "Your job is to build a fire. Building a fire is the objective of the camping trip." And I do the process in the right way. There is a logical order to how to build a fire. And at the end of camping, Miles, my youngest, can't build a fire but Virginia, my oldest, can. Miles is unsatisfactory or partially proficient or whatever because he can't build a fire. Let's say on the other hand, however, [Miles] had all these other meaningful experiences. He takes risks and he goes on a trail he never would have gone on and he climbs a mountain and he paddles a canoe. He may have other experiences that don't fit in the narrow scope of my objective that I don't want him to miss out on. Moments like this make us ask what the objective has to look like and what

success looks like. He doesn't build a fire, but he had all these other experiences that were super meaningful.

Ranciere (2013) discussed the role that aesthetics play in aiding the satisfaction of curiosity. On this position, and under the overarching theme of experience, Lewis (2012) wrote that curiosity does not concern the critique of appearance but rather the redistribution of appearance without end. In other words, curiosity becomes the aesthetic that does not unveil a deeper hidden meaning to the order of things, but rather interrupts the distribution of things themselves, allowing us to see that which is hidden in plain sight: the verification of the equality of intelligences (p. 33). Michael facilitates the opportunity for curiosity to underscore meaning-making and, thus, allows composing interpretation to take place as students reassemble the interrupted distribution, rebuilding ideas and sequences from imagination and connection-making, and applying the outcomes to new understandings through perceptivity and an evolving educational philosophy.

Lewis (2012) reframed Freire's ideas, saying that dialogic pedagogy reawakens our curiosity by directing it toward the world, by revealing the truth of our social relations, and by articulating theory and practice so as to transform the world. He goes on to say that epistemological curiosity and its scientific rigor enable us to "seek the reason for being of facts through the unveiling of hidden truths" (Lewis, 2012, p. 30).

Aesthetically-minded college educators exemplify this way of thinking and thus impact their students in ways that are supportive and influential to integrative higher education models

Actualizing connoisseurship. When aesthetic themes are operationalized in the classroom, actualizing connoisseurship takes place as well. This third prominent theme emerged primarily from my observations of Brittany’s practice. As defined in Chapter 4, connoisseurship comes from the Latin *cognoscere*, which means to know. In the arts, to know depends upon the ability to *see*, not merely to *look*. In higher education classrooms, CRISPA actualizes connoisseurship by placing value on quality and appreciation. We see connoisseurship actualized in Brittany’s practice in the excerpts from previously presented vignettes (see Chapter 4).

“Are any of you connoisseurs?” Brittany asked. “What is something that you appreciate to its finest degree?” Brittany let this question hang in the air. Around her, momentum was building. Gravity—Brittany had talked about it in a previous lesson. I imagined that the entire room was a whirlpool, all of its contents now moving in the same direction. Actualizing connoisseurship is important for higher education and education in general in that it supports contemplative practices for teaching and learning. Evidence shows an intersection of eros (love) and insight (knowing) in relation to the contemplative dimension (Zajonc, 2006). To appreciate is to know and to love. Connoisseurship lends itself to the complete aesthetic experience in that it includes an enlivening and conceiving element, definitive also of a contemplative experience (Hohr, 2013, p. 28).

For Palmer and Zajonc (2010), contemplation means to live not only the questions, but also the experiences, concepts, and ideas. Actualizing connoisseurship does this, and we see how Brittany artfully brings the methodology to life as she

operationalizes the aesthetic themes in her classroom. Zajonc (2009) examined contemplation in the spiritual and meditative realm. Wanting to give application to the work as well as rationale to his skeptics, he described a phenomenology of experience that in turn supports contemplative cognition. Here he writes, rather than thinking of our experiences as merely subjective impressions, we set aside all notions of a real world beyond experience and stay with the experience itself (p. 145).

Connoisseurship adds support for contemplative cognition. *Noticing ability*, according to Eisner (2002a), is the ability to recognize differences that are subtle but significant in a particular qualitative display. To do so, individuals must attend to the moment with all of their faculties, much like contemplation or meditation. True connoisseurship is a total immersion of love and appreciation. Artists understand this, and so do aesthetically-minded educators. The aesthetic themes elegantly present this opportunity for college students. Actualizing connoisseurship demonstrates this outcome. In another excerpt, Brittany shares the following: “Let me say it this way. Let me know if this makes more sense,” she asks, looking around the room. “You can be a connoisseur without being a critic, but you cannot be a critic without being a connoisseur.” She smiles, and I see Kyler, Ellie, Maria, and others smile too. They’re getting it. She continues:

Okay, so let’s bring this back to teaching. How might you apply this to an evaluation of teaching and learning? Subtlety, detail, and complexity? Would you recognize these in an evaluation? An educational critic and connoisseur would be

able to enter a classroom and understand the subtle details of what's happening—this is the theory of Elliot Eisner.

This type of exploration, this attention to detail—connoisseurship operationalized promotes change, and the very same kind of change the research supports is essential for college student development (Kegan, 1982). This happens as a result of what Eisner (1998) described as the way a connoisseur is expected to “attend to everything that is relevant either for satisfying a specific educational aim or for illuminating the educational state of affairs in general” (p. 71). Brittany does this as she draws her class to an image of a painting: “Let's begin with a description—tell me what you see here? I want you to really give me the details.” She calls her students the “docents” and says, “I want to hear from you all how you have brought these pieces together in one cohesive exhibit. Tell me how you came up with your story; provide us an overview of the artifacts.”

Palmer and Zanjonc (2010) further stated the following in his discourse on the element of contemplation as it relates to the classrooms of higher education:

Even in a time of increased emphasis on the pragmatics of education for employment, we see that students will wish to explore the values, meaning and purpose of their lives while in college. Parallel with the study of their major and mastery of marketable skills, students long for a forum that can address their inner or spiritual concerns thoughtfully and deeply. (p. 117)

According to integrative models, the engagement with the content of the class is made successful with the inclusion of reflective or contemplative exercises. Palmer and Zajonc (2010) went on to quote Rilke (1954 [1904]), stating that contemplation allows us to live the questions, experiences, concepts, and ideas that are a part of every educational situation, in the classroom or outside of it (p. 113).

In addition to promoting best practices for teaching and learning, connoisseurship in college classrooms is a powerful conduit for extending conversations that impact future teachers. Recent teacher effectiveness research supports the notion that students learn best from teachers who manage both the craft and the artistic dimensions of learning (Castro, 2010; Kelehear, 2008). Strategies that promote granular and detailed observations of students and the classroom offer preservice teachers the ability to develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions that honor critical reflection, thoughtful practice, and the ability to apply critique alongside appreciation (Eisner, 1998).

Lastly, when aesthetic themes are operationalized in the classroom, two final themes emerge: orchestrating transposition and synthesizing individualization. Brittany's practice most prominently brought transposition to life, while David's practice helped to illuminate qualities of synthesizing individualization. As defined in Chapter 4, transposition, both in music and philosophy, demonstrates the ability to shift an entire sequence while maintaining, if not enhancing, its integrity. In higher education classrooms, CRISPA allows for transposition through experiences that cultivate transference, metaphor, and representation.

Transformation, according to integrative forms of higher education (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010), occurs as a result of intense, sustained, experiential modalities of engagement. Transformation could also be described as resulting from the harnessing of adversity (Stoltz, 2015) or the tension between silence and noise (Robinson, 2014). One might consider transformation a type of alchemy for students. If alchemy turns lead into

gold, transformation turns conflict (cognitive or otherwise) into grit, persistence, tenacity, and resilience (Stoltz, 2015).

Orchestrating transposition. Brittany uses CRISPA and thus poetry and sculpture to help her students transpose their philosophy of education from a cognitive space to an emotional and spiritual space. This movement or reshaping may be described as a transformation. In essence, the outer facts of life may stay the same, but their significance to us and the actions that follow alter dramatically in the wake of such a shift. We see how Brittany artfully facilitates transposition and this enhanced understanding of the individual's view of self and world. Brittany says, "So tell me, what does it take to be artistic?" Kyler, a tall, slender young man dressed in a flannel shirt, jeans, and boots raises his hand and says, "Abstract thinking is artistic." Brittany responds, "So do you have to think of yourself as an artist or identify as an artist to think of yourself as artistic? That's interesting." People are nodding. Brittany says, "The reason I am focused on this is that it inevitably always happen—someone says I am not a writer, or I am not a teacher, or I am not an artist." She pauses. " So what does it take to think like an artist? To do art? Do you have to be able to define what art is? Should we begin there? What is art?"

Aesthetically-minded college educators are transformative. Transformative thinkers hold that a more intense, sustained, active, and experiential modality of engagement is required in order to effect the deeper changes required for a new way of making meaning (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010, p. 105). Orchestrating transposition allows for intellectual stimulation that focuses on promoting careful problem solving, novel ways of

thinking, intelligence building, and questioning previously held assumptions. The research shows that attending closely to the immediacy of the experience is a form of the aesthetic (Granger, 2006). Thus, through artistic engagement, individuals come to realize that the world is not to be learned and thrown aside; it should be continually reverted and relearned.

Brittany encourages her students to transpose their beliefs into their philosophy of education much like integrative practices challenge us to “lovingly hold the questions themselves, while developing faculties of insight that allow us to see and live the answers” (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010, p. 105). Palmer and Zajonc (2010) went on to say that, “living our way into the answers means to so change ourselves that we are capable of beholding and inhabiting a new world” (p. 105). The notion of “living our way into the answers” aligns to Brittany’s intentions for her students in that both encourage development of the mind, heart, and spirit while the authentic integrity of the individual is maintained if not enhanced in the process. Here, we see another example where a student in Brittany’s class demonstrates this kind of paradigm shift: A student from the group looks up, looks at his peers around the table, and then back at Brittany: “You’re supposed to be questioning life, right? In terms of our philosophy of education, I mean. So here’s the Haiku: Seeing deep inside/ Wondering how come or why/ We make the world thrive.” There is a new level of perception illustrated here. Another student from the same group speaks up. Her name is Emma. “You’re supposed to be looking deep inside, trying to question what your purpose is in life, how can you make society better, how can you make yourself better, and the economy; an individual task.”

This excerpt captures how CRISPA provide students with a space to move between the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual domains while allowing for transposition and transformation. These goals, which provide the aesthetic themes in college classrooms, also complement integrative models of higher education and provide for enriched dialogue between students and deepen student-to-student and student-to-instructor interactions. Whether in face-to-face settings or online, enlivened discourse as a result of enriched awareness—“wide-awakeness” (Greene, 2001) if you will—provides for the meeting of more diverse forms of inquiry (Young, 1997). In relation to the literature on student success in higher education, interactions resulting from transposition and thus threaded with transformative approaches to teaching and learning lead to feelings of motivation, empowerment, creativity, critical thinking, and overall improved engagement (Noland & Richards, 2014). In turn, these outcomes may lead to greater self-awareness and a deepened investment in learning for students in higher education.

Asking students to share openly, to think critically, and to provide a variety of solutions on a problem before arriving at a solution is a powerful strategy to help college students shift their thinking (Bogler, Caspi, & Roccas, 2013; Pounder, 2003). The research shows that students who experience this type of paradigm shift as a result of reflective and metacognitive practices feel more confident, committed, and elevated (Bass, 1985; Castro, Perinan, & Casillias, 2008; Pounder, 2006).

Synthesizing individualization. Synthesizing individualization has similar results. The difference between orchestrating transposition and synthesizing individualization is that to transpose knowledge is to shift and transform, whereas a

synthesis of individual beliefs, values, and experiences facilitates intersections of ideas and a myriad of meaningful and personal connections between self and world. This theme was highlighted in David's practice when his intentions operationalized in the classroom. According to Young (1997), aesthetics lived is individuation fulfilled. Given that individualization helps students pair various dimensions of consciousness as a process of transformation, individuation may help to develop the whole personality, thus providing benefits for students in higher education as they work to intertwine their intellectual pursuits with their purpose-driven passions.

Aesthetically-minded college educators use CRISPA to help “think the world together,” rather than “think it apart” (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010, p. 22). One way to do this is to facilitate memorable, meaningful experiences (i.e., wow experiences), which result in enriched pleasurable of consciousness (Lewis, 2012), and thus raises our appreciation for human potentiality. Moments such as this provide an opportunity for synthesis of an individual's inner and outer worlds, thus answering the critical questions worthy of the college student experience.

David facilitates this practice as he dialogues with his students about lesson planning for writing instruction. We see in the following excerpt evidence of the engaging quality of individualization, as a bilingual student provides personal perspective from the point of intersection of one's inner and outer worlds:

I think this ties into our text. When we talk about writing, we often talk about standard English—but if we look at our students especially if we are in a rural setting or racial setting or where there is a lot of cultural diversity, I think that we

are going to see students speaking the same dialect of English that is considered to be acceptable. I'm not sure that I agree with the idea of code switching; that in order to be successful you have to speak standard American English, but I do think that it's important to realize that not all students are going to have the same home experience of subject-verb agreement. Do we teach it as right and wrong? I think it's a fine line.

This type of introspection as a part of individualization plays an important role in an integrated model that honors experience, contemplation, and transformation (Barbezat & Bush, 2014). Introspection allows for the careful examination by students of their internal processes, thoughts, and feelings in order to gain deeper insight into themselves and the material of the course. In the excerpt above, we see how David helps to facilitate this type of meaningful personal inquiry among his college students, so they develop positive feelings and compassion for these types of important developmental intersections. Zach answers him. He is well spoken and instantly engaged:

There's research on grammar as a medium but there's also literary aesthetics. As English teachers, we have a responsibility to say, this is beautiful, this is art. I've been talking to a couple teachers and they are saying there is big push to using nonfiction texts rather than fiction and fantasy. I think it's unfortunate because while it provides useful information, it's dry. As a student, I wouldn't want to read it. I think that in terms of creating lasting life-long learners, it has to be more interesting.

Individualization through synthesis or introspection offers a range of extensions and transformations for traditional college teaching practices. According to the literature, such approaches help students more deeply understand the material and integrate third-person views into their own lives (Barbezat & Bush, 2014).

We see yet another example in the way that David's students respond to one another: "I think [the government is] seeing what jobs are available and they're looking to education as a medium to get a job," Ashton says to Zach. "Essentially, our sole responsibility is to learn to get jobs to get money, which from an artistic perspective is sad." Jessica jumps in again:

From a computer science perspective—learning that stuff takes a lot of dull reading. I know this from experience but if it's always like that I'm not going to want to read forever. That model was entrenched at the time of the common school. It was embedded in the industrial model and we're trying different models now like online, hybrid, and STEM. It feels like a delicate balance. Preparing students for a job and the workforce but also making them life-long learners.

Palmer and Zajonc (2010) wrote that transformative learning rests on an enriched view of the human being, one that affirms our multidimensional nature and fundamental malleability. They further stated that a prerequisite for an enduring shift in meaning-making is to place ourselves in the world of others (p. 107). Paradoxically, by practicing compassion, mindfulness, and introspection, we develop more fully in ourselves.

According to the literature, compassion as a part of contemplation (Zajonc, 2009) helps us reach a deeper sense of individualization, connecting students' academic lives with

concerns outside of the academy. The rich dialogue we see take place in David's classroom as a result of CRISPA and the aesthetic themes clearly demonstrates a level of critical thinking that seeks transformative, connected, contemplative solutions. David shared:

From an experiential standpoint, it [the aesthetic themes] means everything. Yes, experience is everything. Aesthetically, I can't live without it. We need to enjoy experience; we need to know it matters. Aesthetics sends messages. It creates feelings. It impacts the way we interpret and synthesize our world.

The research on integrative practices in higher education provides evidence of the value of experience in college classrooms (Bain, 2004; Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Eisner, 1998; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Young, 1997; Zajonc, 2009). Synthesizing individualization is important for college students in particular for these reasons as it, along with other applications of the aesthetic themes, provides for valuable experiences complementary to the goals of higher education.

Applications of CRISPA operationalized. In summary, the research supports that the aesthetic themes have the potential to encourage powerful outcomes for college students while helping individuals to connect in experiential, contemplative, and transformative ways. When highly intentional educators operationalize their practices, highly impactful learning takes place. CRISPA adds another layer to this, infusing the curriculum with qualities that: (a) stimulate recall, introspection, and episodic memories; (b) provide opportunity for interpretation, reflection, and contemplation; (c) facilitate connoisseurship and a deepened appreciation for the subtle intersections of one's

academic, personal, and spiritual life; (d) create conduits for transposition and significant shifts in thinking, teaching, and learning; and (e) allow for transformative experiences that synthesize multiple dimensions of one's identity in significantly meaningful ways.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked, "What is the significance of studying the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded college educators for higher education and education in general?" Several themes emerged in the study in response to this question that provide support for best practices in college classrooms and classrooms in general, while providing a set of engagement strategies for college students as well as current and future teachers. The following details how this research may impact current practice, policy, and the body of scholarship. Evidence is also given to the areas where this study addresses current gaps in the literature. Suggestions are made for how this research could be employed by educators and, as such, how the strategies presented in this study could impact practice. I also offer insight into how aesthetically-minded college educators and the aesthetic themes may concretely affect students in higher education and students in general.

Significance for higher education. The aesthetic themes for college classrooms are significant for a number of reasons. Primarily, they support integrative education practices that improve engagement and personal development for college students while attending to essential domains of knowledge, teaching, and learning in higher education. This intersection could play an essential role for higher education in terms of student success, and general measures of retention and graduation rates. By partnering best

practices in the academy with a research-based framework that is proven to engage students in classrooms across the nation, our colleges may achieve a level of recognition that students, teachers, and administrators would all define as “captivating.”

Indeed, to create a captivating space of learning is key regardless of level or sector. In its most fundamental state, authentic engagement is at the heart of all great teaching and learning. Utilizing CRISPA promotes these outcomes (Uhrmacher & Moroye, 2009). Moreover, aesthetically-minded educators who purposefully plan with CRISPA facilitate classroom environments that hold experiential, contemplative, and transformative practices for students. Practices that take place as a result of these dimensions allow for authentic, creative, independent, and critical modes of inquiry correlated to and supported by the student success research (Kuh et al., 2010). This study demonstrates how aesthetic mindedness and CRISPA, as a part of the college curriculum, elegantly connect the two bodies of scholarship while providing additional implications for current and future educators.

Those that identify as aesthetically minded and, as such, choose to teach with CRISPA are intentional about facilitating richly meaningful experiences, forms of energy, transformational catalysts, and innovative practices within the field. College educators who use CRISPA were found to communicate a deep sense of purpose, care, and compassion in their work (Uhrmacher, 2009). They also demonstrated a high commitment to student success and issues related to social justice. As such, the outcomes of this study point to a symbiotic relationship between inclination and intention in regards to aesthetic mindedness. In other words, those that are inclined to the aesthetic and are

therefore intentional about the themes listed above evolve their aesthetic mindedness as a result of their commitment to teaching and learning and, thus their use of the aesthetic (CRISPA). Evidence of this presented itself on a number of occasions where participants shared that the aesthetic themes were always a part of their practice, but that CRISPA gave them a vernacular by which to define, evolve, and integrate their goals.

As such, it may be argued that aesthetic mindedness can be taught and, thus, the intentions listed above can be more fully developed through an intentional presentation of experiences for students that innately nurture the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (CRISPA) in one's philosophy and practice. This observation lends itself to the possibility that aesthetic mindedness can be cultivated through the integration of carefully planned curriculum threaded with the aesthetic themes. In turn, current and future educators who choose to integrate an aesthetic minded philosophy are likely to influence a level of aesthetic mindedness in other educators as well.

A close friend and mentor recently said to me, "ripples make waves." Indeed they do, and CRISPA ought to be considered a powerful teaching tool, if not a disruptor for current higher education practice and policy. Defined as the "great credentials race" (Selingo, 2013), many of our colleges and universities have seemingly lost sight of what matters most. Instead, the implied offerings of a rapidly evolving job market driven by technical- and competency-based employment opportunities have in many cases resulted in an impractical approach to higher education. Coupled with increasing regulatory requirements and rapidly rising student debt quotas, the academy has succumbed all too often to pushing all students through a narrow pipeline without any regard for who they

are, what they believe in, and what they really want to do (Selingo, 2013). In an attempt to enroll graduate students as efficiently as possible, higher education has forgotten its essential and unequivocal role: to offer individuals an opportunity to connect their inner and outer worlds so that they may take part in and contribute to an ever expanding, ever evolving, entrepreneurial and innovative world. As evidenced by this study, aesthetic mindedness and CRISPA facilitates a powerful intersection where college classroom engagement meets integrative practices. Together, we find hope and a place where colleges may reclaim their fundamental goals while preparing students and future teachers for the global community that awaits them.

This call to action is imperative given the current landscape. At a time when the nation's college graduation rates are falling far below expectations (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015), and new teachers to the field are dropping out at the same rate, practices such as those produced by CRISPA in the college classroom should be deeply considered. Students and teachers alike often fail personally and professionally as a result of a lack of confidence, motivation and self-efficacy. Utilizing CRISPA and its transformative qualities offers an experience that in turn scaffolds growth, resilience, persistence, and perseverance (Stoltz, 2014; Zajonc, 2009) through opportunities to apply introspection, interpretation, transposition, synthesis, and connoisseurship as a part of one's personal journey. In the classroom or in one's career, this combination offers hope that students can be encouraged to persist and graduate, while teachers (current and future) can be inspired to persevere and grow.

To this end, and in support of teacher retention and development, the themes also provide new and innovative ways for educators to think about lesson planning and the curriculum (Uhrmacher et al., 2013). As a result, CRISPA could be seen as providing a conduit for developing preservice teachers' educational philosophies in an explicit, meaningful, and authentic way while providing exposure to impactful teaching practices (Uhrmacher & Moroye, 2009). Scholarship on teacher retention strategies provides a correlation between the development of explicit teaching philosophies and teacher retention (Eckert, 2011), thus adding support for CRISPA in preservice teacher education programs. Yet, the implications for CRISPA in higher education are broader still. Ultimately, and as detailed in the answers to Research Questions 1 and 2, CRISPA promotes a sense of happiness, well-being, personal insight, connection, reflection, gratitude, and even love (Barbezeat & Bush, 2014; Zajonc, 2009) as a result of the associated experiential, contemplative, and transformative dimensions that the aesthetic themes reside within when operationalized. As a result, individuals who experience the aesthetic themes during their college years may be more likely to internalize personal meaning-making, a joy for life-long learning, and a general sense of satisfaction with work and life as a result of connecting their inner and outer worlds. Thus, college may provide a foundation not only for the core subject matter and critical thinking skills required to evolve, but also for the cultivation of one's sense of self and purpose.

In sum, the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded college educators who utilize CRISPA complement and support integrative models of higher education and thus improved college practices. This is significant for higher education in the following

ways. First, aesthetically-minded college educators possess a set of intentions that serve the goals of integrative higher education, which include engagement strategies to educate the whole person while honoring knowledge, teaching, and learning as objectives of the academy. As such, these individuals are able to facilitate classroom experiences for students that deepen engagement, persistence, self-awareness, growth, and confidence (Young, 1997). The research shows that students that portray these behaviors are more likely to be successful in school and college in general (Schreiner et al., 2012). Positioned as a potential disrupter for today's higher education landscape, CRISPA breaks down impractical or mechanical approaches in the academy while providing an opportunity for authentic learning and development to take place. As college classroom graduation rates are at an all-time low, integration of CRISPA into higher education practices could result in improved retention measures and thus increased college completion rates.

Second, CRISPA holds significance and applications for college classroom educators who aim to enhance integrative learning by weaving enhanced outcomes into the culture, curriculum, and cocurriculum of our colleges and universities. The themes that emerged in this study are associated with high levels of intrinsic motivation and professional satisfaction for educators (Kuh et al., 2005). Educators who utilize CRISPA communicate a deep sense of purpose, care, and compassion in their work (Uhrmacher, 2009). They are highly committed to student success and issues related to social justice. Application of the themes perhaps enlivens the teaching process itself, providing support for the research on lesson planning with CRISPA and thus facilitating a meaningful, joy-filled experience for educators that is creative, authentic, cathartic, inspiring, and deeply

personal (Uhrmacher et al., 2013). This process is symbiotic in that teaching with CRISPA in turn seems to deepen one's sense of aesthetic mindedness. Exploration and implementation of CRISPA may therefore be associated with greater college educator satisfaction, performance, and retention.

Future teachers benefit from the aesthetic themes also. In short, the aesthetic themes can be taught as a part of preservice teacher education programs and subject matter. Integration of the aesthetic themes both explicitly and implicitly allows students an opportunity to develop an educational philosophy that includes perceptual teaching practices alongside behaviorist and constructivist approaches for teaching and learning (Uhrmacher et al., 2013). The development of explicit teaching philosophies has been correlated to new teacher retention. Moreover, providing CRISPA as an additive which can be used fluidly as a lens, framework, lesson-planning template, or engagement strategy presents preservice teachers with a diverse and flexible set of teaching tools that ensures best practices for the future field. As such, implementation and the realization of the aesthetic themes in college teacher programs hold powerful implications for new teachers in the profession. In essence, CRIPSA not only helps to develop these characteristics inside the hearts and minds of new teachers, but also helps to ensure that they are better equipped for the classrooms that await them.

Third, the aesthetic themes in college classrooms helps to address the whole human being—mind, heart, and spirit—in ways that promote social consciousness for our future on this fragile planet. In general, the experiential, contemplative, and transformative aspects of CRISPA in the college classroom provide an additional layer of

significance for higher education. Ultimately, the aesthetic themes provide support for a set of practices that help individuals align the ah-ha moments of their inner and outer worlds. Associated with deepened awareness, metacognition, reflection, spirituality, and personal meaning-making, the themes act as conduits that help individuals cultivate their purposes, passions, and callings (Barbezat & Bush, 2014). This is deeply significant not only for college students navigating their college years, but for what comes afterward—indeed, the “afterward” is the greatest reason to examine the application of the aesthetic themes for college classrooms. The aesthetic themes in college classrooms provide an opportunity to honor this deeply personal take-away alongside the goals of today’s higher education institutions.

Significance for education in general. The themes that emerged in relation to the intentions of aesthetically-minded educators and their practices not only provide great implications for higher education, but also for education in general. As described above, the themes provide support for a set of best practices that, when operationalized, lead to a set of engagement strategies that are as powerful for students as they are for teachers. In addition, the themes that emerged in this study provide additional support for Uhrmacher and Matthew’s research (2005) regarding aesthetics in the curriculum that found the themes, regardless of level or sector, teach students to make meaning in their world by engaging their senses. They provoke imaginative thought and enable us to secure meaning from a variety of media and forms while broadening modes of presentation (p. 180).

The significance of the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded educators also provides additional support for the transformational domain of arts education, which holds core implications for education in general in that it aims to facilitate a rethinking of education from aesthetic and artistic views. In the transformational domain, the goal is not h to change the curriculum per se as it is to change people—first teachers, and then students (Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2009). These outcomes are described in more detail below.

Best practices for teaching and learning. As discussed, the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded educators hold significance for education in general. For example, the first set of key themes (i.e., wow experience, transformational catalysts, forms of energy, and innovative practices in teacher education) constitutes a set of best practices associated with belief systems and philosophies applicable across sectors, grade levels, and institutions. Moreover, these themes, as well as a sense of an aesthetic mindedness, can be taught to teachers and students alike; meaning current and future teachers can benefit from their outcomes through purposeful and intentional integration into the curriculum. We see additional implications for these themes in the following ways.

The wow experience provides teachers and students with a rich and memorable experience accompanied by awe, surprise, and fascination. It is bold, bright, and richly memorable. The wow moment is valued and treasured, and transforms us and our perceptions. Easily recalled, the wow moment might takes us back to a point in time while also allowing us to be fully present—it is captivating and worthy of

connoisseurship. Students, teachers, and future teachers can benefit from cultivation of this practice through the incorporation of CRISPA into one's philosophy and approach to teaching and learning in order to deepen meaning making and engagement.

Innovative practices in teacher education ensure that our teachers and students are able to try on various narratives in order to look more clearly at themselves as well as at the larger world. This type of intention advocates for leadership, innovation, and care. At its heart, innovation in teacher education might be viewed as a grassroots effort to impact legislation and the field in general by ensuring intrinsic motivation, positive psychology, integrative models, transformational experiences, and creativity for teachers, future teachers, classrooms, and students. These types of practices have great significance for education in general as they assist in addressing some of today's toughest questions in relation to the field, including those related to the common core, technology, the role of social media, politics, high-stakes testing, school leadership, school climate, and perhaps most importantly, preservice teaching programs.

Transformational catalysts launch teachers and students from one place in their lives to another. In higher education, CRISPA can help by providing opportunities for metacognition, reflection, and the development of personal meaning-making. This is significant as it helps things to come together—the epiphany where both conflict and resolution play a part. For students and teachers across the sectors, transformational catalysts as a best practice for teaching and learning allow individuals to grow into their personal and professional philosophies while gathering the courage and inspiration to take the next step. Encompassing the powerful implications of each aspect of CRISPA,

transformational catalysts honor the purpose of education in general by helping individuals realize what it means to be a human being navigating the nuanced dimensions of human experience.

Forms of energy for teachers and students relates to energy, impulsion, and heightened awareness. Deeply committed to change, advocacy, and social justice, forms of energy is as much about pushing against the current as it is finding the flow. It provides evidence for the importance of teaching at different intervals, and for finding ways to integrate and implement that impact people, places, and things in meaningful ways. At a time when education is in need of passionate change, this theme provides support for best practices that inspire students and teachers to teach and learn with a heightened intention, awareness, and frequency.

In addition to examining the intentions of seven aesthetically-minded college educators, I also observed closely the practices of three of my participants. Through observation, five additional key themes emerged (i.e., orchestrating transposition, stimulating recall and introspection, synthesizing individualization, composing interpretation and actualizing connoisseurship). Individuals who experience CRISPA as a part of the curriculum—whether as a student in relation to their subject matter, through a preservice teaching program, or through a professional development opportunity—have the opportunity to cultivate a set of universal engagement strategies applicable to any classroom, level, or sector. The significance of these additional themes is illustrated as follows.

Orchestrating transposition occurred as a result of an articulation and representation of a concept or learning outcome related to art or poetry. In higher education, CRISPA allows for transposition through experiences that cultivate transference, metaphor, and representation in relation to deepened engagement and the ability to demonstrate application across multiple modalities. When transposition occurs through forms of representation including mediums such as music, art, dance, speech or text, or interdisciplinary subject matter, imagination is enlivened and we are able to move beyond ourselves to create deeply personal and meaningful take-aways (Eisner, 1994).

Integration of the aesthetic themes also provides significance for engagement as it relates to recall and introspection. Aesthetics arouse several areas of the brain, including those responsible for wide-awakeness (Greene, 1978), flow (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990), and episodic memories (Uhrmacher, 2009). When elements of CRISPA are present in the classrooms of higher education or education in general, contemplation, reflection, and introspection occur for students. Such practices allow students to examine concepts more deeply, which leads to opportunities for greater connection and insight. These outcomes are significant for students and teachers alike in that they allow individuals to come to their own conclusions, again making deeply personal meaning from new information and ideas while also inspiring greater awareness, self-conception, and inquiry (Barbezat & Bush, 2014).

Yet another essential outcome of the aesthetic themes in the classroom is the unique capability to help individuals synthesize various nuances of their inner and outer lives so as to give way to transformation, growth, and personal development. This

engagement strategy holds significance for education as college students in particular are more likely to thrive and achieve greater academic and personal success when their internal beliefs align with outside perspectives, perceptions, and expectations. In essence, the ability to synthesize individualization lends itself to the cultivation of a student mindset, which directly relates to students' confidence, sense of self-efficacy, motivation, and self-esteem (Schreiner et al., 2012). A student's mindset shapes the core of their whole self and how they operate within their world. For teachers, the ability to facilitate individualization can be likened to the metaphor of the art of alchemy in that a key component is that transformation (Barbezat & Bush, 2014). Transformation ultimately leads to self-transformation while honoring inseparable dimensions of physical, sensory, emotional, and spiritual consciousness.

The ability to compose interpretation in a way that enhances insight and interpretation is yet another significant theme in this study. This outcome also holds significance for education in general in that students achieve a certain level of critical consciousness as a result of such practices. Moreover, this aspect of the operationalized aesthetic themes provides for the development of autonomous individuals who can think for themselves and are actively attending to the world around them. Teachers and students alike can benefit from this powerful teaching tool while facilitating classroom environments that inspire individuals to be mindful of principles such as fairness, respect, and human integrity while assessing the guiding principles by which they live (Greene, 1978).

Actualizing connoisseurship is the last and final theme that emerged in this study as a result of the aesthetic themes. Connoisseurship, which takes its lead from literature, theater, film, music, and the visual arts, holds great significance for students, teachers, and classrooms in general. At any grade level and across the sectors, connoisseurship for education provides a set of outcomes founded in aspects of quality, appreciation, attentiveness, recognition, and perception (Eisner, 2002a). Connoisseurship leads reflective practitioners to ask themselves, “What can we learn from a careful examination of artistry? What can we learn from a careful examination of the classroom?” (Schon, 1987). Those who care deeply about the art of teaching can benefit greatly from the kind of knowing connoisseurship reveals to us. In this way, connoisseurship as an outcome of the aesthetic themes holds great significance for students, teachers, and future teachers alike as a practicum, pedagogy, and practice.

Further Research

The themes that emerged in this study in relation to the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded college educators hold significance for higher education and education in general. Those interested in enhancing college classroom practices and the college student experience as it relates to persistence and thus completion may benefit from reading about the philosophy and practices of the participants included in this study. However, there is still much research to be done.

One possible limitation of this study was the small snowball sampling of participants. As described in Chapter 2, each of the seven participants had a connection to the University of Denver and as such may be seen as a part of an aesthetically-minded

family of scholars with roots tied to the AEIC, the Morgridge College of Education, and the associated research of the associated creation of CRISPA. Though this intimate view of CRISPA allowed for a thorough understanding of this school of thought, a replicate study with a larger random sample would add variation and validity to the findings.

Another consideration for future research lies in the possibility of influence, or what one might describe as nature versus nurture. Each of the seven participants interviewed in this study had been exposed to the arts through personal and familial relationships; this was viewed as an influence essential to the development of their educational practice and philosophy. As such, further research may also investigate the natural mindset of aesthetically-minded educators and the outcomes associated with a natural proclivity versus a learned practice of aesthetic ways of teaching and learning.

Closing Comments

The meaning of your life is to find your gift; the purpose of your life is to give it away (Picasso as cited in Hager, 2014, p. 200).

This study aimed to investigate the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded college educators and their use of aesthetic themes (CRISPA) in the classroom. These topics were explored through interviewing and observing participants under the qualitative framework of educational connoisseurship and criticism. Three research questions guided this study: (a) What are the intentions of aesthetically-minded educators who purposefully utilize CRISPA in higher education? (b) How do the aesthetic themes (CRISPA) operationalize in college classrooms? and (c) What is the significance of the intentions and practices of aesthetically-minded educators for higher education and for

education in general? This study holds that the applications of the aesthetic themes (CRISPA) for higher education are significant as they inspire deepened engagement for students and teachers alike in ways that hold great promise for today's colleges and universities.

First, aesthetically-minded college educators who are intentional about their use of CRISPA in the classroom provide support for essential domains of an integrative model of higher education including the enrichment of knowledge, teaching, and learning. What may be described as the wow experience, innovative practices in teacher education, forms of energy, and transformational catalysts are in essence a set of best practices that aim to enhance learning, student satisfaction, perceptual knowledge, episodic memory retention, meaning-making, creativity, and overall engagement in college classrooms.

Second, CRISPA operationalized in the classrooms of higher education provides support for the cultivation of experience, contemplation, and transformation. Here again, we find opportunities to infer implications of the aesthetic themes as a result of what may be described as stimulating recall and introspection, composing interpretation, actualizing connoisseurship, orchestrating transposition, and synthesizing individualization. These outcomes are particularly useful when considering the design and development of curricular activities, differentiation strategies, facilitation styles, and best practices that enable the implementation of an integrative framework for higher education.

Third, the aesthetic themes help us to address guideposts of inquiry regarding the purpose and aims of higher education. The themes facilitate the reconceptualization of

pedagogy and practice in ways that may inform how educators awaken the deepest potential in students. This is a result of the fact that when the aesthetic themes are present, students experience enhanced engagement, persistence, self-awareness, and confidence. In addition, the themes may also help us to consider ways that we can facilitate an integrative model into the college curriculum and culture by attending to knowledge, teaching, and learning while strengthening intrinsic motivation and satisfaction for students and educators alike. The themes have been found to enliven the teaching process itself, therefore adding benefit and value for preservice teacher programs as well as future teachers. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, the themes allow us to address the whole human being, mind, heart, and spirit, facilitating experience, contemplation, and transformation as students integrate their inner and outer worlds through deepened awareness, reflection, spirituality, and meaning-making.

In sum, the aesthetic themes are significant for higher education and education in general in that they provide for universal engagement strategies and a set of best practices applicable at all levels and across sectors. This is mostly due to the fact that by its very nature, the aesthetic experience is a captivating one. As such, it is capable of inspiring students to not only deepen their intellectual pursuits, but also to achieve greater success in college and in life.

“Enter With Your Own Gift”

Vocation is the place
where the heart’s deepest gladness
meets the world’s deep hunger

(Buechner as cited by Palmer & Zajonc, 2010, p. vii)

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APPENDIX A: TIMELINE

June 2013: Defend Proposal

June 2013: Submit Application to IRB

July 2013- December 2013: Data collection and analysis

December 2013- May 2015: Data analysis; writing of dissertation chapters

Fall 2015: Defense of dissertation

APPENDIX B: CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING AESTHETICALLY-MINDED
COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS

1. Is a teacher of higher education;
2. Has an understanding of The Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (CRISPA; either through coursework or research);
3. Has a philosophy of education that includes aesthetics and the aesthetic themes for teaching and learning; and
4. Intentionally utilizes the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (CRISPA) in college classroom instruction.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW INVENTORY FOR AESTHETICALLY-MINDED
COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS

1. Please tell me what inspired you to become a college classroom teacher?
2. Where did you receive education/training in the Six Dimensions of Teaching and Learning?
3. What is your current personal philosophy of education?
4. Were aesthetics or arts education a part of your philosophy of education prior to CRISPA?
 - a. If not, what experiences, education or understandings contributed to the world-views that shaped your philosophy of education?
 - b. If so, what experiences, education or understandings contributed to including aesthetics in your philosophy of education?
5. How do you plan/design/develop college curriculum using CRISPA?
6. How do you personally define each aspect of CRISPA?
7. How long have you been teaching with CRISPA?
8. Why do you choose to teach with CRISPA?
9. What are your intentions for your students?
10. Do you make your intentions clear to your students? If so, why? If not, why?
 - a. How do your students respond when you discuss aesthetics and/or CRISPA?
 - b. Do your students initiate discussions or questions related to aesthetics and CRISPA?
11. Do you feel comfortable expressing your aesthetic-mindedness in your professional life?
 - a. Do your colleagues ask you about teaching with aesthetics and/or CRISPA?

- b. Has your aesthetic-mindedness and/or aesthetic-minded beliefs ever been questioned or dismissed?
- 12. What do you believe are the key ingredients to helping college students to successfully complete their college program and graduate?
 - a. Does teaching with CRISPA support these outcomes? If so why?
 - b. If not, how do you as a college classroom teacher help students achieve these outcomes?
- 13. If you were to use a metaphor to describe how you think about your practice, what would it be?
- 14. Tell me about your classroom environment. What do you attend to most in the physical environment?
- 15. Do you have anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX D: OBSERVATION GUIDE FOR AESTHETICALLY-MINDED
COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS

Date of Observation: _____

Location: _____

Instructor: _____

College: _____

Course: _____

Students/Year: _____

Topic/Lesson: _____

Lesson Objectives: _____

Time of Observation: _____

Length of Observation: _____

I. Curricular Dimensions

- A. Are the instructor's intentions evident in the lesson? If so how?
 - a. How does the instructor communicate his/her intentions?
 - b. How are the instructor's intentions attended to in the curriculum planning process?
- B. What is the topic and objective of the lesson?
- C. How is content organized?
- D. What types of learning opportunities are present?
- E. How is CRISPA introduced into the lesson?
- F. Is the CRISPA framework utilized in an explicit or implicit way?
- G. How is the lesson framed?
 - a. Who frames the activities? (ie teacher, students, curriculum guide)
- H. Describe the operational curriculum.
 - a. What happens when/after CRISPA is introduced?
 - b. What indicators of aesthetic themes in the learning environment are present? (*See Uhrmacher, 2009*)
 - i. Euphoric experiences
 - ii. Well-conceived lessons

- iii. Rich learning experiences
- iv. Integration of various disciplines
- v. Enhanced creativity
- vi. Connections through a non-linear approach
- vii. Open opportunities to aesthetic educational experiences
- viii. Shared learning
- ix. Negotiation skills
- x. Communication
- xi. Caring environment
- c. How does CRISPA impact the classroom environment?
- d. How does CRISPA impact students?
- e. What language is used to describe each aspect of CRISPA?
 - i. What language does the instructor use?
 - ii. What language do students use?
- f. Are variations on the themes present?
- g. Does CRISPA appear to disrupt the curriculum? If so how?
- h. Does CRISPA appear to compliment the curriculum? If so how?
- i. Is the lesson successful? Do students feel successful? Describe.
 - i. How is success measured and/or assessed?
 - ii. Does CRISPA make the lesson successful/more successful? If so how?
 - iii. If CRISPA does not make the lesson more successful, what does?
- I. Describe the received curriculum.
 - a. What is this classroom/lesson experience like for students?
 - b. How do students respond to CRISPA?
 - c. What language do students use to describe their learning as a result of CRISPA?
- J. Describe the null curriculum.
 - a. Because the instructor focused on CRISPA what was not focused on?
 - b. As there is a prefigured focus, is there an element of the lesson or curriculum that is unanticipated? If so, does this unanticipated event command special attention?

II. Pedagogical Dimensions

- A. Mediation and Variation
 - a. What similarities and differences exist in how CRISPA is taught in various college classrooms?
- B. What is being taught in addition to CRISPA?
- C. What cues and content are utilized in support of the lesson?
- D. What genres of performance are present in the lesson?
 - a. What styles are present within genres?

- b. What individual pedagogical signature does the instructor appear to present?

III. Additional Questions/Observations