Performed Disciplines/Collaborative Disciplines: Becoming Interdisciplinary in Higher Education

DISSERTATION

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By

Courtnie N. Wolfgang, MA, BFA
Graduate Program in Art Education

The Ohio State University

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Dissertation Committee:

James H. Sanders III, Advisor
Eugene W. Holland
Deborah L. Smith-Shank
Sydney Walker
ABSTRACT

This doctoral study concerns itself with the challenges and potentials of engaging in interdisciplinary collaborations in higher education. As a participant/researcher in the study, I was a member of a cohort of three graduate student teaching associates that engaged in mindful examinations of our disciplinary subjectivities and the processes of becoming interdisciplinary. Further, the cohort explored the tensions of being disciplinary subjects and, through narrative and visual arts-based practices, made attempts to alleviate some of those tensions. I suggest that one might engage in strong interdisciplinary work by allowing oneself to depart somewhat from codes of disciplinary identity. I use the word “departure” meaning “a different approach,” not to suggest an exodus from disciplinary identity or practice, but acknowledge the advantages of the codes of a discipline that serve to ground one’s identity and practice. The theorizing of such a departure is significantly informed by both Feminist theory and the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.

In order to understand the process of becoming interdisciplinary, the methodology of the study includes three group interviews, the sharing of individual disciplinary approaches to curriculum, and participant reflections on the proceedings of the study. These methods were employed to help answer the primary research question, which is:

What are the potentials of changed disciplinary performance and identity resultant from
mindful interdisciplinary collaboration? Using a content analysis approach, I identified emergent questions through which the findings of the study were also analyzed. Those emergent questions are:

1. What are the tensions associated with disciplinary performance in regard to student expectations of the discipline?

2. How might interdisciplinary collaboration alleviate tensions or limitations embedded in a disciplinary identity?

3. How does an interdisciplinary body perform?

I consider the affective investments the participants have in their disciplinary identities, the usefulness of the discipline, and the potentials for renegotiated disciplinary identity in regard to pedagogy. I also call for future research in the areas of interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and post-disciplinary practices that might create more vibrant learning communities.
DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to Genevieve and Lola.
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First, I’d like to thank all my colleagues, friends, and mentors at The Ohio State University. I was constantly inspired by the good work being done at this institution, and expect I will continue to be for the rest of my career.

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VITA

1999.............................................................BFA Photography, The University of Georgia
2001.............................................................BA Art Education, The University of Georgia
2002 – 2007.................................................High School Visual Arts Educator
2008 – 2010.................................................University Supervisor of Art Education

Student Teachers, The Ohio State University

2010 – 2011.................................................Graduate Teaching Associate, The Ohio State

University

2011 – Present.............................................Instructor of Art Education, The University of

South Carolina

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field:  Art Education
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **ABSTRACT** ............................................................................................................................. ii
- **DEDICATION** ............................................................................................................................ iv
- **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS** ............................................................................................................... v
- **VITA** .......................................................................................................................................... vi
- **TABLE OF CONTENTS** ............................................................................................................. vii
- **LIST OF FIGURES** ................................................................................................................... xiii
- **PROLOGUE** .............................................................................................................................. 1
- **CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION** .......................................................................................... 12
  - 1.01 *Background to the Study* ................................................................................................... 12
  - 1.01.01 *Discipline and Interdisciplinarity* ................................................................................ 13
  - 1.01.02 *Operational Definitions of Discipline, Interdiscipline, and Transdiscipline* ............ 15
  - 1.01.03 *Theorizing Disciplinary Departures* ........................................................................... 17
  - 1.01.04 *Practiced Disciplinary Departure* ................................................................................ 19
  - 1.02 *Statement of the Problem* ............................................................................................... 20
  - 1.03 *Primary Research Question* ............................................................................................ 21
1.04 Supporting Subquestions .......................................................... 21

1.05 Parameters of the Study ............................................................ 22

1.06 Overview of the Study ............................................................... 23

1.06.01 Arts-Based Research .......................................................... 23

1.06.02 Participatory Action Research ............................................. 25

1.06.03 Theory and the Study ......................................................... 27

1.06.04 Overview of Methods ......................................................... 29

1.07 Significance of the Study .......................................................... 32

1.08 Chapter Descriptions ............................................................... 34

1.08.01 Chapter Two – The Review of Literature .......................... 34

1.08.02 Chapter Three – Methods .................................................. 35

1.08.03 Chapter Four – Presentation of Data ................................. 36

1.08.04 Chapter Five – Analysis ..................................................... 36

1.08.05 Chapter Six – Conclusions ............................................... 38

CHAPTER TWO – THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE .............................. 39

2.01 Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity ....................................... 42

2.01.01 The Usefulness of Discipline .............................................. 43

2.01.02 The Limits of the Discipline .............................................. 44

2.01.03 Interdisciplinarity ............................................................. 45
2.01.04 In-between Spaces ................................................................. 46

2.02 Feminism, Performance, and Discipline ..................................................... 47

2.02.01 Judith Butler and Performance ......................................................... 47

2.02.02 Performance, Naming, and Norms .................................................... 49

2.02.03 Performance and Disciplinary Boundary Crossing ............................ 52

2.03 Deleuze and Guattari ............................................................................ 55

2.03.01 Intersections of Deleuzo-Guattarian and Feminist Thoughts .............. 57

2.03.02 A Thousand Plateaus ...................................................................... 59

2.04 Navigating Interstitial Spaces - Arts-based Practices and Collaboration...... 62

2.04.01 A Rationale for Arts-based Research Practices ................................. 63

2.04.02 Narrative Research Methods ............................................................ 65

2.04.03 Visual Research Methods ................................................................. 70

2.04.05 Participatory Action Research and Transformation ............................ 73

CHAPTER THREE – METHODS ....................................................................... 76

3.01 Research Questions and Proceedings ..................................................... 77

3.02 Institutional Review and Participant Selection ........................................ 78

3.03 Establishing the Participant Cohort ......................................................... 80

3.04 Proceedings of the Initial Cohort Meeting .............................................. 82

3.05 Coding and Emergent Themes from the Initial Cohort Meeting ............. 83
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>Communicating Disciplinary Performances Visually</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.06.01</td>
<td>Generating Word Clouds from the Initial Meeting</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.06.02</td>
<td>Articulating Disciplines in Images and Objects</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>Coding the Second Phase</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>An Interdisciplinary Investigation of White Privilege</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>Coding the Third Phase</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Collaboration of Curricular Design</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>Conclusion to Methodology Chapter</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>CHAPTER FOUR – PRESENTATION OF DATA</strong></td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>Participants of the Study</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>The Initial Cohort Meeting</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.02.01</td>
<td>Articulated Disciplinary Identity and Performance</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.01.02</td>
<td>Experiences with Interdisciplinarity</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.01.03</td>
<td>Articulating Values of Our Disciplines</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.01.04</td>
<td>Tensions Associated with Disciplinary Performance</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>Visual Disciplinary Articulations</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.02.01</td>
<td>Word Clouds</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.02.02</td>
<td>Disciplines in Images and Objects</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.02.03</td>
<td>Interdiscipline in Images and Objects</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chapter Four – Further Interdisciplinary Exploration and Reflection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>An Interdisciplinary Investigation of White Privilege</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>Further Interdisciplinary Exploration and Reflection</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.04.01</td>
<td>The Collaborative Document</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.04.02</td>
<td>Follow-up Reflections</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chapter Five – Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>The Initial Interview</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.01.01</td>
<td>How Do You Perform Your Discipline?</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.01.02</td>
<td>Articulating the Tensions of Disciplinary Identity and Performance</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.01.03</td>
<td>Alleviating the Tensions of Disciplinary Identity and Performance</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.01.04</td>
<td>Performing Interdisciplinary Bodies</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.02</td>
<td>The Second Interview</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.02.01</td>
<td>How Do You Perform Your Discipline?</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.02.02</td>
<td>Articulating the Tensions of Disciplinary Identity and Performance</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.02.03</td>
<td>Alleviating the Tensions of Disciplinary Identity and Performance</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.02.04</td>
<td>Performing Interdisciplinary Bodies</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>The Third Interview</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.03.01</td>
<td>How Do You Perform Your Discipline?</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.03.02</td>
<td>Articulating the Tensions of Disciplinary Identity and Performance</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.03.03</td>
<td>Alleviating the Tensions of Disciplinary Identity and Performance</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1. Word cloud of first interview transcript ........................................... 117
Figure 4.2. Lola’s responses from the first interview ........................................... 118
Figure 4.3. Genevieve's response from the first interview ................................. 118
Figure 4.4. Courtnie's responses from the first interview ................................. 119
Figure 4.5. Lola's response: How do you perform your discipline? .................. 120
Figure 4.6. Genevieve's response: How do you perform your discipline? ......... 120
Figure 4.7. Courtnie's response: How do you perform your discipline? ............ 121
Figure 4.8. Lola’s response: Tensions associated with disciplinary identity ........ 122
Figure 4.9. Genevieve’s response: Tensions associated with disciplinary identity 122
Figure 4.10. Courtnie’s response: Tensions associated with disciplinary identity 123
Figure 4.11. Lola’s disciplinary story in images and objects ......................... 126
Figure 4.12. Genevieve’s sequence of images (Part 1) .................................. 128
Figure 4.13. Genevieve’s sequence of images (Part 2) .................................. 129
Figure 4.14. Genevieve’s sequence of images (Part 3) .................................. 130
Figure 4.15. Genevieve’s sequence of images (Part 4) .................................. 131
Figure 4.16. Genevieve’s sequence of images (Part 5) .................................. 133
Figure 4.17. Courtnie’s disciplinary story in images .................................... 138
Figure 4.18. Genevieve’s selections from “outside” of her disciplinary identity .... 139
Figure 4.19. Courtnie’s selections from “outside” of her disciplinary identity............. 141

Figure 4.20. Lola’s selections from “outside” of her disciplinary identity.................. 142

Figure 4.21. Collaborative interdisciplinary identity................................................. 144

Figure 4.22. Screen capture of the electronic document........................................... 154
PROLOGUE

This is a story of becoming interdisciplinary, but it begins with a story of my becoming an artist/educator/researcher. While the focus of the dissertation study and this document is on collaboration that explores the potentials of becoming interdisciplinary, my own beginnings and positionality contribute significantly to how I arrived at the study and where the findings are likely to take me in the future. It is a story of a split subject, of a subject tossed about on a restless sea of territory (re)negotiation, a subject caught between worlds of art-making, pedagogy, and academic research.

Becoming Artist/Educator/Researcher

Part I: Becoming Artist

I began my proceedings self-identifying as an artist. My work as an undergraduate in a bachelor of fine arts program for photography was primarily concerned with formal elements of art-making. I understood art-making as a solitary practice, an expression of my being. Therefore, my identity and success as an “artist” was contingent upon the singularity of “being artist.” The work I produced was, at times, reflective. I became increasingly interested in narrative qualities of image-making, experimenting with text and image and visual storytelling, and therefore began a process of re-imagining the
multiplicities of artist, image-maker, storyteller, and constructor of meaning external of my personal “being.”

Part II: Becoming Artist/Educator

When I began teaching, I found my relationship to media and process even more changed. The translation of practice at a university school of art and practices at k-12 schools in the art room was a terrain of serious negotiation. Teaching studio practice in an underfunded arts program while pushing a cart loaded down with 100 lbs of clay and drawing paper made me long for the salad days as an art student, but it also was the start of my strong interest in addressing issues of access in the arts and in arts programs. I learned to do a lot with a little, and where my resources fell short I chose to fill the gaps with a designed curriculum that encouraged inquiry, self-reflection, and meaning-making. My priorities shifted from product to process, and seeing the process as a process of becoming, developing units around themes becoming agents of change, becoming self, becoming citizens, and becoming critical consumers of visual culture.

I saw the art room as a space where, through makings, critical social issues might be addressed. We live in a highly visual culture where students encounter countless (re)presentations of culture daily. In the 21st century, we have an increased responsibility to teach students to interpret visual media in order to make sense of their lives. This requires regular renegotiation of our own practice.
Part III: Becoming Artist/Educator/Researcher

As a new practitioner of pedagogy a decade ago, I found myself in a state of constant tension and renegotiation, brought on by the acknowledgement of my lack of experience in the field of art education. I questioned my practices in pursuit of more engaging, more meaningful, and a more successful process of inquiry and instruction. While that pursuit hasn’t dissipated completely, experience and performance, as well as instances of what I consider “success” in the classroom, have served to somewhat stabilize my performance in my discipline. I’ve attempted to investigate my own ways of “being” through theoretical and practical lenses as a way of reconnecting with the fruitful tensions of that (dis)ease.

Feminist theory encourages the questioning of the dominant discourses that inscribe hierarchy and performance. Visual images—along with the written, the spoken, and the performed—are a language. Amelia Jones (1993) cites Feminism as one of the most important perspectives by which visual culture has been theorized over the past thirty years. The polyvocal pluralities that feminism promotes unblock patriarchal, hierarchal notions about society, identity, and institutions that are (re)presented in the coding of visual language. Without careful intervention, our identity and performance are mediated by those codes. Unblocking ourselves from those codes allows for a (re)reading of self and others through visual, spoken, written, and performed languages. As Irigaray (When our lips speak together, 1980) said, “If we keep on speaking the same language together, we’re going to reproduce the same history. Begin the same old stories all over again.” As a visual artist, I explore issues of my identity as a woman, as a Feminist, as a
queer subject, and as a critical subject. I view the world through a postmodern lens, seeking to destabilize the good, the true, the beautiful, and the self (Barrett, 2008).

The work of French philosophers Gilles Delueze and Felix Guattari challenges stabilized systems of thought in search of creative lines of flight and potential. I borrow the term becoming from them, which replaces being. Being is static, while becoming represents a state of constant proceeding. It is in the becoming that we inhabit in-between spaces, the imperceptible. This is especially significant when theorizing curriculum. The term “curriculum” extends from the Latin “currere,” meaning “to run” (Wallin, 2010). This positions curriculum as an active force, a force that creates lines of becoming that expands difference and creation. According to Deleuze and Guattari, film, art, music, and performance are rich sites of investigating becoming, as they continuously undergo productive deterritorializations, or resistances to dominant discourses that limit difference and understanding of difference. Deleuze and Guattari advocate a process of learning to be a foreigner in your own tongue, becoming unfamiliar with the familiar, and embracing the “minor” by resisting the “major” in an attempt to unhinge oneself from those dominant discourses, or becoming minor.

Thinking differently or resisting dominant discourses requires new ways of negotiating the terrain of those discourses. As discussed later in this study, arts-based methodologies seek to bypass staid practices of research that limit expression and innovative ways of understanding. Arts-based methods disrupt steadfast theories about what constitutes research and knowledge in qualitative fields, much like early responses to the qualitative challenged positivism. And yet, those debates are critical to progress as
they create space for the renegotiation of disciplinary practices and standards (Leavy, 2009). So one might ask: What can arts-based methods reveal and represent that traditional qualitative methods cannot? What are the potentials for accessing subjugated voices? Leavy also states that “the creative arts can help qualitative researchers pay closer attention to how the complex process of meaning-making and idea percolation shapes research” (p. 10). The arts can be emotionally and politically evocative—they have the power to captivate, to be powerful. The arts “can get at elements of the lived experience that a textual form cannot reach…[evoking] compassion, empathy, and sympathy, as well as understanding” (p. 13). They have the ability to raise critical awareness and build coalitions across groups and to challenge dominant ideologies. The frequency of the application of arts-based methods in identity work is due to the ability of the arts to challenge stereotypes and generate dialogue; the arts ideally inspire emotional responses resulting in highly engaged dialogue. “The kind of dialog promoted by arts-based practices is predicated upon evoking meanings, not denoting them” (Leavy, p. 14).

To unpack processes of (dis)ease in my consideration of this study and investigate potentials of becoming a foreigner in one’s own tongue, as Deleuze and Guattari would say, I considered these three categories: 1) my positionality as a Feminist and the intersections of discourse, discipline, and performance; 2) Deleuzo-Guattarian thought on performance and the refrain as a stabilizing practice and those intersections with Feminist theory; and 3) Arts-based Research methodologies as a practiced response to an interdisciplinary participatory study, where my co-investigating participants and I reflect
Thinking Differently and Why it Matters

In a presentation during the 2010 National Art Education Association’s (NAEA) annual convention in Seattle, Washington Jan Jagodzinski spoke about the notion of an avant garde without authority. The avant garde, he claimed, gets a bad name as elite, modern, and binary. But he draws a distinction between an avant garde WITH authority and another without. With authority is an avant garde—experimental, innovative—that seeks to control. His example: The Green movement. Going “green” means buying into a lifestyle, replete with products that mark you as “green,” but require your commitment to a designer capitalism of “being green.”

His alternative? Mark Dion’s Neukom Vivarium (2006), which opens a gap between nature and sculpture. It enters, as Jagodzinski says, into a space of exemption: where it is clear that one SHOULD think but one is not sure WHAT to think. This space is a creative force. It represents the in-between, the interstitial, the imperceptible.

One of the reasons I love hearing Jan speak is that something always clicks in a really significant way. It's not just a new idea...it's a new way of understanding things that we already know. Maybe the tensions that arise from always trying to have “new ideas” could be eliminated, or at least diluted, if we instead simply ask ourselves to think differently about what we already know. How many times, as an artist, have I sat with a blank mind, waiting for that spark, that flash of inspiration? As artist/educators, what if
learning to think differently about our acquired and experiential knowledge could lead us toward innovative, meaningful design for our students that fosters agency, strength, and voice? What if I was able to relieve some of the tensions my students have by teaching them to reimagine what they already know as a line of creative flight?

Ours is a complicated time, one dominated in The USA by visual culture and technology. Perhaps maybe now, more than ever, I need to impress upon students a sense of agency in and responsibility initiate positive change in the world to and offer them the tools they need to make sense a complicated, and at times manipulative, visual culture. To do this, one should connect to students’ narratives, needs, experiences, and communities (Ballengee-Morris, Daniel, & Stuhr, 2010).

One specific example that is very near to my heart: in the fall of 2010 we saw a chain of highly publicized suicides in the teen queer community. These suicides did not represent a significant increase in suicides in the adolescent queer community, only increased visibility to the struggles that were once kept much more quiet. While I acknowledge that increased visibility is a step in the right direction, as silence accomplishes nothing, schools are still generally not viewed as safe places for many LGBTQ youth.

As a member of the LGBTQ caucus of NAEA, we are in the process of more directly addressing the needs of artist educators to develop tools for teaching tolerance and acceptance of difference. The caucus has a very unique position in arts education, given at our core there is the power to teach students methods of expression beyond words, beyond a vocabulary have yet to develop learning to listen to voices which are
still becoming. I consider the arts to be forms of communication about things that count (Anderson, 2010). I believe that making spaces where identity narratives of students struggling with their gender and/or sexuality are imperative, as is their need for action, voice, agency, and developing a vocabulary (visual and verbal) for promoting self tolerance and understanding. The arts have the potential to affirm difference, to oppose power, and to dehabituate normalizing discourses—processes that mobilize agency and create meaningful change. I posit that collaborative, interdisciplinary work possesses similar powers of change.

One of the struggles of becoming artist/educator/researcher is that it is difficult to be—or be(come)—all of those things at once. Instead, I have found that terrain shifting along the way. I have looked back on the work I did when I identified as an “artist” only during my undergraduate work and found that I was unknowingly speaking a language that reflected ideologies I have marked with language and theory later in my academic and professional careers: Feminist, postmodernist, storyteller, researcher. It is this reflexivity that has allowed me to continue shifting in my thought, to disallow fixity of identity markers that might concretize my performance within a discipline of art education. That is not to say I do not find myself comfortable with process or practice, but that I do not long rest within that comfort. Along with the (dis)ease of negotiating new theory, new content, or new practices comes an invigorating re-imagining of self as artist/educator/researcher.

I layered this prologue to the study with reflections of my own becoming, acknowledging that those memories are mediated by the experiences that came before
and have come since. But as I reconstruct my memories from my current positionality, I set into motion new becomings that seeks a reciprocal proceeding of practice, experience, and theory.

**Becoming Interdisciplinary**

“Interdisciplinarity” is a term that links all areas of my becoming: interdisciplinary arts, interdisciplinary education, and interdisciplinary research. This study seeks to unlock the potentials of interdisciplinarity in practice; that is to say, participate in methods that encourage dialogue and collaboration, as well as ways of performing disciplines so that the perspectives of interdisciplinary collaboration become more clear. Ultimately, this study is about an investment in my field’s disciplinary practices as necessarily changing, and the potentials of interdisciplinary collaboration to set that change in motion. Additionally, I believe that engaging in mindful interdisciplinary practices keeps one’s ideas about what interdisciplinarity IS from becoming fixed. The participants in this study, while identifying as already someone “interdisciplinary” situated in their respective fields, still had the opportunity to inquire how an interdisciplinary discipline might perform as well as how that performance might be changed in working with other inherently interdisciplinary disciplines.

I am a woman in my early thirties. I identify as White/Caucasian, and I come from an upper middle-class home. I have attended two large public universities in my academic career, one in the South and my current institution in the Midwest. I began a long process of becoming artist/educator/researcher as an art student in high school and
college. It wasn’t until after graduating with a degree in photography that I stumbled into art education. I suppose if I am being honest, I was heading that direction all along, but I had long separated art-making from art education. I feel differently about that now. After teaching in public high schools for five years and grappling with issues of access, privilege, and meaning-making in art production, I rejoined the world of academia as a full-time graduate student. Like my co-participants, I see education as a site for critical inquiry, whether it is the art or university classroom. I often struggle with the dual identities of art educator in higher education: the theorist and the practitioner. My experiences working in interdisciplinary environments continue to shape my own practice in ways that I believe would be harder to make transparent without those experiences.

In considering a population for this study, I decided that participant feedback would be especially fruitful and that I needed to account for my own becoming as an interdisciplinary subject. I knew that even in gathering data for this study, I would be changed as the researcher. Also, because I wanted to frame the interdisciplinary collaboration within/through/around arts-based practices, I represented a participant that was vested in those practices. Instead of opting for an additional participant that could bring that perspective to the study, I included myself. Additionally, I posit that my perspective as participant/researcher provided rich insight to the data as well as the interpretation of data in recognition of my subjectivity as initial designer and reporter of the collaborative data obtained. This dual role illuminates the tensions of collaborative interdisciplinary study in ways that might not have been made as transparent otherwise. At the same time, I recognize the limitations of participating in my own study. I was at all
times aware of my presence as the participant/researcher, and cognizant that my co-
participants’ interest and investment in this study were different than my own.
Nonetheless, we all did our parts to become an interdisciplinary cohort in the short time
we had to work together.
CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

1.01 Background to the Study

Sitting in a darkened classroom during the winter of 2009, my classmates and I were watching a commercial for a popular chain of affordable hotels as part of an ongoing discussion about literacy practices. As an artist/educator, I immediately began composing my response to the images and content of the commercial, excited for a change from the standard discussion of readings about alphanumeric language and literacy. This was my first required course as part of an interdisciplinary minor in Literacy Studies at the Ohio State University. Of the seven students in the class, I was the only one situated within field of art as a discipline. The commercial ended, and I readied myself. The discussion, albeit robust in terms of spoken language and performing different kinds of literacy, did not attend to the visual information presented in the commercial in any way. When I shared my thoughts on visual representation, my classmates were receptive but admitted to not considering the connoted or denoted visual content prior to my mentioning them. My question to them was, then, “why include the visual?” In that moment, we embarked on perhaps our first interdisciplinary dialogue of the quarter, exploring a problem from our respective fields to arrive at different and new ways of understanding a problem.
In my second required course for the interdisciplinary minor the following quarter, the instructor scheduled one day dedicated to exploring visual text. One classmate looked at the first image, a portrait of a family in a rural setting, and noted the bird’s nest that sat on a tree branch between the figures, suggesting that it symbolized family, or home. We were told by the instructor to ignore that. It became quite clear that the inclusion of this image was NOT to generate an interpretive dialogue, but to arrive at something very specific that the instructor, a professor of English, had predetermined as significant from, I might assume, his disciplinary perspective. Again I questioned the inclusion of the visual if the visual information was not to be attended, but I also wondered how that professor’s particular situatedness within his discipline had informed his notions of what was significant about discussing that image, and why were they so clearly different from mine? These sites of fruitful tension provided a point of departure from my previous acceptance of interdisciplinarity as a coming-together of persons from different disciplines to a questioning of what and how we call interdisciplinary practices.

1.01.01 Discipline and Interdisciplinarity

In 1958, Wesleyan College’s president Victor Butterfield published The College Plan in Perspective, calling for a doing away with traditional departmental structure at Wesleyan in favor of a system that would “break through the artificial barriers of specialized subjects…and instead allow these various fields to ‘shed light’ on one another” (Kleinberg, 2008, p. 8). Since the mid-1970’s, “interdisciplinarity” in higher education has been more clearly defined as a learning mode of exploratory methods through
integration and synthesis of theory and methodology drawing on more than one discipline (Ellis, 2009).

Interdisciplinarity, according to Klein (1990) has been “variously defined” as “a methodology, a concept, a process, a way of thinking, a philosophy, and a reflexive ideology…[as] a means of solving problems and answering questions that cannot be satisfactorily addressed using single methods or approaches” (p. 196). This range of definition suggests a need for much-needed flexibility in the academy to experiment, but it also leaves interdisciplinarity as a methodology vulnerable to becoming a token methodology—interdisciplinary by name only. According to Kleinberg (2008), the flexibility and “spontaneity” of early interdisciplinary programs is threatened by the shift to a more “corporate-style service industry selling a vacuous and indefinable notion of ‘excellence’” (p. 6). But Kleinberg is not hopeless. He offers suggestions for (re)igniting interdisciplinarity by focusing on remaining flexible and increasing discourse and the infusion of new ideas into interdisciplinary programs, resisting stagnation and immersion into corporate “buzzwords.”

The distinction between multidisciplinary approaches and interdisciplinary approaches can be blurred as well. A multidisciplinary approach draws information or content from more than one discipline, but without the synthesis or collaboration of an interdisciplinary approach (Ellis, 2009). The distinction is subtle, but imperative: it is my assertion that the synthesis present in interdisciplinary collaboration—theorizing a problem from different disciplinary perspectives—is the catalyst for great innovation in the way one teaches.
Interdisciplinary studies, once “marginal sites for innovative scholarship,” (Kleinberg, 2008, p. 6) are increasingly prominent at colleges and universities in the United States. A quick Google search for “interdisciplinary major” produces over two million hits, “interdisciplinary studies” over four million. But Kleinberg warns that these programs, in practice, often don’t differ substantially from the academic disciplines and departments that interdisciplinary studies were designed to challenge. Instead, the practices of “interdisciplinarity” more resemble multidisciplinary approaches, drawing separately from different disciplines but without the collaboration that defines interdisciplinary work. Increasingly blurred disciplinary boundaries in the late twentieth century—for instance, those created by sociology or cultural studies—create a demand for understanding interdisciplinarity’s relationship to disciplinarity (Ellis, 2009). As Karl Popper stated, “we are not students of some subject matter, but students of problems. And problems may cut right across the borders of any subject matter or discipline” (Popper, 1963, p. 88).

1.01.02 Operational Definitions of Discipline, Interdiscipline, and Transdiscipline

Discipline is a slippery word. Perhaps the slipperiness of practiced interdisciplinarity results from the slipperiness of the word discipline. For the purposes of this study—which seeks to investigate disciplinary identity, performance, and collaborative interdisciplinary dialogue among graduate student instructors from different academic disciplines—it is useful to determine an operational definition of discipline as used within this document. One might be disciplined, meaning either one adheres to a
system of codes of conduct or one is punished for not adhering to codes of conduct. In academia, one might understand discipline as the system of codes that governs a course of study. From a Foucauldian (1975) perspective, discipline creates _docile bodies_ designed for performing certain tasks requiring institutional surveillance and the molding of bodies under the gaze. I am not attempting to pin down what discipline _is_ , rather what I entered into this study understanding discipline to be: a system of governing codes that defines a body that identifies as part of that discipline. This defining might limit a disciplined body, but I assert that disciplinary identity is also necessary to varying degrees, even if to serve only as a point of performative and disciplinary departure. It is the defining system of codes bound by a discipline, however fluid, that I refer to in this study as a discipline.

I am using interdisciplinarity according to Popper’s (1963) notion of interdisciplinarity stated earlier in this chapter: interdisciplinary work seeks to address multiple approaches to a problem. In other words, interdisciplinary work is problem-based as opposed to subject-based. Put another way, interdisciplinary work surrounds a problem from many sides and from many perspectives in order to find a solution without always privileging one particular disciplinary perspective or approach. This accounts, I assert, for the enabling of discipline-specific perspectives as well as new perspectives brought about by interdisciplinary collaboration. By this definition, I find the notion of interdisciplinarity as a _synthesis_ (Ellis, 2009) to be useful but somewhat problematic, as a synthesis suggests a coming together as one thing. I assert that problem-based approaches
to curriculum, pedagogy, or performance offer multiple variations of a theme, not one synthesized product.

Transdisciplinarity has been described as a collapsing of academic borders and the emerging of a new discipline (Davies & Devlin, 2010). Transdisciplinarity, it has been suggested, is therefore “a more theoretically possible position than a practical reality” (p. 17). At what point can the creation of a new discipline be determined? What would it be called? Kreber (2009) suggests that transdiciplinarity goes beyond the boundaries of a defined discipline, not rooting transdiciplinarity within a newly defined discipline. Case’s (2001) discussion of transdisciplinarity sides with post-disciplinarity and the collapsing of academic borders. The slipperiness of transdisciplinarity as a practice is due in part to the slipperiness of defining what transdiciplinarity is, much like attempting to define discipline or interdiscipline. The notion of transdisciplinarity is brought forward in this study to address emergent questions of post-disciplinary practices, discussed in more depth in the Analysis and Conclusion chapters of this study.

1.01.03 Theorizing Disciplinary Departures

I argue in this study that one might engage in strong interdisciplinary work by allowing oneself to depart somewhat from codes of disciplinary identity. I use the word “departure” meaning “a different approach,” not to suggest an abandonment from disciplinary identity or practice. I value the disciplinary codes that serve to ground one’s identity and practice. Additionally, I acknowledge that strong interdisciplinary work could be actualized in other ways than I advance as a mindful disciplinary departure, and
that the theoretical framework adopted for this study is, likewise, not the only theoretical approach. The proceedings of this study are presented as one of many potential methods for conceiving interdisciplinarity. The theorizing of such a departure is significantly informed by both Feminist theory and the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. Judith Butler (1990, 1993) posited that gender is not natural or given, but determined through performance and the repetition (refrain) of that performance, bringing about new ideas regarding nature, performance, and potentials of change. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) propose a philosophy of difference where difference is internal, not determined by comparison. Even in nature, no two things are ever the same. A creative image of disciplinarity in higher education through Butler’s lens, suggesting that disciplinary thought, identity, and practice are subject to the same constructions, might unhinge steadfast or even static operating systems within disciplines, the systems that seek to govern docile bodies. Understanding difference from a Deleuzo-Guattarian perspective allows us to conceive of disciplinary practitioners as inherently varied and only by the repetitions that norm and name the discipline do they become static.

Disciplines are not natural. Rather, they are the effect of difference and repetition. This study explores notions of identity construction as they relate to disciplinary identity and the potentials of productively disrupting stabile performances through interdisciplinary collaboration. Through collaboration, we might learn to speak in another’s tongue, as Deleuze and Guattari might say; what is the potential of shifting the object of study or unmasking difference in higher education?
1.01.04 Practiced Disciplinary Departure

In addition to a theoretical approach to strong interdisciplinary work through disciplinary departure, I posit a practiced disciplinary departure informed by Arts-Based Research (ABR) methodologies. It is suggested in this study that the methodologies of ABR provide fruitful points of disciplinary departure when one examines her disciplinary practice through image and narrative.

Arts-based methods can disrupt steadfast theories about what constitutes research and knowledge in qualitative disciplines much like early responses to the qualitative challenged positivism. And yet, debates are critical to progress, as they create space for the renegotiation of disciplinary practices and standards (Leavy, 2009). What can arts-based methods reveal and represent that traditional qualitative methods cannot? What are the potentials for accessing subjugated voices in oneself as a disciplinary body and in others as disciplinary bodies?

Like discipline, a working definition of arts-based methods as I understand them in relationship to this study follows. The arts or creative arts might be described as many things, but for the purposes of this study I include the collection, assemblage, and interpretation of images and narrative accounts of participants’ disciplinary identity, performance, including interdisciplinary experiences.

Leavy (2009) states that “the creative arts can help qualitative researchers pay closer attention to how the complex process of meaning-making and idea percolation shapes research” (p. 10). She continues that the iterative process of qualitative research praxis is one of emergent meaning through the labeling, identifying, and classifying of
concepts, interrelation, patterns, and theory generation and that “visual and other arts-based methods make this process explicit [by drawing] out the meaning making process and [pushing] it to the forefront” (p. 11). Further, interdisciplinary arts-based practices have the potential to access new audiences by allowing for communicating ideas that one does not always have the words for. Further, arts-based practices can pose questions in new ways and inspire the asking of entirely new questions. The arts can be emotionally and politically evocative, they have the power to captivate, to be powerful. The arts “can get at elements of the lived experience that a textual form cannot reach…[evoking] compassion, empathy, and sympathy, as well as understanding” (p. 13). They have the ability to raise critical awareness and build coalitions across groups and to challenge dominant ideologies, such as the dominant ideology of a discipline or disciplinary practice.

1.02 Statement of the Problem

This study concerns itself with disciplinary practices and identities, how they inform practice, and the potentials of changed perspectives through interdisciplinary collaboration. Put another way, I seek to encourage my participants to define themselves within/though/around their disciplines and then renegotiate that definition within/through/around collaborative discourse and practice. I aim to make significant the narratives that can define disciplinary experiences as well as the narratives that begin to define interdisciplinary identities. In other words, I assert that the practices of a disciplinary subject are somewhat determined by the codes of a discipline or
interdisciplinary collaboration. The utterances of the participants in this study reveal these codes of practice. Further, I seek to explore the potentials of renegotiated disciplinary practice brought to light by interdisciplinary investigations of the language, values, and practices of individual disciplinary identities.

1.03 Primary Research Question

This study seeks to address the question, What are the potentials of changed disciplinary performance and identity resultant from mindful interdisciplinary collaboration in higher education? I explore this primary research question through theoretical frameworks informed by Feminist theory and the work of Deleuze and Guattari. Additionally, I investigate the question through informed practices of Arts-Based Research (Leavy, 2009) as discussed earlier in this chapter.

1.04 Supporting Subquestions

During the first interview, a series of questions emerged that became central to the investigation of interdisciplinary collaboration and disciplinary performance and identity. They were:

- What are the tensions associated with disciplinary performance in regard to student expectations of the discipline?
- How might interdisciplinary collaboration alleviate tensions or limitations embedded in their disciplinary identity?
- How does an interdisciplinary body perform?
The list of supporting subquestions attempts to further unpack disciplinary performance, arriving at a more clear understanding of what is embodied in disciplinary performance and how interdisciplinarity might be approached. Specifically, the emergent questions provided a refrain for coding and analysing the data for the study.

1.05 Parameters of the Study

It is necessary to set boundaries for this study, and to make them transparent. To begin, I acknowledge my own subjectivity as one who believes there are benefits to interdisciplinary collaboration when considering practice and pedagogy. I recognize, also, that this belief shapes my participation in collaborative study, as well as my understanding of data collected therein. The participants agreed to this study, acknowledging their own subjectivities regarding collaboration and practice. However, due to the emergent and participatory nature of the study, we entered into the collaboration hoping to uncover knowledge that was previously out of our reach, to examine our own practices through multiple lenses in order to unpack methods of practice that would otherwise remain locked inside previously determined definitions of disciplinary identity.

Secondly, I acknowledge the limitations of the study. The small sample ($N=3$) represents disciplinary participants already familiar with interdisciplinary discourse: Art Education, Comparative Studies, and Women’s Studies. Although not a prerequisite to participation, each participant in the study acknowledged during the study that they identify to some extent with an academic discipline that is, inherently, somewhat
interdisciplinary. While this complicates definitions of disciplinary identity for the purposes of the study, it also provides opportunities to explore notions of post-disciplinary practices discussed later in this study. It should be noted that I make no claims to generalizability of data obtained, but do suggest that findings might possibly be transferable in fields of study concerning interdisciplinarity.

Finally, the study was not conducted as a longitudinal examination of interdisciplinary collaboration. Instead, I acknowledge it as an initial investigation of disciplinary identity, practices, and interdisciplinary exploratory practices.

1.06 Overview of the Study

This study is designed as a qualitative research study informed by methods of Arts-Based Research and Participatory Action Research (PAR). The participant group is an interdisciplinary cohort of graduate student instructors. I approached this study from a Feminist perspective and employed a Deleuzo-Guattarian ontology of constructing a smooth space of thought: one that resists unproductive spaces governed by sets of refrains, or codes, that define a discipline. The purpose of the study is to investigate the potentials of transformation in teaching and thought in higher education through mindful interdisciplinary collaboration.

1.06.01 Arts-Based Research

In his discussion of Arts-Based Research, Sullivan (2005) notes the importance of practice-based research methods in describing the profiles of “making” disciplines (such
as art or architecture), but what are the potentials of practice-based methods outside of the “making” disciplines where interdisciplinary collaboration is taking place? Sullivan suggests:

Post discipline practice describes the way visual arts research takes place within and beyond existing discipline boundaries as dimensions of theory are explored and domains of inquiry adapted. The discipline perspectives that surround art making reflect ways of engaging with relevant theoretical issues and how appropriate methods might be deployed to meet research interests and needs...there is a discipline-based position that is embedded within the empiricist tradition of research. Within the interpretivist paradigm, it is through an interdisciplinary investigation of cultural texts that theories and practices are teased apart and meanings disclosed. (pp. 101-102)

Further, he suggests that transdisciplinarity could be related to critical investigations of existing systems, structures, and practices that are then interrogated and subject to change. “When working from a base in contemporary art, the conceptions of the discipline are uncertain and the informing parameters are open-ended, yet the opportunity for inventive inquiry is at hand” (p. 102). Similarities exist across disciplines in the thinking processes developed. I often compare the process of writing to the process of making visual works of art: begin with a concept or problem, draft ways of expressing that concept/problem, and then revise. In both disciplines, new questions might, and should, arise through process. Identifying the context and recognizing organizing principles enables an ability to change perspectives.
Participants of this study engaged in collection, assemblage, and interpretation of visual representations of their disciplinary performances. Additionally, participant narratives were shared during collaborative interviews regarding disciplinary performance, pedagogy, and interdisciplinary experiences. Casey (2003) notes that in her asking participants open-ended questions, the results never closely resembled the project plan, but what emerged instead were rich narratives. Narratives, suggests Casey, should not be elicited simply for the information that can be extracted, but that one attended to the importance of participants’ understandings of their own experiences also are attended to. As the primary researcher/participant, I employed methods of translating narrative response into visual representations (word clouds) in an attempt to try to “see” our disciplines differently. In doing so, this study attempts, as Sullivan would say, to tease apart disciplinary identity and performance.

1.06.02 Participatory Action Research

In determining a Participatory Action Research (PAR) project, it is useful to ask Who, What, How, and To Whom? Who benefits from a PAR project? What will constitute as data? How is decision-making implemented? And to whom will the information be disseminated? (MnIntyre, 2008). I see both instructor and student benefiting from this project, but my primary site of data collection was the responses of my co-participants as we marked transformations of our identity and practice that took place during the project. Aside from the invitation to participate and my articulation of the theoretical framework that I am operating within, I opened up all other decision-
making about the project to my co-participants. Consistent with interest in how interdisciplinary collaboration might serve as a productive site of change, I see decision-making for the process of becoming interdisciplinary to be an integral part of that collaboration. This process included: questioning the notion of disciplinary performance; reflecting upon and investigating disciplinary performance through interviews, visual storytelling, reflections, and dialogue; collectively developing plans of action to productively unhinge our stabile identities as disciplined subjects; and then reflexively looking back at the proceedings. All information gathered was available to the entire cohort. It was imperative to the study that everyone involved had access to narratives, notes, artwork, interviews, or any data that was generated during the course of the study. Through this transparency, we sought to transform our practice as researchers and instructors in higher education together. Put another way, “[a]s the PAR process evolves, these and other questions are re-problematized in the light of critical reflection and dialogue and collective reflection that the participants of PAR recognize that they have a stake in the overall project” (McIntyre, p. 1).

PAR participants resist the dualism of the researcher/researched characterized by other forms of social science research. Every effort to equalize the relationships in PAR projects is made (McIntyre, 2008). Equalizing the relationship between my participants and me values the contributions of their experiences and acknowledges my willingness to investigate personal practices and potential for change. Participatory Action Researchers “…[take] action to improve conditions, clarify information to outside communities, and gain a better understanding of the external circumstances that structure their lives” (p. ix).
Participatory Action Researchers recognize the existence of a plurality of knowledges in a variety of institutions and locations. In particular, they assume that those who have been most systematically excluded, oppressed or denied carry specifically revealing wisdom about the history, structure, consequences and fracture points in unjust social arrangements. PAR therefore represents a counter-hegemonic approach to knowledge production. (Kindon, Pain, and Kesby, 2007, p. 9)

Because each of the participants in this study articulates a commitment to teaching and student success and growth, PAR methods employing counter-hegemonic approaches to knowledge production opened channels of thinking and reflection integral to the creation of a more interdisciplinary body in the study.

1.06.03 Theory and the Study

A Feminist theoretical framework established for this study is integral to the process of exploring new disciplinary thought, interdisciplinarity, and transdisciplinarity. Disciplines, like gender for example, are constructed (Butler, 1990; 1993), and applying methods employed by Feminist theory I have attempted to unpack hierarchal structures that limit participant performance and expose structures that limit disciplinary performance. Co-participants negotiated boundary crossings in higher education.

The work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) embodies thinking differently. I posit that understanding difference from a Deleuzo-Guattarian perspective and its intersections with Feminist theories is a significant move
toward disrupting systems that bind, restrict, and limit new images of thought. Deleuze-Guattarian notions of the rhizome, the refrain, the nomad, and smooth and striated spaces are particularly useful in re-imagining performance and discipline and will be discussed in more detail in the Review of Literature. My decision to include Deleuze Guattari was informed by the significant impact reading *A Thousand Plateaus* had on me in regard to my teaching, my research, and my understanding of the world. There are many theorists or philosophers I might have chosen to approach a study on disciplinary performance or interdisciplinary collaboration but Deleuze and Guattari seemed my obvious choice, as I feel as though I live this text much of the time.

In the study of disciplines in higher education, “the focus is shifting from concentration upon double ‘o’ ‘roots’ to an idea of ‘o’ plus ‘u’: ‘roots: routes,’ with space increasingly mapped out in flows. Focus falls upon movement, crossings, types, of circulation…” (Ellis, 2009, p. 13). Disciplinary identity provides a framework for situating oneself as a disciplinary body, helping to navigate the complexities of identity construction. What this study seeks to explore is the careful renegotiation of disciplinary identity in productive ways. Deleuze and Guattari provide a useful image of thought for establishing and naming that renegotiated territory.

Through interdisciplinary collaboration, I propose to occupy a transdisciplinary space. “‘Transdisciplinarity’… is directed at problems that go beyond, or transcend, the boundaries of particular disciplines…knowledge is seen to originate not in disciplinary problems but within the framework of real life application where solutions are required for complex problems…” (Kreber, 2009, p. 25). Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinarity
foster layers of learning and research, which I posit are imperative to practice in higher education in this century. Kreber notes, “unless institutions pay closer attention also to [transdisciplinary] knowledge production, students may not be adequately prepared for the demands of the modern knowledge society…university curricula that are relevant in the twenty-first century” (p. 25).

In asking my co-participants how they “perform” their discipline, I realize that I must pose the same question to myself. How do I understand my own performance in the discipline of art education? As a participant in my own research project, I had to address my subjectivity as being embedded in a disciplinary practice and remain open to unanticipated directional flows of the study. I realize that an emergent, collaborative study is full of uncertainty in the planning process. My subjectivity as a participant makes that uncertainty even greater.

The graduate student participants in my proposed study negotiate terrain mapped out by the institutions in which we are a part, at times with very little voice in terms of what or how we teach. Each of us expressed an interest in creative instruction and performance in regard to what we believe is a transformative process of learning, both on our parts and for the benefit of our students. It is through this process that we as a cohort hoped to initiate change personally and professionally.

1.06.04 Overview of Methods

The mixed methods—narrative inquiry, arts-based inquiry, and collaborative ethnography/participatory research—generate data for this study. This triangulation of
methods is meant not only to provide a rich database to form a grounded theory, but also to establish validity. This study begins with an idea that investigation of disciplinary identity and interdisciplinary collaboration elicit transformation in research and practice. Collection of responses to my initial question, “How do you perform your discipline?” will be marked with a series of codes extracted from the text, then grouped into concepts. These concepts produce categories that will inform a working theory to guide the study. A grounded theory was formed by the relationships among concepts. The analysis of all collected materials was subject to constant comparison. Empirical data (observation, interviews, narrative and arts-based responses) were compared for similarities and differences.

This study also includes narratives of individual participants’ teaching and research experiences, narratives reflecting on collaborative encounters as well as my autoethnographic data as a co-participant in the project. These narratives were subject to comparison, coding, and concept development to ground the theory. What do those narratives reveal about a participant’s experiences? What similarities/differences exist between participants? What do we, individually or collectively, deem useful or counterproductive in the collected narratives? These are some of the questions that emerged as the study unfolded.

My disciplinary performance involves art-making, and as a co-participant in the project, I introduced a practice of visual storytelling as a process of defining disciplinary performance. In my role as a co-participant, I encouraged the other participants to utilize arts-based methods as alternative means of self-expression in an attempt at unhinging
staid practices or modes of thought related to disciplinary performance. How/have arts-based methods communicated data that other methods could not? How/have arts-based methods contributed to new understandings of disciplinary identity, research, or teaching? How do we know?

This collaborative study embodies the three characteristics of PAR that distinguish it from other forms of social inquiry: 1) cooperation of participants in problem definition, data analysis, and use of findings; 2) embodiment of democratic ideals; and 3) an objective of producing useful knowledge and consciousness raising (Schwandt, 2007). All of the participants of this study articulated an interest in the improvement of research and teaching practice, as well as an interest in interdisciplinary collaboration. The combination of methods of inquiry I use raise the following questions: What are the unique qualities of collaborative ethnography? How does a collaborative ethnography reinforce a theory of transformation through collaboration? What is the knowledge acquired? How will it be of use?

These methods sought to answer the primary research question, *What are the potentials of changed disciplinary performance and identity resultant from mindful interdisciplinary collaboration in higher education?* as well as investigated participants’ willingness to think differently about their performances within disciplines and transformation for the benefit of research and instruction.
**1.07 Significance of the Study**

Kleinberg (2008) states, “[in] today’s competitive college market, ‘interdisciplinary studies’ are a major selling point” and that it might be argued that interdisciplinarity might be the “dominant educational paradigm” of the twenty-first century (p. 6). But he cautions against allowing “interdisciplinary” to become a buzz word and ignoring the unique contributions highly interdisciplinary programs make when they are not in danger of losing their “flexibility, spontaneity, and open-minded approach that characterized their development” (p. 9).

The Ohio State University, like many colleges and universities, offers a number of interdisciplinary minors. As an Art Education graduate student participating in one of those interdisciplinary minors, I often wondered why the majority of my classes were conducted from a disciplinary perspective of one particular program. What is the interdisciplinarity being practiced and how many disciplinary perspectives are contributing to that practice? In part, I think that defining “interdisciplinarity” has become part of the problem. Kleinberg offers suggestions for (re)igniting interdisciplinary studies, all which rely on increased dialogue between disciplines. I hope to extend this thinking to include the students participating in these courses but also those teaching courses which employ interdisciplinary methods: Graduate Teaching Associates.

Experimenting with interdisciplinarity necessitates leaving open channels of communication between multiple disciplines rather than becoming stuck as an “interdisciplinary” course, utilizing cross-disciplinary scholarship or methods but neglecting collaborative interdisciplinary discourse. This study (re)opens lines of
discourse by encouraging the development of a new interdisciplinary image of thought, one that is fluid, rhizomatic, and constantly proceeding.

Researchers investigating practices of interdisciplinarity at colleges and universities might find this study useful in developing or renovating their own interdisciplinary programs. More importantly, I hope that it would be useful in empowering instructors in higher education to experiment with highly interdisciplinary approaches and resist the reterritorialization of that highly interdisciplinary space into one that is, at best, only labeled “interdisciplinary” as a marketing tool. Secondly, I anticipate that increased collaboration among disciplines unlocks a new image of pedagogies, resulting in a more transdisciplinary methodology: a methodology defined not by the rules and structures of the participating disciplines and their collaboration but one that is emerges with its own structures through the collaborative thinking. Finally, positioning Arts-Based Research methods as alternatives to other, more traditional forms of communication, collaboration, and expression in higher education deserves continued attention. In considering audience, the arts have the ability, Leavy (2009) argues, to widen the scope of who benefits from and is engaged in academic scholarship. “Free from disciplinary jargon and other prohibitive (even elitist) barriers, arts-based representations can be shared with diverse audiences, expanding the effect of scholarly research that traditionally circulates within the academy…”(p. 14). This study attempts to illuminate the positive outcomes of increased collaboration and support through an interdisciplinary cohort, but also the barriers that still exist within interdisciplinary practices in higher education.
The study is small, and represents only three areas of study: Art Education, Women’s Studies, and Comparative Studies. Rather than present itself as a comprehensive analysis of interdisciplinary practice, it serves as a model for future practices. The autoethnography pursued through my own participation in the study closely documents my process of **becoming** through an unhinging of practices and those beliefs already situated within the visual. The study is a re-imagining of process and practice that I believe necessary to an interdisciplinary line of flight and the construction of knowledge and pedagogy.

1.08 *Chapter Descriptions*

In my conceptualizing of this study, I knew I was interested in exploring the tensions I had experienced as a disciplinary body immersed in coursework that was named “interdisciplinary.” Interdisciplinarity was marked as important, in my mind, but the potentials of interdisciplinary dialogue were yet to be realized in my own practice. Further, I wanted to explore the tensions as well as the advantages of disciplinary identity, and the potentials of purposeful interdisciplinary collaboration. The chapter descriptions that follow outline the proceeding of this study.

1.08.01 *Chapter Two – The Review of Literature*

The literature reviewed in this chapter reflects an investigation into a pedagogical process of becoming (dis)eased: resisting a routine, stable disciplinary identity performances and to open oneself to the potentials of new thought and practice.
Beginning with a discussion of disciplinary identity and practice, this study seeks to unblock interdisciplinary collaboration. My review of literature explores the importance of disciplinary identity—including practiced interdisciplinarity in higher education. The fluidity of disciplinary identity and interdisciplinarity presents sites of fruitful tension in determining a grounding identity, which necessitates a theoretical response to thinking differently about disciplinary identity. I approach this theoretical response through discussions of Feminist theory and the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987).

Chapter Two divides the literature into categories of: 1) disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity; 2) Feminist theory and the intersections of discipline and performance; 3) Deleuzo-Guattarian thought on performance, the refrain, the nomad, and territorialization; and 4) literature relating to the methodology of participatory, engaged arts-based refrains through which one may unpack disciplinary performance and identity.

**1.08.02 Chapter Three – Methods**

The methodology chapter explores how Participatory Action Research and Arts-based Research methodologies in this study. I consider these methods as processes through which I might think and respond differently to disciplinary identity and practice. Additionally, this chapter illuminates those methods used in recounting proceedings of participant interviews, group discussions, and disciplinary performances (both individual and collaborative). I will outline the conceptual framework and map out those mixed methods used in the study, including autoethnographic narratives (of my own disciplinary
identity), co-participant narratives (examining their disciplinary and pedagogical identities), preliminary cohort interviews and discussions, unearthing those grounded theories emerging from our interdisciplinary collaboration and percolating investigations.

**1.08.03 Chapter Four – Presentation of Data**

Chapter Four presents the data collected through the three recorded cohort conversations, the generated word clouds from the transcriptions, the visual storytelling, and the interdisciplinary lesson collaboratively designed by the cohort introduced in the preceding methodology chapter. The purpose of Chapter Four is to relay a layered narrative of the participants’ emergent understandings of their own disciplinary performances as well as their emergent identities as an interdisciplinary bodies. This chapter is structured as an on-going narrative, told through the these utterances of the participants, through the generated images from transcribed utterances, and through the inclusion of the visual storytelling part and parcel of our disciplinary performance and emergent interdisciplinary identities. Further, the data continues to build on the emergent study themes I discuss in Chapter Three. In the following Chapter Five – Analysis, the emergent themes regarding the tensions of disciplinary performance and interdisciplinary performance are more fully explored.

**1.08.04 Chapter Five – Analysis**

Chapter Five attempts to answer the main research question *What are the potentials of changed disciplinary performance and identity resultant from mindful*
interdisciplinary collaboration in higher education? Chapter Five also addresses the emergent supporting questions and the process of becoming interdisciplinary as our cohort understands it. While Chapter Four presented the data collected during the collaboration and study, Chapter Five offers the interpretations of the data in an attempt to explore the findings, what was intended in the framing of the study, and what was uncovered in the utterances of the participants. The interpretations are supported by literature from Feminist theory (citations) and Deleuzo-Guattarian thought (citations) as outlined in Chapter Two, and is arranged around the three phases of the collaboration: 1) the initial interview and the describing disciplinary performance, 2) the second interview and visual storytelling 3) the third interview and sharing of disciplinary approaches to a shared curricular objective. The collaborative design of a unit and the responses to follow-up questions performs our interdisciplinary line of flight and serves as a suggestion as to what might be possible when a field let’s go of its disciplinary fixity.

I begin by answering part of my primary research question with a discussion about disciplinary performance as determined through participant disciplinary values and refrains (repeat performances of those values). The remaining parts of the research question regarding the potentials of changed performance through interdisciplinary collaboration are answered through the exploration of the emergent questions from the collaboration. I then analyze the data through the lenses of inter/disciplinarity, Feminist theory, and Deleuzo-Guattarian thought.
Chapter Six – Conclusions

Conclusions from the study are shared in this final chapter, as well as its implications for negotiating boundary crossings and teaching in higher education. Thoughts on transdisciplinarity and post-disciplinary practices are discussed here. Suggestions for future research concerning interdisciplinary collaboration among graduate student teaching associates are brought forward and positioned as fruitful sites for interdisciplinary inquiry.
CHAPTER TWO – THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature reviewed in this chapter reflects my investigation into the pedagogical process of becoming (dis)eased, beginning with a discussion of disciplinary identity and practice that this study seeks to examine through interdisciplinary collaboration. As a new practitioner of pedagogy a decade ago, I found myself in a state of constant renegotiation, brought on by the acknowledgement of my lack of experience in the field of Art Education. I questioned my practices in pursuit of more engaging, more meaningful, and a more successful process of inquiry and instruction. While that pursuit hasn’t dissipated completely, experience and performance, as well as instances of what I consider “success” in the classroom, have served to somewhat stabilize my disciplinary performances. While looking at this literature, I have attempted to investigate my ways of “being” opened up through my theoretical and practical lenses as one way of reconnecting with the fruitful tensions of the uneasiness disciplinary identity emerged as.

Feminist theory encourages the questioning of dominant discourses that inscribe hierarchy and performance. Delueze and Guattari challenged stabilized systems of thought in search of creative lines of flight and potential. Arts-based methodologies seek to bypass staid practices of research that limit expression and innovative ways of understanding. The literature review unpacks strategies for resisting dominant practices and investigates potentials of being a foreigner in one’s own tongue (Deleuze and
This literature chapter is divided into categories of 1) disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity; 2) Feminism and the intersections of discipline and performance; 3) Deleuzo-Guattarian thought on performance, the refrain, the nomad, and territorialization; and 4) literature concerning the methodology of engaging in a participatory study and arts-based methods that might challenge disciplinary performance and identity.

Disciplinarity might be considered a performance. Put another way, disciplinarity might be the performance of a refrain (repeated codes or behaviors) or a set of refrains—the more defined the discipline, the more constraints on variation (performance, objects, or methodology). Repeated performance of the refrain reproduces the discipline as a specific territory and its objects, studies, and aims.

It can be said that when one chooses a discipline, one’s particular identity emerges consistent with its disciplinary mandates. Disciplinary comfort is a result of theories and perceptions of self that align with these disciplinary structures or codes. It is suggested here that living with uneasiness within a discipline occurs when personal theories and perceptions diverge from steadfast disciplinary approaches. But I seek to reclaim that uneasiness as a site of productive change.

Disciplines have been characterized as higher learning since the founding of the first universities in the Middle Ages. Strongly influenced by the Roman educational heritage, the seven liberal arts emphasized grammar, rhetoric, dialect, arithmetic, music, geometry, astronomy (Wagner, 1983). One can be bound by disciplines in application, in
practice, and in identity. But they are not the constructions of academic identity alone. They are socially constructed and performative as well.

Disciplines can be defined as both “continuous yet changing through time; yet the extent to which this is the case varies by discipline” and that their “mutual independence” might not be upheld given “the extent to which disciplines also inform one another” (Kreber, 2009, p. 23). The methods by which knowledge is arrived at in a discipline are essential to the definition of that discipline. Limiting difference in a discipline makes clear the disciplinary identity. Disciplines also provide a basis for how academic departments are organized and adorned—that is, in the symbols that can be observed and understood by a larger community. One identifies in and with one’s discipline.

Disciplines exert strong influences on teaching, learning environments, and how students learn. Similarly, I anticipate academics are probably comfortable with the idea that their discipline deeply influences those factors (Kreber, 2009). “Disciplines appear to help us make sense of our academic worlds while at the same time limiting our ability to do so” (Poole, 2009, p. 51).

It is then useful to imagine the discipline as a territory, marked by performance or refrain. Art-making is the refrain of the artist that forms the territory of the artist. Writing is the refrain of the author or academic that forms another territory. The dangers of rigid territorialization, or segmentarity, of disciplines are assumption, reduction, and fixedness. For the purposes of this argument, might interdisciplinarity or transdisciplinarity be the absolute with which we generate a line of flight to disrupt, or deterritorialize, disciplinary
segmentation? Or we might imagine a supple segmentarity which can be modified? Deleuze and Guattari (1987) simply say to “deterritorialize the refrain” (p. 350).

The disciplinary devotee is determined by a process of subjectification. According to Butler (1993), the subject does not simply exist but is repeatedly created/ performed. The in-between spaces in such performances are the sites of resignification or the repetition that constitutes the subject. One cannot refuse those terms, but neither should we obey them without question. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) allude to the interconnectedness of nature and relocate the subject within multiple affective, ethical, and performative dimensions. “The Deleuzian figure of becoming is central to these considerations because it not only talks of the constantly creative evolution of the conceptual world but also of the world of subjectivity with which Butler engages…” (Gale, 2010, p. 305). Becoming a discipline, therefore, could be imagined as more heterogeneous than disciplines are commonly understood to be. Acknowledgement and occupation of the in-between spaces sets in motion new images of thought within disciplinary domains.

2.01 Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity

One might understand disciplines as striated spaces one performs within. Disciplines have characterized higher learning since the founding of the first universities in the Middle Ages, institutions strongly influenced by the seven liberal arts: grammar, rhetoric, dialect, arithmetic, music, geometry, astronomy (Wagner, 1983). It bears repeating that disciplines can be defined as both “continuous yet changing through time;
yet the extent to which this is the case varies by discipline” and that their “mutual independence” might not be upheld given “the extent to which disciplines also inform one another” (Kreber, 2009, p. 23). Some believe that disciplines in higher education, if not yet dead, are on the wane. Historical features that determined disciplines as a powerful way of knowing the world, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, become displaced in a pluralist society where multiple truths are favored over the search for an objective truth (Barnett, 2009). Instead, it seems there is the potential to operate within a smoother space in higher education. That doesn’t suggest that disciplines are no longer of any use. Rather, the smoothing of those spaces can be accomplished through mindful interdisciplinary collaboration with recognition of the usefulness of the structure we perform within.

2.01.01 The Usefulness of Discipline

“[Disciplines] are real and they exert real effects on lecturers’ approaches to teaching and also on the student experience…[we might] make vivid the liveliness of disciplines as they are taken up, explored and experienced within the pedagogical relationship” (Barnett, 2009 p. xv). The methods through which knowledge is arrived within in a discipline are essential to the definition of that discipline. Disciplines provide a basis for how academic departments are organized and adorned—that is, in the symbols that can be observed and understood by a larger community. One identifies in and with a discipline. Disciplines also exert strong influences on teaching, learning environments,
and how students learn. Similarly, most academics are probably comfortable with the idea that their discipline deeply influences those factors (Kreber, 2009).

Disciplinary comfort is a result of teaching theories and perceptions of self that align with the disciplinary structure. As noted earlier in this chapter, living with uneasiness within a discipline occurs when personal theories and perceptions diverge from given disciplinary approaches, in such ways that creative interpretations of disciplinary knowledge can occur.

2.01.02 The Limits of the Discipline

Kreber (2009) notes, “…drastic changes in the learning environments over the past decade (e.g., types of students entering university, content to be taught, advances in technology) not only invite pedagogical inquiry but make it a necessity. As a consequence, the scholarship of teaching and learning is an imperative today, not a choice” (p. 27). Education and research can be a site for transformation. In order to access meaningful transformations in one’s own practices and with/ for students, one might recognize the importance of the drastic changes that Kreber considers. Embedded practices within a particular discipline do not always engage in renegotiations of environments, technologies, and student perspectives unless the practitioners proactively seek those renegotiations. “Once the disciplines have been defined and described in certain ways, it becomes even more difficult to break away from entrenched practices or traditions and engage in innovations in teaching” (Kreber, 2009, p. 27).
Teaching and research are context-specific, and there are other mediating factors in determining context other than discipline. Teachers’ and researchers’ subjectivities exert an influence beyond disciplinary or departmental influence. “These considerations invite serious questions about whether reluctance [can]…be observed among departments [by] look[ing] beyond their own immediate teaching and assessment ‘silos’ is justified and about the potential of opening these up through exchanges of practices across disciplinary and departmental boundaries” (p. 27).

This discussion suggests that neither departmental culture nor disciplinary structure should exclusively determine performance. Rather, performance should be influenced by a combination of departmental culture, disciplinary structure, and other mediating factors: the in-between spaces.

2.01.03 Interdisciplinarity

For the purposes of this study, interdisciplinarity is defined as problem or idea dominant collaboration. Simply put, interdisciplinary investigations approach a problem or concept with the intent of creating a multi-perspectival solution. I acknowledge the useful of the discipline throughout the proceedings of this study as I assert that understanding one’s individual and others’ disciplinary influences increases the potential for strong interdisciplinary collaboration. A deeper exploration of these ideas is presented in the subsequent chapters.
2.01.04 In-between Spaces

Because “disciplines appear to help us make sense of our academic worlds while at the same time limiting our ability to do so” (Poole, 2009, p. 51), I propose seeking out the in-between spaces between disciplines; those that can serve as a rich site for reform of situated practices within discipline. “All of us come through or out of disciplines, so disciplines are supposed to be a kind of secure shell, like a place we know and something we are getting used to” (Garstenauer, et al, 2006, p. 38). If so, then leaving the shell necessitates one’s entering into uncertainty. The process of becoming comfortable with uncertainty can be made easier with support that interdisciplinary collaboration can provide. This sharing of epistemologies, unpacking of overlaps, differences, and potentials for change require careful negotiation. My study seeks to contribute to a broadening of teaching and research perspectives to include interdisciplinary collaboration. I hope to thereby determine what collaborative performances must be kept, which need to change, and what will be left behind in order to be most productive. One can invent the capacity to shift ways of knowing and hopefully accommodate new ones that exceed any disciplinary singularity.

The notion of transdisciplinarity introduced in the first chapter might occupy this in-between space. As Kreber (2009) noted, a transdisciplinary idea might be one that goes beyond the boundaries of a particular discipline, but does not settle in another particular discipline. Therefore, in order for transdisciplinarity to continue to transcend boundaries, transdisciplines must always seek out the interstitial spaces, lest a transdiscipline be fixed into a new discipline with its own codes and boundaries.
2.02 Feminism, Performance, and Discipline

This portion of the review of literature is an attempt to frame my disciplinary identity constructions within a discourse of resistance to dominant hegemonies. The subsequent discussion does not presuppose that disciplinary identity is inherently and exclusively limiting, only that resistance to the codes of a discipline might bring forth new, creative ways of thinking about disciplines and pedagogical practices.

2.02.01 Judith Butler and Performance

In *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies that Matter* (1993), Judith Butler presents a queer understanding of gender identity based on principles of performance and repetition: that to achieve the semblance of identity, gender depends on repeat performances. We mask difference in order to create a more stable identity, what Case (1989) calls the *masquerade*. We perform a set of refrains— the identity “do-over.” Sex and gender are not determined by nature. Rather, they performativity resists the notion of the presupposed subject in a gender binary by renegotiating performance and refrain.

Butler makes a distinction between performance and performativity, that the former “is more or less a consciously elucidated act or series of acts [that] can never be performative…because performance it too *a priori*, too conscious of itself and its biases and internal, social forces. Performance is more a showing than a becoming. The forces at work in performativity are more insidious, hidden, concealed, and self-concealing” (Kubiak, 1998, p. 91). In Butler’s words, “performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate ‘act’, but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which
discourse produces the effects that it names” (1993, p. 236). In other words, performance presupposes while performativity contests.

Performance protects a hierarchy of identification. “By claiming that some identifications are more primary than others, the complexity of the latter set of identifications is effectively assimilated into the primary one, and the ‘unity’ of the identifications is preserved.” (Bulter, 1990, p. 253). This process, according to Butler, is what maintains a unifying narrative by which we identify ourselves and recognize the other. “The primary identification in which gender becomes ‘fixed’ forms a history of identifications in which the secondary ones revise and reform the primary one but in no way contest its structural primacy” (p. 253).

Resistance to structural primacy is not futile. Butler suggests that other possibilities emerge within psychoanalytic theory “whereby identifications work not to consolidate identity, but to condition the interplay and the subversive recombination of gender meanings” (p. 255). Fantasy resists an exclusive binary of gender and the necessity to occupy one or the other. In fantasy, subjects are plural and fluid. In her discussion of drag, Butler posits that drag “implicitly reveals the imitative of gender- as well as its contingency” (p. 259). Drag challenges the assumptions that gender is naturalized. The fluidity of identities in drag suggests an openness to re-signification of gender. It deprives hegemony of its essentialist claims to gender identity.

Butler cautions against a concept of nature as passive, stating that “the relation between culture and nature presupposed by some models of gender ‘construction’ implies a culture or agency of the social which acts upon a nature, which is itself presupposed as
a passive surface…” (p. 237). She notes that other theorists have suggested that the idea of nature should be rethought as one with a history, that nature-as-lifeless is “decidedly modern, [linked] to the emergence of the technological means of domination. Indeed, some have argued that a rethinking of ‘nature’ as a set of dynamic interrelations suits both Feminists and ecological aims” (p. 238). If nature is indeterminate and dynamic, then we might understand gender and identity as indeterminate and dynamic as well.

Gender is constructed. Construction, says Butler, is a temporal process operating through reiterative norms and that gender is both produced and destabilized in that reiteration, or refrain: gender acquires its naturalized effect through refrain but the refrain also opens “gaps and fissures [in what] cannot be wholly defined or fixed by the repetitive labor of that norm” (p. 239). So, although there are forces that seemingly fix identity through repetition and refrain, the gaps and fissures within such refrains make possible its own destabilization and “potentially productive crisis” of identity in this proceeding. The destabilized identity is excluded and abject. Butler sees this as potential for a “radical rearticulation of what qualifies as bodies that matter, ways of living that count as ‘life’” (p. 243) and the challenges to a symbolic hegemony of identity.

2.02.02 Performance, Naming, and Norms

A norm is a regulatory ideal. Naming is the product of regulatory ideals and regulatory practices. A regulatory practice “produces the bodies it governs” (Butler, 1993, p. 235) and creates a zone of uninhabitability. “This zone of uninhabitability will constitute the defining limit of the subject’s domain…” (p. 237). Operating within a
domain reifies the regulatory practices that determine performance, or being. But if one
believes Butler, gender identity is not natural or given, which means one performs
identity within a symbolic hierarchy or primary structure. This also means one has the
power to perform productive crises of identity around and through symbolic hierarchies
and primary structures. One might inhabit the uninhabitable deliberately by renegotiating
identity through refrain.

If we keep on speaking the same language together, we’re going to reproduce the
same history. Begin the same old stories all over again. Don’t you think so?

Listen: all around us, men and women sound just the same. The same discussions,
the same arguments, the same scenes. The same attractions and separations. The
same difficulties, the same impossibility of making connections. The
same…Same…Always the same…Come out of their language. (Irigaray, 1980, p. 82)

Irigaray beckons one to “come out of their language.” In a sense, it is not just
their language. One owns it in practice. For example, naturalized verbal and visual
languages often misrepresent the complexities of gender, race, and ethnicity, fostering
misunderstandings that enable further misrepresentation. One must come out of that
spoken and visual language, what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) would call becoming a
stranger in one’s own tongue: to make a deliberate effort to misunderstand the familiar.
“We haven’t been taught, nor allowed, to express multiplicity. To do that is to speak
improperly. Of course we might…exhibit one ‘truth’ while sensing, withholding,
muffling one another. Truth’s other side...stayed hidden. Secret. Inside and outside, we
were not supposed to be the same” (Irigaray, 1980, p. 85).

Those who study foreign languages become accustomed to unhinging their ways
of knowing language. Assumptions about meaning, structure, and even the gendering of
language must necessarily dissolve given that languages vary in their organization. It is
often taken for granted that the constructing of language in a native tongue must engage
in deconstruction in order to understand speaking in another. Knowing this, what might
one learn from determined deconstruction of our systems of naming, of showing, and of
knowing?

Haraway’s (1991) concept of the cyborg (cybernetic organism) encourages one to
resist naming in those restrictive ways in which one has been taught. Naming can limit
understandings of multiplicity and fail to acknowledge what is excluded in such naming.
“It has become difficult to name one’s feminism by a single adjective—or even to insist
in every circumstance upon the noun. Consciousness of exclusion through naming is
acute. Identities seem contradictory, partial and strategic” (p. 155). Irigaray speaks to the
privileges of embracing our subjectivity and critical awareness of the patriarchy of
language—and the potentials contained within that embrace:

If you/I hesitate to speak, isn’t it because we are afraid of not speaking well? But
what is ‘well’ or ‘badly?’ With what are we conforming if we speak
‘well’?...Erection is no business of ours: we are at home in the flatlands. We have
so much space to share. Our horizon will never stop expanding; we are always
open. Stretching out, never ceasing to unfold ourselves, we have so many voices
to invent in order to express all of us everywhere, even in our gaps, that all the time there is will not be enough. We can never complete the circuit, explore our periphery: we have so many dimensions. If you want to speak ‘well’, you pull yourself in, you become narrower as you rise. (p. 87)

In the course of developing a new language or confronting inscribed ways of knowing through language, one resists blockages etched out by patriarchal systems. One can, as Irigaray says, do without patriarchal models, standards, or examples. The commanding, prohibitive world has no place in a new image of thought: one that is plural, flexible, and foreign. The spoken, the written, the produced, and the consumed are no longer limited to inscribed meaning. They, too, are plural, flexible, and foreign.

Feminist theories provide a framework of resistance and renegotiation that is fruitful in reimagining disciplinary performance. “[Feminism is a] constantly shifting and diverse project…[it] represents ‘theory in the making’, always on the move, open to re-examination and new possibilities” (Dalton, 2001, p. 15).

2.02.03 Performance and Disciplinary Boundary Crossing

Poole (2009) suggests that “divergent views regarding the nature of thinking within a discipline should be encouraged because these views enrich the discipline” and that, as educators, there is a need “to strike a balance between curricula that socialize students into a way of thinking and curricula that welcome new forms of discourse and thought” (p. 53). There exists a binding system of cultural codes. “Meaning is determined in part by cultural codes. These codes control us without intervention, trapping us on
public stages as we ‘perform our lives’” (Deniston-Trochta, 2000, p. 52). Developing voice and agency as a disciplinary body means recognizing codes and how they construct meaning for or intervene in that construction.

Similarities exist across disciplines in the thinking processes developed. Identifying the context and recognizing organizing principles enables an ability to change perspectives. Interdisciplinary discourse is one essential way those similarities might be recognized. “Power arrangements shift and new social patterns emerge through discourse. Groups are excluded or included through discursive practices and those with little power are given new legitimacy by adopting a ‘legitimate’ discourse” (Dalton, 2001, p. 22). Foucauldian discourse helps us identify how common ideological concerns are articulated disciplinarily and Ellis (2009) proposes that “a Foucauldian approach might be described as a transferable interdisciplinary method…suggested by the issues and problems that are confronted” (p. 12). Similarly, Feminist studies help us identify those ideologies by challenging dominant discourses in society. “Feminist activism is a multilayered position which is reflected in our perception of society and theory” (Garstenauer, et al, 2006, p. 39).

As bell hooks notes, taking a position on the margin can be exhausting, but it allows “the possibility of radical perspectives from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds” (hooks, 1990, p. 341). A position of marginality leads to a “new understanding of a strategic sense of knowledge [that] constitutes a pulsating oppositional stance to institutional mainstream rules” (Garstenauer, et al, 2006, p. 49), but only with constant reframing of that position. Otherwise, the marginal position is at
risk of becoming dominant and static: “…each act of engagement means tracing new
borders and stepping out, as well as examining internal contradictions. Do we multiply
our power by consenting to assimilation and to all the rules already established by the
institutional, namely, the academic mainstream, and, if so, at what cost?” (p. 51). Using a
critical Feminist approach to disciplinary boundary crossing is an emancipatory act,
questioning unitary notions of identity that underpin the codes of a discipline.

Poststructuralism encourages one to be suspicious of classical notions of truth,
reason, identity, and objectivity, and to question universality, singular frameworks, and
grand narratives. The postmodern world is contingent, ungrounded, diverse, unstable,
indeterminate, and disunified (Dalton, 2001). “Critical postmodernism is seen as a
continuation of a kind of modernist thinking, which looks back and reasserts the hidden
discourses of counter-modernism. It critically reflects on modernism, but is not a
complete break with it” (p. 32). In determining productive boundary crossings between
disciplines, a critical postmodern approach endorses the looking back onto one’s own
discipline in order to better understand the in-between spaces one might occupy in that
crossing.

I return to Haraway’s (1991) concept of the cyborg to represent these theoretical
boundary crossings. “From one perspective, a cyborg world is about the final imposition
of a grid of control on the planet”: We could understand this perspective as a striated,
disciplinary space. “From another perspective, a cyborg world might be about lived social
and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and
machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints”: 54
This represents a smooth space of interdisciplinarity, but fails to account for the “looking back” that I posit is critical in interdisciplinary collaboration. And finally, “The political struggle is to see from both perspectives at once because each reveals both dominations and possibilities unimaginable from the other vantage point” (p. 154): This is the space of transdisciplinarity, or a new space in which disciplinary structures are valued while productive boundary crossings take place.

It is suggested here that negotiating boundary crossings between disciplines in higher education requires collaboration, reflexivity, and dialogue. In navigating those in-between spaces, we are able to critically investigate objects and practices embedded within disciplines, determining what is useful, what is counterproductive, and where meaningful change can take place. Butler (1995) asks, ”How is it that we become available to a transformation of who we are, a contestation which compels us to rethink ourselves, a reconfiguration of our ‘place’ and our ‘ground?’” (p. 132). Foucault (1980) said, “I don’t construct my analyses in order to say ‘This is the way things are, you are trapped.’ I say these things only insofar as I believe it enables us to transform them. Everything I do is done with the conviction that it may be of use” (pp. 294-295).

2.03 Deleuze and Guattari

The work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987) embodies thinking in a different manner. Understanding difference from a Deleuzo-Guattarian perspective and its intersections with Feminist theories is a significant move toward disrupting systems that bind, restrict, and limit new images of thought. It is useful to be reminded of the root
versus *route* comparison mentioned earlier, that in discourses surrounding disciplinarity “the focus is shifting from concentration upon double ‘o’ ‘roots’ to an idea of ‘o’ plus ‘u’: ‘roots: routes,’ with space increasingly mapped out in flows. Focus falls upon movement, crossings, types, of circulation…” (Ellis, 2009, p. 13).

Borrowing a concept from botanical root structures, the *rhizome*—a decentralized networking structure—within Deleuzo-Guattarian ontology operates as an alternative to the arborescent, or one that restricts growth or movement linearly from a central point. Instead, the rhizome allows for an infinite (or finitely infinite, as it is not random and occurs within and due to constraints) growth in any direction, without one dominant or centralizing root. “Deleuzian concepts keep the field of play open…rhizomatic, with science springing up everywhere, unrecognizable according to old rules, and coming and going in the middle ‘where things pick up speed’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 25).” (St. Pierre, 2004, p. 287).

The Deleuzo-Guattarian rhizome provides a new model for organization and thought. Similarly, the Deleuzo-Guattarian notion of *becoming* is the production of a new assemblage of thought (Bonta and Protevi, 2004), which “[taps] into the ability of self-ordering forces of heterogeneous material” (p. 54). In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), *becoming* is characterized by constant proceeding: X or Y or Z or… becomes X and Y and Z and… For example, gender is not man OR woman, but a spectrum of *ands*; discipline is not hard OR soft, but flexible and plural. Deleuze and Guattari caution against being—that it is inert, unproductive.
2.03.01 Intersections of Deleuzo-Guattarian and Feminist Thoughts

In the same era of Deleuze’s and Guattari’s A Thousand Plateaus, Parker and Pollock (1987) expressed similar concerns about philosophical inertia in regard to Feminism. They state that it is “easier to perceive oneself as a victim and to be encouraged to find other victims who will sustain the initial consciousness-raising and emergence into combative struggle. But to remain at that point or retreat into creating an alternative world, positing and celebrating some essential, female power is personally and politically unproductive” (p. 59).

Similarly, Haraway (1988) posits that passionate detachment binds one to seek perspective from multiple points of view. “One cannot ‘be’ either a cell or a molecule…if one intends to see and see from these positions critically. ‘Being’ is much more problematic and contingent. Also, one cannot relocate in any possible vantage point without being accountable for that movement. Vision is always a question of the power to see” (p. 61). Therefore, one might assume that the processes of becoming foster perspectival diversity, the ability to see. Further, in The Cyborg Manifesto (1991), Haraway posits that the image of the cyborg (cybernetic organism) “can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves…it means both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationships, space stories” (p. 181). The cyborg represents a “condensed image of both imagination and material reality” (p. 150), that in their joined centers there is potential for transformation.
Cyborg imagery can help express two crucial arguments…first, the production of universal, totalizing theory is a major mistake that misses most of reality, probably always, but certainly now; and second, taking responsibility for the social relations of science and technology means refusing an anti-science metaphysics, a demonology of technology, and so means embracing the skillful task of reconstructing the boundaries of daily life, in partial connection with others, in communication with all of our parts. (p. 181)

I’m suggesting that perspectival diversity can lead to a rethinking, or deterritorialization of a structured space of thought. The deterritorialized space, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1987), has been unhinged somehow from its territorial, coded function. A deterritorialized (smooth) space is one of multiplicities: territorialized (striated) spaces limit and determine. Deterritorialization par excellence results when “there is no reterritorialization afterward…the land ceases to be the land, tending to become ground…or support” (p. 381). But the authors caution that one is not saved by smooth spaces alone. Systems of structure operate to orient negotiations in, around, and through structure.

You have to keep enough of the organism for it to reform each dawn; and you have to keep small supplies of significance and subjectification, if only to return to them against their own systems when the circumstances demand it, when things, persons, even situations, force you to; and you have to keep small rations of subjectivity in sufficient quantity to enable you to respond to the dominant reality. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 160, emphasis my own)
Put another way, acknowledgement of the structured, striated spaces we operate within, around, and through is needed in order to navigate new thought, to ground oneself if only long enough to catapult in another direction. In her discussion of the early nineties backlash to Feminism, Amelia Jones (1992) looks at the coded information that endorsed that backlash through masculinist models of interpretation. “In the last ten years…feminism has become a dirty word. I would like to explore the discursive means by which the death of feminism…has been promoted through photography and written texts, examining what is at stake – politically, culturally, and economically – in this promotion” (p. 314). One’s subjectivity is visible in an investigation of what determines subjectivity, resisting the stagnation of being a named subject, and by becoming a critical subject. Striated, territorialized spaces provide the coded information that ultimately enables one to operate productively within those codes as well as negotiate movement away from those codes. Similarly, “[c]yborg writing is about the power to survive, not on the basis of original innocence, but on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other” (Haraway, 1991, p. 175, emphasis my own).

2.03.02 A Thousand Plateaus

In the translator’s foreword of A Thousand Plateaus (1987) by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Brian Massumi describes the work as “an effort to construct a smooth space of thought” (p. xiii). Smooth spaces of thought require recognition of primary structures, subjectivity, negotiation, performance, repetition, and decentering. In a smooth space, one might rise up at any time and move to another space. Deleuzo-
Guattarian notions of the rhizome, the refrain, nomad thought, and territorialization are useful in determining those smooth spaces.

A subterranean botanical rhizome is decentered. The rhizome within Deleuzo-Guattarian ontology operates as an alternative to the arborescent that restricts growth or movement linearly from a central point. In their words, “a rhizome is not amenable to any structural or generative model” (1987, p. 12). A rhizome is a map, not a tracing. A tracing “has already translated the map into an image” (p. 13) that is organized, stabilized, and neutralized. The map, on the other hand, is susceptible to constant modification, has multiple entryways, and can “be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation” (p. 13). A rhizome fosters connectivity and the constant proceeding in multiple directions.

The concept of the refrain as determined in *A Thousand Plateaus* relates to the coding of information that serves to mark or name a territory. Territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization are not three successive movements in an evolution, but three aspects of a single thing: the refrain (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Deleuze and Guattari state, “The refrain moves in the direction of the territorial assemblage and lodges itself there or leaves” (p. 323). In other words, the refrain is a block of content organized to form a territory—or to deterritorialize and reterritorialize somewhere else. “The [new] territory arises in a free margin of the code, one that is not indeterminate but rather is determined differently” (p. 322).

Deleuze and Guattari use birds’ songs as an example of a territorial refrain, as well as repeating mottos that establish nationalism, patriotism, or ordering. Difference is
inherent, but unity and territory are established through the refrain. The refrain does not assume a territory that becomes *of* the refrain. Rather, the refrain is a part of pre-existing circumstances. In other words, new territories are, at least in part, determined by their difference in relationship to other existing codes. In their discussion about art, Deleuze and Guattari state, “these three ‘ages,’ the classical, romantic, and modern…should not be interpreted as an evolution, or as structures separated by signifying breaks…everything we attribute to an age was already present in the preceding age” (p. 346). The difference was established, and informed, by what came before and what would come after. Additionally, inherent differences should not be masked by a refrain. Recognition of the difference one embodies keeps channels open for renegotiating identity, the potential for change: to “[hazard] an improvisation” (p. 311). The improvisation, or experimentation, is a creative line of flight.

Nomad thought is not confined to “ordered interiority; it moves freely in an element of exteriority. It does not repose on identity; it rides difference. It does not respect the artificial division between the three domains of representation, subject, concept, and being but it replaces restrictive analogy with a conductivity that knows no bounds” (Deleuze and Guatarri, 1987, p. xii). The nomad is part of a social formation dedicated to constant proceedings and deterritorialization of determined and over-coded space, resisting the sedentary State organizations that are stratified and stable. The State is defined by order and codes that order. The nomad, by comparison, “distributes himself in a smooth space” (p. 381). “The nomad has a territory; he follows customary paths; he goes from one point to another; he is not ignorant of points…although the points
determine paths, they are strictly subordinated to the paths they determine, the reverse of what happens with the sedentary” (p. 380). In other words, the nomad is not without territory, but differs from operations of the State in how that territory is determined—or, rather, how that territory is constantly re-determined.

Creative reimagining of performance through an interdisciplinary lens, I believe, strengthens one’s abilities as an instructor to engage students from multi-perspectival positions in multi-perspectival ways: a disciplinary nomad. As Gale (2010) states, “the nomad is only passing through; s/he makes necessary situated connections that can help him/her to survive, but s/he never takes on the fully the limits of one…fixed identity” (p. 307).

The concepts brought forth in *A Thousand Plateaus* are useful in positioning boundary crossing as a constant proceeding of ideas—not as singular moves from one ideology to another. By decentering structural ideas (the rhizome), acknowledging difference and repetition in the refrain, and allowing a path to determine the points and not the reverse, one approaches an image of disciplinary territories as supple and fluid.

### 2.04 Navigating Interstitial Spaces - Arts-based Practices and Collaboration

This body of literature addresses the rationale for arts-based and collaborative methods in this qualitative research study. More detailed accounts of arts-based education researchers’ theoretical and methodological positions attend to the interstitial spaces between knowledge, language, socially constructed understandings, and makings. An investigation of narrative and visual research methods exposes the values of co-
participant groups in qualitative research and provide methodological frameworks for
data collection and analysis for the development of my own research project. This study
investigates the performance of disciplines in higher education and the potentials of
interdisciplinary (re)imagining of practice through arts-based methods. Finally, a
discussion of Participatory Action Research (PAR) informs the transformative
possibilities of that collaboration.

2.04.01 A Rationale for Arts-based Research Practices

“Both artistic practice and the practice of qualitative research can be viewed as
crafts. Qualitative researchers do not simply gather and write, they compose, orchestrate,
and weave” (Leavy, 2009, p. 10, emphasis in original).

In *Method Meets Art*, Patricia Leavy (2009) notes that, “the arts are often
characterized as ‘universal’” (p. 254) which might account for why the arts are used
multidisciplinarily as prompts for discussion or alternative forms of expression or
communication. Personal correspondence with my fellow graduate students indicates that
disciplines outside of art, art education, and art history are also relying increasingly on
the visual for critical or historical investigations, sometimes going as far as asking
students to respond in visual or performative ways in lieu of traditional forms of
expression (formal and informal writing). But, Leavy cautions, although the arts can
serve as a point of convergence, the idea that music, dance, or visual arts serve as a
“universal language” is romanticized and fails to take into account systems in which art is
produced and consumed (namely socially and politically constructed systems). Therefore,
consistent, mindful recognition of the assumptions surrounding the “universality” of the arts is necessary when constructing an arts-based methodology.

As noted in the first chapter, arts-based methods disrupt steadfast theories about what constitutes research. Those disruptions are critical to progress as they create space for the renegotiation of disciplinary practices and standards (Leavy, 2009). For this reason, arts-based methods are useful in the examination of disciplinary performance and the potential of renegotiated disciplinary performances or identity through interdisciplinary collaboration.

Leavy states that, “the creative arts can help qualitative researchers pay closer attention to how the complex process of meaning-making and idea percolation shapes research” (p. 10). She continues that the iterative process of qualitative research praxis is one of emergent meaning through the labeling, identifying, and classifying of concepts, interrelation, patterns, and theory generation and that “visual and other arts-based methods make this process explicit [by drawing] out the meaning making process and [pushing] it to the forefront” (p. 11). Further, interdisciplinary arts-based practices have the potential to access new audiences, to pose questions in new ways, and to inspire the asking of entirely new questions. The arts can be emotionally and politically evocative, they have the power to captivate, to be powerful. The arts “can get at elements of the lived experience that a textual form cannot reach…[evoking] compassion, empathy, and sympathy, as well as understanding” (p. 13). They have the ability to raise critical awareness and build coalitions across groups and to challenge dominant ideologies.
Leavy notes the frequency of the application of arts-based methods in identity work is due to the ability of the arts to challenge stereotypes and generate dialogue, that the arts ideally inspire emotional responses resulting in highly engaged dialogue. “The kind of dialog promoted by arts-based practices is predicated upon evoking meanings, not denoting them” (p. 14).

I return to Leavy’s assertion that the arts have an ability to broaden the scope of the benefactors of and participants in academic scholarship. “Free from disciplinary jargon and other prohibitive (even elitist) barriers, arts-based representations can be shared with diverse audiences, expanding the effect of scholarly research that traditionally circulates within the academy…”(p. 14). I emphasize her claim that “arts-based practices help qualitative researchers access and represent the multiple viewpoints made imperceptible by traditional research methods” (p. 15).

2.04.02 Narrative Research Methods

Leavy identifies the multiple arts-based practices as narrative, music, performance/theater, dance/movement, and visual. There is a lacing-together of arts-practice in terms of performance and performativity, which leaves the study open to additional, emergent perspectives of theater, dance, and music as the collaboration commences. While there is a great deal of overlap in the ways that these various arts practices contribute to the field of qualitative research, for the purposes of this review of literature and study, I will focus on two: narrative and visual practices.
Narrative inquiry “attempts to collaboratively access participants’ life experiences and engage in a process of storytelling and restorying in order to reveal multidimensional meanings and present an authentic and compelling rendering of the data” (Leavy, 2009, p. 27). While I agree with Leavy’s description and rationale for narrative inquiry, I would trouble the use of the word “authentic” when discussing data or representation. Instead, I’d advocate narrative inquiry’s ability to present polyvocal data in its attempt to address issues of authenticity or, in some cases, misrepresentation and assumptions embedded in more traditional forms of research.

There are multiple varieties of narrative research, and each possesses unique ways of expressing data. Ethnography includes observation and interviews with the aim to describe the people or the nature of the culture being studied. Arts-based texts include multiple voices in an attempt to weave an image of the research subject that resists the hierarchy of the univocal researcher position. Autobiographical input narrative includes field notes and memos generated by the researcher. “Theoretical memos and analysis memos require the researcher to write his or her understandings and impressions of a particular social reality” (Leavy, 2009, p.36). This includes the researcher/participant’s assumptions as they unfold in the process of recording. Autoethnography is an account of the personal and its relationship to culture. As an Arts-Based Research method, autoethnography creates moments where the reader connects to the research, an entry point. Impressionistic autoethnography merges data about others and self, an especially important form of narrative inquiry for those who are attempting to act as participants in their research plan. Narrative fiction, composite characters, or poetic representation can
also provide engaging moments for researcher, participant, or audience for accessing meaning and understanding in research materials (Leavy, 2009).

In discussing narrative practices, Casey (2003) notes the importance and pervasiveness of dialogue:

We engage in dialogue, whether we are in actual conversation with another person, or watching television, or reading a newspaper…we continually make judgments on what we see or hear; we make sense through a process of selection and rejection. And what we select and reject very much depends on who we are, who is speaking to us, what they say, how they say it, where and when we are listening. (Casey, 2003, p. 7)

In I Answer With My Life (2003), Casey begins by informing the reader of her positionality, the planning for each study, and the establishment of her theoretical framework. She credits the Popular Memory Group (1982) with important discussions on oral histories and research and with the same attention to their cultural frameworks of meaning she “included her own autobiographical statements” (p. 13) in her work. Narratives, suggests Casey, should not be elicited simply for the information that can be extracted, but that the importance of participants’ understandings of their own experiences also be attended to.

The flexibility Casey allows herself in the collection of participant stories is imperative to the drift of constructed meaning in narrative research. Casey states that the interviews “mercifully” never come close to the analytical “neatness” of the research proposal. “There were several reasons why this happened. The major cause was the
sentence with which I opened the interviews: ‘Tell me the story of your life,’ a challenge which I followed with silence” (p. 17). While Casey also notes that these open-ended interview questions can result in coding and analysis chaos, they also allow time and space for participants to be reflective, to construct meaning out of all of the words in the asking sentence. These “highly constructed texts” (a term Casey borrows from the Popular Memory Group) were also site of constructive chaos. Casey recounts:

…the intensity with which these women told their stories and the coherence which developed as they spoke meant that they often ended with a strong sense of closure, one which I felt I could not violate by asking further questions. Yet I would feel frustrated because some of my questions were left unanswered…It took some time for me to realize that I could not have it ‘both ways,’ to really understand the consequences of my chosen methodology. (p. 18)

On analysis and theory, Casey refers to the life history narratives as texts, noting that as her thinking about analysis developed, she put aside the interrogation of texts through concepts of academic sociology, eventually deriving patterns from the texts themselves. Casey draws on Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of language in The Dialogic Imagination (1981) and acknowledges his sensitivity to the plurality of experience. “Bakhtin sets himself a more difficult task than most theorists do, but he also achieves a more inclusive understanding. This is accomplished through an overarching theory of ‘translinguistics’ or ‘intertextuality’ and, on the level of specificity, with the concept of ‘utterance’” (p. 20). As a semiotician, Bakhtin addressed the spinning web of interpretants generated by language, and the intersections between context (heteroglossia)
and the relationship between utterances (intertextuality). “Thus, ‘language’ can be said to be Bakhtin’s central concept and controlling metaphor...[language] is always defined in terms of diversity and changeability: ‘languages,’ multiple voices,’ ‘heteroglossia.’” (p. 20-21).

Critical theory is also reflected in Casey’s use of Bakhtin’s theories. She notes, “The plurality of social situations creates a multiplicity of languages,” that languages are stratified into dialects in the strict sense of the word, but also socio-ideologically, “such as languages belonging to professions or generations” (p. 21). Languages are also stratified by the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and so forth. Approaching narrative analysis with attention to socially constructed multiplicities of language attempts to honor the polyvocality of subjugated persons made perceptible with arts-based practices. Casey continues, “It is extremely important for researchers to create a Bakhtinian sense of the spatial coexistence and temporal simultaneity of all social languages in order to portray and encourage social dialogue” (p. 21).

According to Bakhtin (cited by Casey), one can define ‘self’ only through her relationship to the other. “Replying to the demands of the social world,” says Casey, “the self can demonstrate her ‘response-ability’: answering the questions of the social world, she can establish her ‘author-ity’”(p. 23).

By comparison, Bagley and Cancienne (2002) address the disruption of the monovocal and monological nature of voice through choreographed performance. The performance was intended as “an opportunity to encapture the multivocal and dialogical, as well as to cultivate multiple meanings, interpretations, and perspectives that might
engage the audience in a recognition of textual diversity and complexity” (p. 16). While the choreographed piece would be categorized as performative arts-based practice, their decisions about print-based data communication are highly narrative. The description of positionality, planning, and analysis is, itself, a sort of dance. Bagley and Cancienne take turns (around the page/around the floor) in expressing their relationship to the process of performing the research and, at times, speak with a “shared voice,” always made explicit to the reader.

Also essential to their study was what they considered a necessary establishment of research roles within their collaboration. “We agreed from the outset that [Cancienne]- with her background in the performing arts- would take the sole responsibility for choreographing the performance. I knew this to be the right course of action, not least because I knew nothing about choreography, movement, or dance” (p. 5). In proposing a study of arts-based methods within an interdisciplinary cohort, my positionality as a visual artist is laid bare. While I’ve struggled with being identified as the “authority” in terms of visual arts based methods in my study, Bagley and Cancienne demonstrate productive use of collaboratively established roles in participatory research.

2.04.03 Visual Research Methods

According to Leavy:

Visual art may serve as a vehicle for transmitting ideology while it can effectively be used to challenge, dislodge, and transform outdated beliefs and stereotypes. In terms of the latter, visual images can be used as a powerful form of social and
political resistance because the arts, and perhaps visual arts in particular, always retain oppositional capabilities. Cultural norms and values, which change over time as they are contested and negotiated, shape the production of visual art. (2009, p. 216)

Images are pervasive and are a significant source of information about one’s socially constructed environment. One’s understanding of images is mediated by one’s experiences, which then shape cultural and social relationships to those images. Therefore, the production and consumption of visual images can serve as a powerful agent of change. Art is a medium for conveying political ideas, concepts, beliefs, and other information about the culture in which it was produced. Visual imagery does not represent a window onto the world, but rather a created perspective. The perspective of the art-maker should always be considered. Photographs are particularly risky, as they are popularly thought to “capture” reality, neglecting the lens (physical and perspectival) through which the photographer looks or the context in which they are (re)produced.

bell hooks (1995) insists that the arts can challenge OR re-inscribe dominant views of race, class, and gender. hooks also asserts that race, class, and gender shape who makes art, who sells it, what is sold, who values it, how it is valued, who writes about it, and how it is written about. Art sometimes functions as a site of exclusion, but also has the power to dislodge stereotypes.

In thinking through visual Arts-based Research methods, it is fruitful to ask oneself, “How can visual art reify or challenge stereotypes? How can visual art serve as a method of exposing and altering unequal relations of power, privilege, and oppression?”
(Leavy, 2009, p. 219). For example, a university course concerning identity construction through the investigation of visual culture mobilizes the use of the visual to challenge stereotypes and unpack systems of practice and privilege. If that investigative lens was turned toward pedagogical practice, then again to reflect changed perspectives resulting from interdisciplinary collaboration and the production and consumption of visual images, what would that analysis look like? This inquiry will steer the study.

Leavy cites three genres of visual research images: 1) subject-produced images; 2) researcher-produced images; and 3) preexisting images. I’d posit a fourth genre: collaboratively produced images. Leavy characterizes visual arts Participatory Action Research (PAR) as “[involving] research participants creating art that ultimately serves both as data, and may also represent data” (p. 227). PAR methodologies and epistemologies will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. The goal of visual arts research is not merely one of translation from visual to verbal, but rather one that braids together the visual and verbal, provides a bridge between the two. This hybridity creates a third space, where image and word, art and inquiry meet. That third space is one that I identify as a productive site for change, for renewed perspective, and for rich (re)imagining of practice within/through/around disciplines.

Sullivan (2005) extols the potentials of visual practices in an interdisciplinary study:

Post discipline practice describes the way visual arts research takes place within and beyond existing discipline boundaries as dimensions of theory are explored and domains of inquiry adapted. The discipline perspectives that surround art
making reflect ways of engaging with relevant theoretical issues and how appropriate methods might be deployed to meet research interests and needs…there is a discipline-based position that is embedded within the empiricist tradition of research. Within the interpretivist paradigm, it is through an interdisciplinary investigation of cultural texts that theories and practices are teased apart and meanings disclosed. (pp. 101-102)

Further, investigations of the chosen visual representations of one’s disciplinary practices could be related to critical investigations of existing systems, structures, and practices that are then interrogated and subject to change. In these investigations, like Sullivan’s investigations of contemporary art, “the conceptions of the discipline are uncertain and the informing parameters are open-ended, yet the opportunity for inventive inquiry is at hand” (p. 102).

**2.04.05 Participatory Action Research and Transformation**

McIntyre (2008) names three characteristics of Participatory Action Research (PAR) as “the active participation of researchers and participants in the co-construction of knowledge; the promotion of self- and critical awareness that leads to individual, collective, and/or social change; and the building of alliances between researchers and participants in the planning, implementation, and dissemination of the research process” (p. ix). Further, McIntyre outlines the tenets of PAR as:

(a) a collective commitment to investigate an issue or problem, (b) a desire to engage in self- and collective reflection to gain clarity about the issue under
investigation, (c) a joint decision to engage in individual and/or collective action that leads to a useful solution that benefits the people involved, and (d) the building of alliances between researchers and participants in the planning, implementation, and dissemination of the research process. (p. 1)

In determining my PAR project, I have asked Who benefits from this project? What will I constitute as data? How is decision-making implemented in this study and to whom is the information disseminated? “As the PAR process evolves, these and other questions are re-problematized in the light of critical reflection and dialogue and collective reflection that the participants of PAR recognize that they have a stake in the overall project” (p. 1).

The process mentioned above involves:

- Questioning a particular issue
- Reflecting upon and investigating the issue
- Developing an action plan
- Implementing and refining said plan (p. 6)

Each of these elements of the process involves reflexivity, collaboration, and dialogue.

The participants of PAR projects can be defined in a variety of ways and because PAR participants resist the dualism of the researcher/researched characterized by other forms of social science research, every effort has been made to equalize the power relationships in this project. This means that participant identities are often in flux. Equalizing the relationship between myself and my participants values the contributions
of their experiences and acknowledges my willingness to investigate personal practices and potential for change.

Because “Participatory Action Researchers recognize the existence of a plurality of knowledges in a variety of institutions and locations” (Kindon, Pain, and Kesby, 2007, p. 9), the design of this study employs methods informed by PAR in an attempt to access the plurality of perspectives that PAR can provide.

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two frames the investigation of interdisciplinary collaboration presented in this study. In the following chapter, the methods through which I conducted the study will be discussed.
In this chapter I fully outline the proceedings, conceptual framework, and methods of inquiry I use in this study—a mix which includes autoethnographic reflection exploring disciplinary identity, arts-based practices, and narrative inquiry undertaken to identify participants’ development of disciplinary and pedagogical identities. Though preliminary cohort interviews, grounded theories began emerging from our interdisciplinary collaboration, as did themes that would later be investigated. I use the notion of the refrain throughout this chapter, where I come back to a discussion of the marking of our individual disciplinary territories during each phase of the study. The chapter itself is a refrain, an unfolding of patterns that mark our moves toward becoming interdisciplinary bodies. The chapter is also somewhat of a smooth space—where methods and data overlap as the data determined the emergent methods of the study. I acknowledge the indeterminacy of this soft space and assert that the boundaries of this text limit a more expansive rhizomatic reading of the small interdisciplinary becomings that were unearthed throughout the collaboration. I do, however, try to name these overlapping and interstitial spaces in as systematic a way possible. Sections of the data included in this chapter enable readers’ movement through methods used in the study; methods discussed in more detail in the following chapter.
3.01 Research Questions and Proceedings

The methods employed in this study answer question and the emergent supporting question: *What are the potentials of changed disciplinary performance and identity resultant from mindful interdisciplinary collaboration in higher education?* Emergent questions generated amidst this inquiry include:

- What are the tensions associated with disciplinary performance in regard to student expectations of the discipline?
- How might interdisciplinary collaboration alleviate tensions or limitations embedded in a disciplinary identity?
- How does an interdisciplinary body perform?

This research seeks to explore these performances that stabilize the disciplinary body and determine to what extent such performance could be destabilized through mindful interdisciplinary collaboration.

First, I describe myself as co-participant in the study and the rationale for including myself as participant. I then describe the populations in which other participants are situated and how those participants were chosen. Subsequently, I explore each of my co-participants’ narratives and discuss how each describes herself within a discipline and practice.

During the first phase of the collaboration, a group interview, we all responded to the initial discussion question *How do you perform your discipline?* Emergent themes surrounding these tensions produced in identifying and performing within our particular discipline were then explored, as were themes of interdisciplinary work in which each of
us was already engaged. Additionally, I began a process of creating visual records of our transcribed conversation with open-source, online word cloud generators. The resulting images provided a visual representation based on the frequency of reoccurring words or phrases in the conversation. Word clouds were also generated from the text associated with the disciplinary mission statements available on each participant’s academic department website. The second phase of the collaboration included participants collecting sets of objects or images with which to narrate their disciplinary identity and performance. Phase three of the collaboration included our shared document analysis in which participants reviewed syllabi and course that marked our disciplinary instructional performances. Phase four is a performance of our interdisciplinary body, as we collaboratively redesign a unit of instruction from an interdisciplinary perspective.

3.02 Institutional Review and Participant Selection

A purposeful sample of three graduate teaching associates (myself and two other participants) from three different university departments agreed to participate in this study. A purposeful sample is described as one not chosen for its representativeness, but “for [its] relevance to the research question, analytical framework, and explanation or account being developed in the research” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 269). My initial request for participants and my decision to include myself as a co-participant is meant to provide “an illustrative [flavour]” (Mason, 2002, p. 126) of an interdisciplinary collaboration, but it is not meant to represent a comprehensive illustration of interdisciplinary collaboration in higher education.
The first step in this study, as with all studies involving human subjects, was to secure Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. I submitted an application for exemption through the Office of Responsible Research Practices at my institution of study. The initial application was submitted and returned to me with instructions for revision before exemption was ultimately determined. Exemption for this study was determined by Review Categories 1 and 2 that recognized my study was to be conducted with participants over the age of eighteen (Appendix A). Additionally, the study was voluntary did not require the observation of persons under the age of eighteen. Participants could remove themselves from the study at any time without penalty. Finally, my co-participants’ names have been changed to further protect their privacy.

The participant sample was determined based on the following criteria: participants were graduate teaching associates during the academic year of 2010-2011; each participant was completing coursework for a graduate degrees in discrete disciplinary areas; and participants agreed to be available for collaborative meetings in which they would explore disciplinary and interdisciplinary practices during the months of March, April, and May 2011. For the sake of validity, I knew my sample could be no smaller than three participants (thus allowing me to triangulate the data collected). “The principle (of triangulation) pertains to the goal of seeking at least three ways of verifying or corroborating a particular event, description, or fact being reported by a study. Such corroboration serves as another way of strengthening the validity of a study” (Yin, 2010, p. 81).
Once these criteria had been determined, I sent an IRB-approved email to potential participants. Two participants expressed interest in the collaborative study, and we then scheduled the initial meeting of the cohort. At the initial meeting, I provided each participant with 1) the letter of invitation to participate in the study and explanation of the research (Appendix A); and 2) a copy of the informed consent document (Appendix B). I then asked the participants to review and sign the form, assuring them I would provide them each with a copy and keep the originals in a secure, locked cabinet.

**3.03 Establishing the Participant Cohort**

All three participants in this study were graduate students in the academic year 2010-2011 and were pursuing doctoral degrees in the respective fields of Art Education, Comparative Studies, and Women’s Studies. All three participants are female and between the ages of twenty-eight and thirty-four years old and hold graduate teaching associateships from the same university in the Midwest. Each participant has held a position of teaching undergraduate coursework at the university for at least one year. At one point all three participants worked together at the university writing center and no participant considered herself positioned as a subordinate to another. This sample group can be described as a purposeful sample, one that was chosen in a deliberate manner where “the goal or purpose for selecting the specific study units is to have those that will yield the most relevant and plentiful data given [the] topic of study” (Yin, 2010, p. 88).

The participatory group can be situated within a social constructivist paradigm (Guba, 1990; Lincoln, 2001) in its focus on “how participants come together to co-create
their understandings of the issues under investigation” (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2010, p. 107). I opened the dialogue for the initial interview with all participants with the following statement:

This conversation is being audio-recorded. I want this to be as useful as much for all of us in terms of our own practice or performance as instructors, so if at any point you have things or you have an idea that you want to add, I’m very open to it. I’m ok with allowing it to go in any direction…(4-18-11, lines 1-3)

As the participant/researcher, I made sure all knew that the dialogue would be on record for the purposes of the study, and that the direction of the dialogue and actions of the cohort would be mutually determined. Following this statement, I explained the theoretical framework that informed my study:

[T]he framework that I’m operating within in terms of the way that I’m interpreting data is through Deluezo-Guattarian ontology of becoming or the idea of progressing or becoming something different, the refrain as a way of stabilizing practice and Feminist notions of performance.

My interest in sharing the theoretical framework with the study participants was not in having them adopt these theories as their own. Rather, as a co-participant I thought it useful to make more transparent the direction of the study from my participant researcher position. Finally, I discussed the inclusion of arts-based methods as they relate to the study:

I’m looking at Arts-Based Research methods as a way of thinking differently and responding differently to research…I’m also looking at any kind of visual
response— that could be textual visual or any kind of creative work that we could
do either collaboratively or individually that puts language aside and represents
this experience or your experiences in your discipline— that includes narrative, or
using narrative as an arts based research method as well…the first question is

Once the direction of the study was established, along with the theoretical
framework and participatory nature of the study, the cohort was set to begin the
exploration of becoming an interdisciplinary body.

3.04 Proceedings of the Initial Cohort Meeting

My first step in gathering data was to ask each participant the open-ended
question *How do you perform your discipline?* Allowing the participants to construct
meaning in their narratives as they unfold, I hoped to construct an understanding of
experiences that Casey (2003) suggests comes from posing such open-ended questions
and attending to participants’ responses. The participants had previously been informed
of the study directive, but had not been asked to prepare a statement ahead of time in
regard to their disciplinary or performative identity.

Once each of us shared our initial responses to the first question, I posited the
following question to the group as a way of “[propelling] the plot” (Colyar & Holley,
2010, p. 78) of our performative narrative:

What [are] your experiences outside of your department in terms of working
interdisciplinarily in higher [education], what kinds of opportunities have been
afforded to you or things you’ve sought out where you feel like you are working with other disciplines in ways that look at practice, or pedagogy? Or have you? (4-18-11, lines 106-109)

In responding to this question, participants were allowed to layer their experiences as disciplinary subjects with experiences that took them outside of their subjectivity situated within Art Education, Women’s Studies, or Comparative Studies. This also reflects the process of Participatory Action Research, where we question a certain issue, then reflect upon and further investigate that issue (McIntyre, 2008). Each participant was given time to reflect on the question and respond. In answering, participants noted their interdisciplinary experiences as either interdepartmental (with colleagues whose origins prior to joining participants’ respective disciplines were in other fields) or through employment by the university writing center. Because none of us cited strong interdisciplinary collaboration outside of those venues, it was decided that we would share documents in the form of syllabi and course assignments to determine areas about which we might collaborate in future sessions.

3.05 Coding and Emergent Themes from the Initial Cohort Meeting

The shared descriptions of our disciplinary performance served to open up the dialogue to pedagogical practice and to uncovering certain tensions that we each felt were bound up in our constructed disciplinary identities.

The initial cohort conversation was recorded with an Olympus Digital Voice Recorder (VN-6000). As the researcher-participant, I transcribed the conversation using a
process of content analysis to examine parts of the whole and to generate a working theory to ground further inquiry in the study (Schwandt, 2007). Coding of the initial group interview allowed me to identify key themes and patterns as they emerged in conversation and to develop a basic conceptual framework on which to build theory and through which to interpret results (Newing, 2010). A grounded, inductive, context-sensitive scheme of coding was utilized in order to illuminate responses that addressed the guiding questions of performance and discipline, but also to determine ideas that would steer the path of inquiry and collaborative investigation that would follow. Reoccurring participant utterances of disciplinary identity, tensions embedded within a particular disciplinary identity, and others’ expectations of one identified as a particular disciplinary body assisted in the development of the coding scheme.

In my first pass through the transcriptions of the conversation, I looked for participant response to the question of How do you perform your discipline? I searched for what Newing (2010) refers to as “main themes” that recur or are particularly relevant to the research. After reviewing the list of themes and placing subthemes under the more broad themes, I edited the list to “minimize ambiguities and cut out overlap (p. 270). I then passed through the transcription again using a color-coded system, highlighting passages from the document, and created a key at the top of each page as a heading that identified each coded section by category. I identified two of the emergent themes that merited further exploration as: 1) operating within disciplines that are often described as inherently interdisciplinary; and 2) the tensions of operating within one’s disciplines. These themes informed the proceedings of subsequent cohort meetings.
The first cohort meeting lasted approximately ninety minutes. After the coding of the initial cohort conversation, I contacted my co-participants and shared with them what I had identified as emergent themes hoping to move forward with an articulated uneasiness we each experienced in naming our disciplinary performance and the tensions bound up in our positionalities within these disciplines. With their approval, we planned the second phase of our collaboration: storytelling our disciplines with images.

3.06 Communicating Disciplinary Performances Visually

The cohort’s second phase of the study employed methods of visual response to the question of disciplinary identity and performance. The cohort mutually agreed upon a second meeting where we would each assemble images or objects of our own choosing that defined a part or the sum of the parts of our respective disciplinary bodies. Additionally, during the process of transcribing the initial cohort interview, I sought an alternative interpretive approach to the uttered content and transcription: generating word clouds of the transcribed conversation. During the second meeting of the cohort, we each brought and shared the images and objects we selected as representative of our disciplinary identities.

3.06.01 Generating Word Clouds from the Initial Meeting

During my process of becoming interdisciplinary (and becoming researcher/participant), I grappled with the information in front of me: transcribed conversations; participants’ self-scribed biographies; and our collected definitions of
disciplinary performance. Each of us engaged in a refrain of marking our disciplinary performance with words. In an attempt to translate that refrain into a more visual representation, I entered the transcribed conversations into the open-source word cloud generator *Wordle* (www.wordle.net). Word cloud images (sometimes referred to as tag clouds) are generated by the frequency with which a word appears in a text. Words that appear more often in a text appear larger in the word cloud; words appearing less frequently are arranged in a descending visual hierarchy. An understanding of the general composition of the frequently used words gives the viewer an overview of the main themes of the text and illuminates standpoints of the speaker/author that perhaps in the speaking or writing were less transparent. This visual hierarchy provided a scan of the words most often privileged in the naming and marking of our disciplinary performances through language. Like McNaught and Lam (2010), I used the *Wordle* clouds as part of my preliminary analysis of the transcripts. Kress (2003) has pointed to the recent shift away from monomodality in Western culture and the cultural emphasis on textual practices that place more value on text-based genres than visual genres. This shift results in a more mixed set of semiotic resources through which we make meaning (Gourlay, 2010). As an artist/educator/researcher in the 21st century, the translation of the written and spoken word to a visual representation on the screen made as much sense to me as the careful investigation and coding of the written documents, but did not provide the same deep reading as the coded documents.

I acknowledge the limitations of the *Wordle* word cloud in my use of it. The language in the word cloud is taken out of context: the viewer of the word cloud does not
know the opinion of the speaker/author in their use of a particular word. The word cloud treats each word as a unit, not taking into account the semantics, the phrasing, or the sentence in which the word appears. As a tool for an emergent, collaborative study, the word clouds provided a grounding point from which we were able to launch into new strata of our disciplinary understanding.

I wanted a snapshot of our first collaborative meeting together. After transcribing the first conversation, I selected, copied, and pasted the document into the text field of the word cloud generator. By clicking “create,” the open-source software generates a word cloud from the text supplied by the user. I did not omit any text from the individual participant’s response because, as McNaught and Lam (2010) assert in their study, “frequency is an important aspect of the tool, we would argue that the strategy works best for analyzing text in which the full text of each informant’s speech is preserved” (p. 641). Once the text was pasted into the field, I did not manipulate the word cloud other than to select a font and color scheme that would allow for easy reproduction and would be most easily legible. I chose a motif of black and white with simple, sans serif fonts and kept that consistent for each of the word clouds generated. I also selected word clouds where the text was arranged dominantly horizontal. These decisions were made comparatively by clicking on the “randomize” selection available in the software until a word cloud was generated that seemed most easily understood in regard to color, font, and organization. To preserve the anonymity of the participants, I chose not to save the word cloud to the public gallery available through the software. Rather, I made a screen capture of the word cloud and saved it to a password-protected folder on my personal computer.
The second word clouds generated were of each participant’s responses in their entirety. I selected each participant’s responses to all questions from the transcribed conversation and pasted it into the text field of the online word cloud generator. I did not attempt to isolate individual’s responses to specific questions or responses to other participant’s remarks. The same process of selection for the word cloud generated from the transcription in its entirety was used for the individual participants’ responses. These files were also saved to the password-protected folder on my personal computer.

The next series of word clouds generated were informed by the coded data from the initial cohort interview. After searching “though the data for significant events (statements, actions, interactions)” (Walker, 2006, p. 4) and identifying internal and external themes from the repetition of key words and phrases and theories drawn from the review of literature, I selected sections of response according to the coded document that I thought suggested fruitful sites of exploration in the study: performed discipline and tensions associated with disciplinary performance.

My use of the word cloud provided the snapshot I was looking for, but also was intended to serve a more significant role in the collaborative study: active documentation. According to Sullivan (2005), active documentation in practice-based research should not be seen as the research process itself, but rather methods through which ideas are developed. This concept is particularly useful in collaborative research projects or Participatory Action Research, where polyvocal perspectives might be represented in multiple, visual ways. In this study, the process is integral to concept development and understanding. In research where collaborative participants are being asked to not only
reflect on their experiences, but to reflexively account for their own construction of identity and performativity, the production of visual media can produce what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) call a line of flight, or new direction of thinking about experience, identity, or practice. I will braid the simultaneous simplicity and complexity of ideas generated by communicating visually, “using the visual arts to turn questions into understanding that gives rise to more questions not only describes an aesthetic process of self-realization but also describes a research process” (Sullivan, 2005, p. 115).

3.06.02 Articulating Disciplines in Images and Objects

After the first cohort meeting, we communicated via email and each agreed to bring in a series of objects or images that told the story of our disciplinary performances. This decision was determined after I shared the word clouds generated from the initial transcripts. The processes of art-making and practices of research share commonalities that allow us to speak that language. “Both artistic practice and the practice of qualitative research can be viewed as crafts. Qualitative researchers do not simply gather and write, they compose, orchestrate, and weave” (Leavy, 2009, p. 10, emphasis in original). Leavy states that, “the creative arts can help qualitative researchers pay closer attention to how the complex process of meaning-making and idea percolation shapes research” (p. 10). She continues that the iterative process of qualitative research praxis is one of emergent meaning through the labeling, identifying, and classifying of concepts, interrelation, patterns, and theory generation and that “visual and other arts-based methods make this process explicit [by drawing] out the meaning making process and [pushing] it to the
“forefront” (p. 11). Where language might have failed us, we hoped to remedy our articulated performances through images and objects:

An approach such as this offers researchers a means to facilitate the exploration of subtle, abstract and difficult themes in a creative way, which may reveal more depth than traditional interviewing techniques. Another advantage of the image is in the representation of metaphor, and the relative ease with which a visual representation can be made to stand for an important concept or difficult-to-express aspect of experience. (Gourlay, p. 83)

The second meeting took place in an agreed upon location on campus: Genevieve’s office. I informed the cohort prior to commencing that I would be recording the conversation. Because we had agreed in a previous conversation to come prepared with images or objects that attempt to define our disciplinary performance, there was minimal prompting during the meeting itself. Each of us took the time to display the items that we brought and to explain why we chose them. I asked permission to photograph the images and objects as the participants displayed them, and all agreed.

After we each shared our visual disciplinary stories, I suggested that we attempt to re-create our disciplinary bodies by taking out the images or objects that we felt limit or bind us in some way, to take out the things that we own as disciplinary bodies that perhaps we wish we could deterritorialize through interdisciplinary work. In addition, we allowed ourselves to choose from other co-participants’ images and objects to build our performative interdisciplinary bodies. We were each allowed to construct our performative body without influence or input from the other co-participants. Without
interference, but with the supplied knowledge of the collective images and objects, we each reconstructed an interdisciplinary image as disciplined bodies.

The last step in this phase of the collaboration was to create one interdisciplinary image from the collected objects and images to embody our individual contributions to the conversation. Collaboratively, we embarked on a making of an interdisciplinary body that was not marked by one specific disciplinary performance, but the combination of what we perceived as the most productive sites of inquiry in our own performance and in the articulated values of our co-participants. Collaborative making in communities, Sullivan (2005) says, is an intensely local knowledge, is grounded in community construction. “In art making, personal vision and public voice share a loose coalition that not only shapes the dialogue within the community context, but also creates a dialectic with those whose interests are encountered…” (p. 160). This process differed from the previous image-making in that we were forced to consider our interdisciplinary bodies, our personal visions, and pass through the lens of a community of agents and views.

Occupying the interstitial space of this practice was our mindful attempt at unhinging our territorial zones of disciplinariness, of speaking in languages that others in the group found unfamiliar. We did this through visual representation and storytelling, because, as Leavy (2009) states, the arts “can get at elements of the lived experience that a textual form cannot reach…[evoking] compassion, empathy, and sympathy, as well as understanding” (p. 13). They have the ability to raise critical awareness and build coalitions across groups and to challenge dominant ideologies.
The second cohort meeting lasted approximately ninety minutes. The third phase of the collaboration was decided during this meeting. I posited to the group that we share lessons around a common concept to explore an interdisciplinary approach to teaching. Lola suggested we tackle a lesson on White Privilege, an area about which we had each expressed tensions. Genevieve and I both agreed, and we adjourned after deciding on the next meeting time and place.

3.07 Coding the Second Phase

The second phase proceedings were informed by the first phase findings, so common codes from the first phase were noted in the second phase coding process. The themes relating to disciplinary performance, tensions of disciplinary performance and positionality, interdisciplinarity, and articulation of disciplinary values were marked with the same color coding as the first phase for continuity. The refrain of disciplinary performance and articulation of that performance is relevant in the process of unfolding new understandings, just as deterritorialization is dependent first on the territory.

My second sweep through the transcripts was in search of new emergent themes, because:

PAR is more than reflection upon practice and problem solving. It involves problem posing, examining values and questioning motives. It involves committed action in which a range of views and feelings are taken into account. However, while PAR processes aim to open up space for participants to communicate and share their understandings of the situation, such spaces can only
be used when people want to and feel able to share their views. (in Savin-Baden, 2010, p. 111)

Emergent themes reflected significant new directions for the study, including Values and Characteristics of Our Interdisciplinary Body, and Speaking in Metaphor. The frequency with which these themes occur in the second phase further validates their establishment as a directional approach for the continued collaboration.

Noting the language used in conversation and in describing the images and objects selected to tell our disciplinary stories was a valuable process in determining how the cohort was beginning to understand itself as an interdisciplinary body. By identifying the overlaps and the commonalities of our pedagogies and philosophies, we were better able to determine what the next fruitful stage of our collaborative process might be, or that “meaning-making involves the ongoing process of sharing knowledge, discussion, reflection, action and the consequences of action; for participants to revisit shared experiences which challenge previous ways of thinking and participating” (in Savin-B, 2010, p. 112). The participants’ willingness to speak for the group rather than for themselves or their discipline exclusively was noted in this coded theme.

Another significant direction this phase embarked on was the use of metaphor in describing disciplinary performance. As each participant displayed the images or objects brought to the meeting, the language used to describe the image and its relevance to disciplinary performance was often highly metaphoric. The use of metaphor is one of the six renderings of a/r/tography (Irwin and Springgay, 2008). According to Springgay (2004, as cited by Bickel), renderings are “performative gestures of meaning-making (p.
Bickel (2007) advocates an a/r/tographic methodology to address the limits of the “classical and modernist aesthetics of form, order, and beauty and to engage an art aesthetic that is in relationship with self and others - a practice that follows the art process and is curious about space between, around and inside the mind/body, rational/arational, secular/spiritual, writing/art, and ritual/education” (p. 211).

For Bickel, a/r/tography engages her role as the artist/researcher/teacher in a “self-reflexive inquiry that is led by the making of art and writing” (p. 211). She states that a/r/tography allows for complexity of meaning that language cannot fully express, that “language comes to us as it disconnects and distances” (p. 211).

Identification of metaphor in the transcripts from the second phase was made by looking for language where participants were describing all or part of their disciplinary performance in terms of an image or object. These metaphors I interpreted as the interstitial space between language and performance. In the next phase of the study, we sought to access those interstitial spaces again by collaboratively approaching a common problem, informed by what we each understood to be our respective disciplinary identities and the codes that help to define those identities.

3.08 An Interdisciplinary Investigation of White Privilege

In the previous phases of our collaboration, the cohort unfolded a commonality in the courses we teach: that each of us held a disciplinary belief in the value of identifying
and unpacking socially constructed power systems. The third cohort meeting took place at my residence. We agreed to share lesson plans and curricular materials from our courses that dealt with addressing the concept of White Privilege. Our choice to collaboratively explore one issue reflects what Davies and Devlin (2010) refer to as idea dominance:

Viable [interdisciplinary] projects require a key ‘idea’ without which success of the project is threatened… Failure might be because of inconsistent or incompatible key ideas, or because no key idea emerges. The key idea needs to be mutually agreed upon as being important by all involved. Dominant ideas are closely aligned with eventual success and achievement in results that all parties to a project or curriculum regard as being illuminating, and as offering some degree of intellectual progress. (pp. 22-23)

In advance of the meeting, we communicated via email correspondence and agreed to share curricular materials (syllabi, course readings related to the topic, and lesson plans related to the topic) with one another. Electronically submitted documents through email prior to the third cohort meeting were intended to be reviewed at the discretion of the participant, but no instructions regarding the study or interpretation of the documents were given.

I addressed the cohort by welcoming them and asking them how they would like to proceed. I informed them, again, that the conversation would be recorded. Lola volunteered to share her lesson plans first. She systematically went through her unit on the subject of White Privilege, occasionally pausing and asking questions of the rest of
the cohort. We, as co-participants, asked questions as Lola spoke. This procedure differed from earlier cohort meetings where we generally allowed each participant to speak without interjecting. As the researcher/participant, I was especially cautious of occupying that role, my “need to reinforce the collaborative and ethical relationships with participants” (Yin, 2010, p. 97), but felt safe to ask questions and interject after Lola and Genevieve began conversing outside of the loosely established social protocol of the meetings.

Moreover, while a primary researcher does not assume expertise, they are nonetheless required to be skilled, supportive and resourceful. Considering issues of power amongst individuals in light of their different visions of the inquiry, its aims, methods and actions, and making this process amenable to all, is a task not to be underestimated. (Wimpenny, 2010, p. 92)

The change in protocol was uncomplicated by the cohort. Davies and Devlin (2010) assert that “dominant ideas [in disciplines] become viable and become the focus of investigation and learning, that is of research and teaching. However, interdisciplinarity is different. By necessity, and by definition, a variety of ways of seeing, cognitive maps and vocabularies are involved” (pp. 22-23). Issues of the cohort were mutually agreed upon, and the dialogue that proceeded was more polyvocal than with previous cohort meetings. So the proceeding of the third phase of our collaboration was a smoother space than before, which makes the account of that proceeding more difficult to mark out in this section, as there was less structure in that proceeding.
This phase is the slipping in to a more interdisciplinary space where our performance was marked by the collaboration, not primarily by our discipline. This phase was the performance of productive crises of identity around and through hierarchies and structures, the inhabiting of the uninhabitable (Butler, 1993).

Genevieve and I each shared our lesson plans under a similar protocol as Lola: we were given the opportunity to speak as the authority on our approach to the concept of White Privilege and curricular materials related to the topic, but questions were posed of the speaker as a dialogic process. I allowed, as researcher/participant, the conversation to evolve in directions I had not expected. This reflects what Casey (1993) notes in asking participants open-ended questions, the results never closely resembled the project plan, but what emerged instead were rich narratives. Narratives, suggests Casey, should not be elicited simply for the information that can be extracted, but that the importance of participants’ understandings of their own experiences also be attended to. Casey also recommends becoming comfortable with analytic chaos, to let the methods of the analysis unfold with the narratives. At just under three hours, the third phase meeting lasted almost twice as long as the first and second individual interviews.

Before adjourning, we decided that, after the shared knowledge of our individual approaches to the subject of White Privilege, we would collaboratively design a lesson that draws from all three of our curricular materials. We agreed that the best way to approach this design would be to upload our lesson materials to a shared document via Google Documents. This would allow us time to consider the curricular materials, to
mark the changes that we each make, and to generate an ongoing dialogue that allows for reflection and reflexivity.

### 3.09 Coding the Third Phase

The coding of the third phase of the collaboration involved investigating the same themes from the previous two phases (the refrains of disciplinary performance, tensions, etc.) but also the emergent theme that I refer to in my coding as **Interdisciplinary Boundary Crossing**. I noted that in this phase the speaker often stopped in her narrative to ask questions of other participants and that these participants, in turn, felt comfortable to interrupt and ask questions of the speaker. I marked these occasions as moments of the speaker abandoning the privilege of her own disciplinary knowledge in favor of knowing from another’s perspective. This is an instance of the methods of the study giving birth to the data.

Looking for the points of interdisciplinary boundary-crossing was strongly informed by the proceedings of previous cohort meetings. This process of coding was what Schwandt (2007) describes as more circular than linear coding. The methods and subsequent analysis unfolds in an “iterative fashion through the interaction of the processes of generating data, examining preliminary focusing questions, and considering theoretical assumptions” (p. 81). Without the coded transcriptions from the previous two phases, the emergent theme of **Interdisciplinary Boundary Crossing** would not have been made as obvious. The refrain of disciplinary performance and tension had been established as the territory, so the deterritorialization of that language and performance
was laid bare during the third phase in the ways that we each spoke for ourselves, each other, and the collaborative process. That language will be discussed and analyzed in more detail in the following two chapters.

### 3.10 Collaboration of Curricular Design

For the fourth phase of the study, I set up a shared electronic document through Google Docs which allowed each of the participants to contribute to a collaboratively generated curricular approach to the concept of White Privilege investigated during the third phase. This online format allowed us each to act as administrators and editors of an electronically accessible document, but was private and inaccessible to others outside of the cohort. I added the lesson plans submitted by each participant verbatim to the shared Google document and sent an invitation via the Google document manager to the cohort to begin a redesign of the collected material into what we termed one “superlesson.”

As a preliminary step toward the interdisciplinary consolidation of the materials, I color-coded the submitted readings and activities according to participant submission and arranged the readings and activities into thematic groups as opposed to spatially separating them by discipline. I did this to allow each participant access the origin of the materials as well as the ability to note the overlaps present in the submitted curricular materials. I issued an invitation to the other participants to omit and rearrange the submitted curricular material as each deemed relevant, as we could track the changes made through the shared Google document. No changes were lost through the process of designing one “superlesson.” Rather, the document was subject to a process of
deterritorialization and renegotiation. In addition to the revision of the document content, participants were encouraged to make comments in the margins of the document that reflected their thoughts on the included materials.

Participants were given approximately one week to review the assembled materials before responding to a series of follow-up questions. As the participant/researcher, I submitted the initial list of follow-up questions to the other participants via an additional Google document. This format again allowed each participant to converse and edit their responses and to track the changes made to the document. The questions were:

- How/were your thoughts on your own disciplinary performance changed through interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration?
- What would you note as the most significant benefits of interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration in higher education?
- What would you note as the most significant barriers to strong interdisciplinary work in higher education?
- How/was the experience of storytelling your disciplinary performance through images different than naming that performance through language?
- What were your thoughts on seeing your spoken words translated into a word cloud (visual) and then compared to your department/disciplinary word cloud?
- How might the process of collaboratively designing a lesson (White Privilege) change the way that you teach in the future? Were there any perspectives shared that you had not considered?
Each participant was asked to respond via the Google document in order to share her responses with other members of the cohort, but was given the option of responding privately to me if she so chose. No participant opted to respond privately. The reflections to the questions were then generated over the course of approximately two weeks. Participants issued initial responses to the questions and often responded again to reflections made by other participants in reference to particular questions. The follow-up questions function more as an open dialogue than final response to the collaboration.

3.11 Conclusion to Methodology Chapter

From this point, I transition to the next chapter where I present the responses to the initial interview question, the emergent questions and themes, the investigation of visual interpretations of disciplinary identity, the interdisciplinary investigation of a problem, and the follow-up questions. In the presentation of the data, it is hoped that answers to the primary research question What are the potentials of changed disciplinary performance and identity resultant from mindful interdisciplinary collaboration in higher education?, as well as the emergent questions regarding disciplinary identity, become more apparent.
CHAPTER FOUR – PRESENTATION OF DATA

This chapter accounts for the data collected through the three recorded cohort conversations, the generated word clouds from the transcriptions, the visual storytelling, and the interdisciplinary lesson collaboratively designed by the cohort and introduced in the preceding methodology chapter. The purpose of Chapter Four is to provide a record of the layered narrative constituting participants’ emergent understandings of disciplinary performance and their identities as interdisciplinary bodies.

Throughout the process of cohort collaboration, each participant engaged in dialogues regarding perceived disciplinary identity and performance. Participants were given the opportunity to embark on a process of deterritorializing disciplinary identities recording their attempts to arrive at a more interdisciplinary body. The story of each participant is integral to the data collection, and accordingly I also note the importance of participants’ understandings of their own experiences (Casey, 1993). This chapter is structured as a loose narrative, told through the transcribed utterances of the participants, through the Wordle generated images from transcribed utterances, and through the inclusion of the visual storytelling in which we each engaged in as part of our disciplinary performance and emergent interdisciplinary identity. The data continues to build up the emergent themes of the study as introduced in the prior chapter.
Further, as the data unfolded, I found an increasingly conflated, or perhaps merged articulation of disciplinary performance and pedagogy. Perhaps this conflation could in part be the result of each subject’s disciplinary identity being inextricably linked with her identity as a pedagogue situated IN a discipline. The data presented here came into existence during the course of the extradisciplinary interview contexts. I have allowed some parts to be presented in their entirety in order to construct participants’ narrative understandings of their disciplinary, performative and pedagogical subjectivity, even when the question being asked concerns disciplinarity. In the following chapter, the conflation and merging of disciplinarity and pedagogy, as well as the emergent themes regarding the tensions of disciplinary performance and interdisciplinary performance are more fully explored.

This chapter is organized in phases, following closely the format of the preceding chapter. I recognize that this linear categorization does not account for the more rhizomatic becoming interdisciplinary that I believe took place during the cohort collaborations. The presentation of this data is meant to represent a proceeding of data rather than a finite set of data. I now offer the cohort’s narratives as they fit within the phases of the study following my introduction of these participants.

4.01 Participants of the Study

I first met co-participant Lola in the fall of 2010 when she and I started working together at our university’s writing center. The program for which we work is an interdisciplinary program designed to work with the university staff and faculty teachers
of writing. Working with Lola, I soon recognized her as a potential participant in this study. Her dedication to pedagogy and practice in her field and in the broader university community is admirable. When asked to describe herself as an instructor, Lola states:

I am a long-time student and a long-time teacher, I suppose. I guess anyone could say that and not be wrong, but I literally mean that I have been teaching peers since the second grade when one of my elementary school teachers noticed that I was bored in class and that the challenge of teaching a unit to our class on whales would really be the thing that would get my wheels rolling. All through college I tutored music students one-on-one and in groups, and have since been able to teach undergraduate classes in two different departments: Women’s Studies and Comparative Studies. I taught general education courses in both of those departments, and two of the courses that I taught were disciplinary variations on the same second-level writing requirement. As a graduate student in women’s studies, I encountered critical and Feminist pedagogy for the first time and was finally granted vocabulary to describe the classroom strategies that I had personally intuited as more ethical. My interest in teaching continues to expand and be reshaped, and I’ve now taken on a new role working for the campus teaching center and the writing center as a consultant.

I also met Genevieve while working at the writing center, although during the Spring of 2011 while the study was taking place she discontinued her employment there. With a background in social work, Genevieve struck me as unique in her approach to
teaching, that care and nurturing were more central to her instruction than with many graduate student instructors I know.

I currently teach in the Department of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality studies and even though I’ve been teaching in some capacity since middle school when I was chosen by my ballet instructor to choreograph and teach barre routines, I often forget that I am a ‘teacher.’ This isn’t because I don’t enjoy teaching or don’t spend enough time lesson planning, teaching, debriefing, grading, and thinking about my students, but rather due in large part to the number of fantastic teachers I’ve had in my life, dance teachers, women’s studies professors, social work professors, my mother, teachers I still refer to and defer to. I frequently have to remind myself that I, too, am a teacher, that I now sit among these teachers whom I admire, all women who have helped me to realize how much I enjoy sitting in a classroom alongside my students, sharing and challenging ideas and beliefs, developing lessons, facilitating discussion, collaborating, and growing in ways we couldn’t have anticipated on the first day of class.

As the third participant in this study, I identify as an Arts Educator. I am situated in a department of Art Education at an institution of higher learning. Before pursuing a graduate degree in Art Education, I was an instructor of visual art in public schools for five years. Like my fellow participants in this study, my disciplinary identity informs my teaching in significant ways. A more detailed account of my identity as a co-participant entering this study was offered earlier in the prologue.
4.02 The Initial Cohort Meeting

Davies and Devlin (2010) suggest that
A discipline provides the structure of knowledge that trains and socialises
members of a university department. This training and socialisation includes the
ability to carry out the appropriate tasks of teaching, research and administration
that are germane to the discipline. It also includes the production of relevant
research, the process of peer review and the development of a system of academic
rewards. (p. 28)

I chose the concept of “performance” of discipline deliberately. The notion of
performance from a Feminist perspective as discussed in my review of literature assumes
a semi-permanence of identity based on the repetition of that performance. It also
pressumes that deviation from the refrain is possible, as is a deterritorialization of stabile
performative identity.

4.02.01 Articulated Disciplinary Identity and Performance

To begin the collection of data, we had to first name our disciplinary
performances as we understood them. Genevieve identifies as a member of the Women’s,
Gender, and Sexuality Studies department at her institution of higher education. When
asked about her performed discipline, Genevieve asked if I meant “in terms of pedagogy
specifically” (4-18-11, line 25) and I informed her that she could answer in terms of
pedagogy if she felt pedagogy was an integral part to her disciplinary performance,
noting that pedagogy is not integral to everyone’s disciplinary performance. Her response includes pedagogical priorities as she understands them to be valued in her discipline.

I feel that certainly ideas about inclusivity and dialogue are valued in my discipline in terms of pedagogy, but also in performance. I think about my own performance…I don’t know. Because there is such tension and controversy maybe in the Feminist classroom, I immediately start out with my kindergarten teacher in mind, and I sort of feel like I adapt a performance that is really gentle, almost like a kindergarten teacher—and throughout the quarter. But I’m really attentive to the space in the classroom, student background, and a variety of learning styles, and I go back and forth on this. But I think that both in discipline and performance I consider first of all narrative, inserting the self, theory…so using a lot of not necessarily my own personal experiences because I want to maintain personal boundaries—but using narrative stories, using stories of other peers that have decided to write in a less “jargonistic” way. But I think narrative is an important value that my discipline has. (Genevieve, 4-18-11, lines 31-43)

Lola identifies as a member of the Department of Comparative Studies at her institution of higher learning. Lola’s answer to the question of disciplinary performance was less clear, as Lola comes from a discipline that she describes “an ‘interdiscipline’ by definition” (Lola, 4-18-11, p. 2). She continued, naming a central value of her discipline as awareness of power structures, and marking the disciplinary performance by that central value and the different approaches individuals take in addressing that central value.
So, I think the one sort of central value that everybody has is an awareness of power structures and shedding light on power structures, and power structures of various kinds. But people take various approaches to that, use different routes to get there and different methods—but I think that’s what we all do…I guess. (Lola, 4-18-11, lines 45-50)

Lola also remarked that, because of her inherently interdisciplinary discipline, students do not possess the same entrance narrative or expectations that they might when entering a classroom with more established disciplinary boundaries. She compares her experiences in her current discipline, Comparative Studies, with her experiences as a student in Women’s Studies:

You know, with Women’s Studies, it’s usually mostly women and they are generally mostly on board with the topic, but you also can’t be too “the man’s got you down” because they get really resistant to that. You have to ease them in to it. I’ve even had good experiences with men [in women’s studies classes] because they are ready to be destabilized. But Comparative Studies is really different because we use a lot of critical race theory and Feminist theory and that sort of thing, but without the name attached to it right away when we come into the class. So students don’t really know what to expect at all. So in some ways you can kind of slide ideas in, not under the radar. You can just normalize it without them knowing that you are doing something radical. But at the same time, they’re also not prepared to necessarily respond in the most productive way…so, it feels
sneakier to me, in some ways. I don’t know, more under the radar I guess. So that’s my stabilized performance. I’m sneaky now. (Lola, 4-18-11, lines 54-70)

In my own response to the question, I reflected much of what Genevieve and Lola gave as their own understanding of their disciplinary performances as well as spoke to the elements of being an arts educator that make my discipline challenging in other ways not already articulated by the group. Namely, I spoke to the tensions of immersion in a graduate program of study that is highly theoretical when the core of my discipline is teacher preparation, which marks the first time the issue of theory versus practice emerges—an issue that the cohort continues to explore throughout much of the study.

I’m also from a discipline that is inherently interdisciplinary, or at least we talk about interdisciplinary work and that comes from whether you are teaching PreK-12 where interdisciplinary can mean interdisciplinary arts, different media or practices. Or at this institution, where we have an arts policy program as well, arts education tends to generally [tend to imply] “visual” arts education, [but largely not addressing that] there is music education or theater education. But here, we have people from theater, people from dance, people who are visual artists, all in the same program. So I’ve come to think of arts education differently here as a practice or performance than I did when I was teaching. Also, at this institution, it’s highly theoretical program in the graduate school, talking about a lot of the same things that you guys approach in your disciplines like social theory, as there is a strong movement in arts education toward social justice, but also it’s very broad in scope—there are people in my program doing child art studies. So as
things sort of evolve in arts practice and arts research, people still hold on to these other ways…so you have to navigate this pretty dense terrain of how you want to talk about this subject, like in comparative studies, that is inherently interdisciplinary. And that’s one of the things that I really grapple with: where do I want to plant myself? I’m very interested in theory, I’m very interested in these ideas, but the program, at its core, is a teacher preparation program. I don’t know of any arts education programs that don’t have a teacher-training component. And although this program is highly theoretical and exploring these social issues, we still have to decide how we want to bring that theory back to practice. (Courtnie, 4-18-11, lines 72-94)

The conversations describing—or attempting to describe—our personal understandings of disciplinary performance will be significantly analyzed in the following chapters.

4.01.02 Experiences with Interdisciplinarity

Also important in establishing disciplinary performance were our individual experiences with interdisciplinary work outside of the cohort. I suggested we each reflect on our interdisciplinary experiences.

Well, I’d say that working at Writing Across the Curriculum, we have productive conversations in the office…. actually I feel like I’ve lost a significant pedagogical support since leaving Women’s Studies. Women’s Studies is institutionalized in ways that Comparative Studies is not. The thing about comparative studies is that it’s already interdisciplinary, so we talk about it in
informal situations. I like to corner people by the cheese tray, ask them “How’s teaching going?”… but we do talk about concept, what are the different issues raised? How are you teaching White Privilege or are you running into these certain problems where your students will go with you to a certain point and then stop and you just feel battered? How do you deal with that? So we do talk about pedagogy. And we put a lot of emphasis on, I guess I’ll say cultural studies, which is more accurate than comparative studies, since we’re not all comparing things. There is an ideal that you will respect your students’ voices and respect their positionality and respect what they have to say. So people talk about strategies for doing that when they run in to problematic things. (Lola, 4-18-11, lines 125-133)

Yeah, to echo Lola, my experience with WAC [Writing Across the Curriculum] has provided that maybe more last year than this year because I was there all three quarters. And I think like Lola, too, because I’m in a discipline that is more an interdisciplinary, I think that because the faculty are coming from different places professionally and have different ideas about what teaching looks like or what Feminist teaching looks like and that’s come up in the classroom, maybe not so much in workshops or training, but certainly in my first year here. (Genevieve, 4-18-11, lines 134-140)

We each articulated what we understood as interdisciplinary experiences in our departments, because each of our departmental disciplines are composites of scholars from various fields. But what we were failing to acknowledge was that, in spite of where
we all came from, we were all still operating within a discipline which is coded and carries meaning beyond our individual understanding of what that discipline is. We were describing more closely resembles what Davies and Devlin (2010) refer to as *relational interdisciplinarity*.

This variant of interdisciplinarity might be referred to as relational interdisciplinarity, and its similarity to multidisciplinarity is clear. The differences are that, in multidisciplinarity, there is no acknowledgement of the work of others at all; whereas, in relational interdisciplinarity, there is an explicit acknowledgement of – but no implicit willingness to learn from others. (p. 35)

4.01.03 *Articulating Values of Our Disciplines*

This relational interdisciplinarity and our situatedness within our disciplinary performance is more apparent in the articulation of the values we believe are held by our respective disciplines. Genevieve spoke to the situatedness of Women’s Studies:

I think, you know, “we’re sitting this way because this is a Women’s Studies classroom” or this is one way that we dialogue with each other, to see each other’s faces, to decentralize the power. I’m asking you to do this kind of reflective writing because…or the things that we’re reading, this is Feminist methodology and this is why these scholars are doing work in this way. Multi-modal or multi-level or multi-textual. But I tell them, “this is what this is, this is what people in women’s studies do.” (Genevieve, 4-18-11, lines 317-323)
Lola states that she shares with her students explicitly, “This is a Cultural Studies classroom, and in Cultural Studies we value these stories” (Lola, 4-18-11, line 326). My own situatedness in Art Education is a little more slippery when trying to articulate my disciplinary values to my students.

I can’t tell my students “this is an art education class” because Art Education means something very specific to them… I think about it more from the perspectives of other disciplines, honestly, because I’m talking about discourse around social theory, although those things are tied very closely to Art Education, obviously, but I’m not talking to them about practicing arts methods and I’m not usually talking to art or Art Ed majors. I’ve had one Art Ed major in the last 3 quarters. I think it’s something that is a little more difficult to articulate to my students, but I end up talking about the things that we value, not even that all of the discipline of Art Ed values necessarily, but the things that I value and the reasons why I chose Art Ed as a discipline, the ways that I can operate within the discipline that resonate with me, socially, politically, whatever. (Courtnie, 4-18-11, lines 334-350)

In these conversations, we each expressed certain tensions associated with teaching and identifying with a particular discipline: the expectations (or uncertainties) of students entering our classrooms; how we articulate the values of our discipline (or our values as members of the discipline) and the implications of articulating those values; and knowing we have limited time with which to articulate those values and allow students to develop their own ideas within those the discipline.
**Tensions Associated with Disciplinary Performance**

Tensions? “I can definitely answer this. I think about this a lot,” (4-18-11, line 257) Lola blurts out when I ask the cohort *What are some of the things you feel like you struggle with in terms of your disciplinary performance?*

So, I’m really ideologically committed to the idea of a constructivist classroom, but I feel like the stakes are so high because for my students, this is perhaps their one chance to encounter any critical ideas regarding sexuality or identity in any way. So I feel like…I don’t have the luxury of taking a lot of time to let those things organically emerge in discussion. So sometimes I feel that I’ve guided or pushed the discussion and I wish that I didn’t have to do that. And I feel really torn about that. It really bothers me so I try and choose things that will prompt them to think about things without making them defensive, because that’s always a concern, like “Screw you, lady, I don’t want to think about those things.”

Gender is really complicated in Comparative Studies now because our classes are mixed gender, I generally have a pretty 50/50 balance in my courses. Having to be a woman that is normatively feminine in a classroom with all these boys is a really different experience than in Women’s Studies, again because I feel like I’m tricking them into these things, unlike being a Feminist in a women’s studies class, because I don’t want them to shut down. How do I negotiate my own power? I feel so strategic and playful in the way I engage my male students and it feels kind of crappy. (Lola, 4-18-11, lines 257-275)

Genevieve adds:
I mean for me, it’s about having the time for them to come up with these ideas and do the work in the amount of time that is offered…that is the stress. Having students think about doing things outside of themselves or their own experience is difficult, so they say things like “my mom took out the trash and my dad did the dishes, so equality does exists.” But let’s talk about the concept of the power structure at large, outside of your family, outside of your home, but how can we do that without making them feel like their experience doesn’t matter, without making them feel like it isn’t political or whatever? So, that’s the challenge. And not to shut them down—wanting them to dig deeper, to be more thoughtful. More reflexive and more critical. (Genevieve, 4-18-11, lines 300-309)

I agreed with much of what Lola and Genevieve were saying, adding that I felt as though I had to “coddle” many of my students, that I often felt that in my articulation of my disciplinary values that I might be pushing them to the margins when I wanted them to meet me somewhere in the middle. We all felt, at times, implicated by our disciplinary identities in ways that made us uneasy when it came to working with students.

4.02 Visual Disciplinary Articulations

If we do not accept identity as natural or given, then we cannot accept disciplines as natural or rigid. The performance of a refrain identified by the discipline names it, but that refrain is still subject to deterritorialization. The discipline becomes supple. The process of making the discipline supple creates in-between spaces, spaces of creative potential. The use of visual media can make perceptible that negotiation. “I am with
[Elizabeth] St. Pierre when she says: ‘There are times in life when the question of knowing if one can think differently than one thinks, and perceive differently than one sees, is absolutely necessary if one is to go on looking and reflecting at all’ (St. Pierre, 1997, p. 405)” (Gale, 2010, p. 308). The use of the following visual representations of our speech acts and disciplinary performances are part of our on-going process of thinking differently than we think.

4.02.01 Word Clouds

I have come to relate to the word clouds that follow in this section like one might relate to their physical form during an out-of-body experience: from where I float above these images, I can see the whole body of text. I have distance, but I am also connected. I can see the entire landscape of the words at once. And, like McNaught and Lam (2010), I used those word clouds as preliminary tools for analysis, to quickly highlight the overlaps and differences of our declared disciplinary performances, to seek out important words or phrases and themes that, during our performance of naming our disciplines and our disciplinary values, we overlook or do not consider. The comparison and analysis of the word clouds will be explored in depth in the fifth chapter of the study.

The frequency with which we used certain terms in the interviews could indicate pedagogical priorities we possess or analysis of unarticulated disciplinary. The first word cloud below (Figure 4.1) represents the transcription of the first cohort interview in its entirety.
The subsequent series of word clouds (Figures 4.2-4.4) represent each participant’s responses during the first cohort interview in its entirety. There was no additional selection process aside from isolating the utterances of individual respondents—every word spoken by a participant was included to generate their word clouds.
Figure 4.2. Lola's responses from the first interview

Figure 4.3. Genevieve's response from the first interview
The next set of word clouds (Figures 4.5-4.7) represent the specific responses from the first cohort interview to the question *How do you perform your discipline?* The collected text reflects the participants’ responses immediately following the invitation to describe disciplinary performance and any other response throughout the interview that was identified through the process of coding to be in reference to that particular question.
Figure 4.5. Lola's response: How do you perform your discipline?

Figure 4.6. Genevieve's response: How do you perform your discipline?
One of the emergent themes of the first cohort interview was in regard to tensions that we experience in our performance of disciplinary identity. The following series of word clouds (Figures 4.8-4.10) reflect the responses to a suggestion that we talk more about those tensions. The text was selected through a process of coding the document for direct responses to the issue of tension and disciplinary performance.
Figure 4.8. Lola’s response: Tensions associated with disciplinary identity

Figure 4.9. Genevieve’s response: Tensions associated with disciplinary identity
The word clouds provided a snapshot of the uttered responses. The frequency with which particular words or phrases occur in the collected responses from the initial interview created a visual hierarchy. In grappling with an abundance of information generated from only one interview, these snapshots provided a useful collection of the words most often used to discuss discipline, performance, and pedagogy. Additionally, the word clouds provided the participants with an opportunity to reflect on their uneasiness with the frequency (or infrequency) of words that occur in their articulation of disciplinary identity and performance.
4.02.02 Disciplines in Images and Objects

During this phase of the study, each participant selected images or objects that she believed provide an alternative articulation of their disciplinary body. The collection of data below represents the participants’ chosen images and objects. Additionally, transcriptions of each participant’s articulated explanation of images are included. Once participants shared their individual collection of images or objects, the cohort members proceeded to rethink their individual disciplinary identities by combining images from multiple collections. Finally, the collective cohort sought to design an interdisciplinary body from the included images and objects. This process employed arts-based methods of interpreting visual images and objects in an attempt to think differently about identity and performance and to allow images and objects to speak in ways that language could not account for.

The first image (Figure 4.11) represents Lola’s chosen images and objects, her disciplinary story preceding;

So, last time we met I was talking about how I use humor and such to deal with students, and I think the thing is that I outwit them… I try to outwit them, in a playful way. So, that’s why I brought Tina Fey. That’s kind of her strategy – on 30 Rock it’s about her coralling this sort of wild band of people and I feel like that’s what I’m doing, sort of unifying them under ideas and dealing with their complicated identities and investments.

And then I brought a picture of a river because a river meanders without really knowing where it’s going and follows a path of least resistance ... but rarely
goes in a straight line to get where it’s going. I thought that was a lovely official metaphor… then I have this picture of this little girl, this Feminist…and that represents how I feel, kind of optimistic, perhaps childishly so…(laughs) but you know, that still lives on. Then I have this grown-up version of her next to that. Then I have the schizophrenic cats. I actually Googled “schizophrenia” to see what I could come up with because that’s how I feel sometimes trying to balance teaching students about writing, teach them about identity, American identity, cultural studies, and all of these other things and to deal with so many different types of students and having to navigate all these things at once makes me feel like I’m four different people…or four different cats (laughs). Although that one (hand gestures) looks kind of bewildered, which is sometimes how I feel, as it turns out… the way I see myself in my discipline, more generally, is by entering music into the conversation in ways that it hasn’t been before. I enforce that in my classes as well, trying to get my students to think about music more complexly than it’s been dealt with in the past. I don’t think music has been dealt with in a very productive way. So, I’m kind of like the “music person”…I kind of have that identity within my department for better or for worse. And I picked the song “Rain on Your Parade” because I feel like sometimes I rain on my students’ parades, especially their dreams about racial harmony and post-feminism and things like that, things they get really invested in.

Ok, so the last thing I brought is this book called the Real Vocal Book. It’s a bunch of Jazz lead charts. So the interesting thing about lead charts is that there is
not a lot of information to go from. It’s just a bunch of skimpy outline of a song, the very basics. Which is what I feel like teaching in comp studies is like. I mean, we don’t really have very much idea. And also, the handwriting is very blotched, it’s like a handed-down composite, very off-the-record publication that I got my hands on a while ago and there’s a statement about not ever exposing this book for being full of all this potentially copyrighted material because it’s such a valuable resource. Jazz in particular I think is a good metaphor because it’s all improvised in a lot of ways- finding a mostly pleasurable way of letting people hear things that they are not used to hearing. And that’s what I try to do. (Lola, 4-27-11, lines 11-70)
Next, Genevieve’s sequence of images (Figures 4.12 – 4.16) tells her disciplinary story in parts.

I’m telling this story thinking about how Women’s Studies as a discipline understands teaching, or performing pedagogy or whatever. And so honestly, ok, so we have confusion because I think that even though we like to say that there’s an idea about pedagogy, it hasn’t been updated since the 80’s. I think it also depends on who’s teaching. In this department, because only one of our faculty members comes from a women’s studies background, they really teach or structure their instruction from their home discipline. Even in my first quarter here, (name withheld) said something like, “I don’t know what kind of Feminist pedagogy you are used to, but I’m not your mother and I’m not your this and I’m not your that” or whatever. Not to me personally, but to a group of us. Ok, but (another name withheld) does think she is our big sister or aunt or something so there are different ideas about what that (pedagogy) looks like…and no one really knows at least…and (another name withheld) thinks that it has to be something different, she’s from political science. So I think there is a whole lot of confusion even though there is supposed to be this understanding of what Feminist pedagogy is. And I think mostly people just refer back to bell hooks and Paolo Friere…these are the things that we refer to and that (name withheld) talks about but we’ve got to move on from here so I also think there are misunderstandings, so I have a hand mirror and a consciousness raising group because there is a misunderstanding among students that we’re going to come in and it’ll be like
looking at your vagina, talking about your feelings, whatever. That it’s going to be therapy. This is what it’s going to be. But I feel like for me I have to get rid of all of that (swipes images clear) that can’t be my direction anymore. (Genevieve, 4-27-11, lines 76-112)

Figure 4.12. Genevieve’s sequence of images (Part 1)

So for me and my performance, these are the people that I draw on: Gloria Anzaldúa, Thich Nhat Hahn, and Analouise Keating and Analouise Keating’s book *Teaching Transformation*. So this book is really important to me, and it includes so many of her syllabi and course assignments and expectations and an index in the back and sort of the way that she understands herself as a teacher and the way that we talk about transcultural dialogue in the classroom…when we talk
about who it is that we model, she’s who I model. And really, my dissertation, the last two chapters focus on pedagogy, thinking about bringing these two figures together to develop radicalized, revolutionized, updated, something whatever they (hooks and Friere) were doing. And these two, Anzaldua and Thich Nhat Hahn, really do it for me. So this is how I would describe my influence. (Genevieve, 4-27-11, lines 112-125)

Figure 4.13. Genevieve’s sequence of images (Part 2)

But in performance, I think I really take into this identity of midwife as teacher: midwifery 1% occupation and 99% dedication. I feel similarly about teaching…if I wasn’t dedicated to these ideas, if I wasn’t dedicated to activism, I couldn’t keep doing this. I really like this essay that talks about the midwife as teacher, talking
about the experiential education and uses the midwife as an analogy to talk about assisting students or birthing new knowledge and I use that in the classes that I teach to talk about the way that I understand pedagogy and practice. (Genevieve, 4-27-11, lines 125-13)

Figure 4.14. Genevieve’s sequence of images (Part 3)

But then, part of what makes the discipline so difficult, and I’ve got double images on purpose, is that here (points) I feel like I’m walking on eggshells because I have to be certain things. So he says (indicating image) “You don’t look like a Feminist” and she says “You have to be careful, we often disguise ourselves as human beings” (laughter). So I feel like I make such an effort…to watch the way I dress, to perform in a really feminine way, wearing feminine colors
whatever that means... I have to appear as nonthreatening as possible. And I think I’ve moved in and out of those ideas some. But I still come back to this idea that I know my appearance or my whatever are, I don’t want to say “on display,” but they are being observed in ways, judgments are being made in ways that a math teacher is not being judged by his or her appearance. So it does feel like walking on eggshells, it feels like towing this line of too much or whatever and still respecting myself and how I want to appear. (Genevieve, 4-27-11, lines 134-149)

Figure 4.15. Genevieve’s sequence of images (Part 4)

I worked as a therapist before coming here, and I think that my work as a therapist really does affect my teaching, it really does influence the way I understand teaching or even advising undergraduate students. Then there is this gay issue,
this queer issue in the classroom, which for me is much more difficult to talk about than race or I can talk about race as a woman of color ally or I can talk about class in particular kinds of ways even if I don’t fit into a particular category. But I feel super implicated in my queer identity so that’s a much more difficult topic. So I have students who are against “PC” stuff, like it’s so awful to use caring language instead of exclusionary language. So this little comic includes all this different language, this black person, this queer person, this Asian person have gone through to be more PC. So I try to use language in teaching this stuff versus correcting them? But then there is also “Sir, wouldn’t I turn straight faster doing this with a woman?” and he’s obviously gay, too.

This idea with students coming forth still questioning queer identities so this is both a therapist to represent that also to represent so much misinformation, if I have to hear one more student tell me that the gay gene has been found…So at the same time it’s the thing that they don’t want to talk about it but they still WANT to talk about it. It’s just naughty enough, it’s just whatever enough. I feel implicated, I feel stuck in that, I feel that if I weren’t in a same sex relationship or committed to those politics I probably wouldn’t have the same visceral or bodily reactions that I do. That’s my whole story. (Genevieve, 4-27-11, lines 149-171)
Finally, I share my pile of images (Figure 4.17) that I believe help define my disciplinary identity.

I operate in these spheres of pictures. They’re related, but I don’t want to arrange them in any particular order, because I kind of see them as like this living thing. This is Deleuze and Guattari, who I’m using a lot in framing the ontological path in terms of identifying what sticks us in place and also trying to identify a path away from that. To be more productive, to think about ourselves differently, to think about our students differently, so these guys are always on my mind. I also connect it to this, the feminism cartoon here and how it’s complicated. One of my committee members asked me, “What do you think about using these dudes, these dead white French dudes.” You know, I’ve had some issue with that and I’ve tried
to marry some different pedagogies or theories and I always end up coming back to these guys and I have a little tension with that. But until it proves itself to be unproductive, I’ll just continue going along with it.

This is the dogon egg, which Deleuze and Guattari (1987) reference in *A Thousand Plateaus*, but the idea of this is that it represents pure potential. It’s living, but it’s not “alive” yet and I keep holding on to this in a lot of areas but especially in terms of my own becoming something different and I feel like I’m in this stasis sometimes and if I try to re-imagine that as potential and not just being static, that’s helpful for me. But sometimes I feel like I’m going down this tunnel and there’s something at the end, but I don’t know if I’m ever going to get there. It feels very long and complicated and far away for me. So that’s more of my identity as a researcher, but all of these things are intertwined.

Of course, I have this other identity as an arts educator, which this is a picture of the art teacher Barbie from 2002… I didn’t bring the actual object…and it comes with all of these things: the little student, the desk with the relief “Barbie” logo on it so you can put a piece of paper on it and make a rubbing of the Barbie trademark, the color wheel, all the things that an art teacher might have, and these weird little marker things and this very cheap watercolor and this shitty paintbrush. But I love how she’s dressed, because there is this visual culture of the “art teacher” she has on, compared to other Barbies, this kind of wild outfit, it’s very colorful, she has a scarf around her neck. I wear a lot of scarves, actually. But she has on high heels of course and her hand is fashioned so that she can hold
a pencil for instruction, and she has, like some other Barbies, a little sidekick or whatever. She’s positioned in the box holding this child and she’s positioned as doing all of these things…painting, or whatever. I mean, certainly art teachers do those things, but I don’t identify with that visual representation of what art teachers are, that reduced and generalized vision. The teaching of art has, for a long time, been a lot more than painting and color wheels and drawing tables. Long ago, even before I came back to school, I was already thinking about those areas within that space that could be explored through visual art—critical social issues through the study of visual art and also art-making that I see somewhat happening in public schools, but I don’t see a ton of in public schools. In the theoretical realm and in the university sphere, people are talking about these issues, but there is a real disconnect between theory and practice, as with most disciplines. I see it in arts education and I see it as something that needs some real reconsideration.

This is a periodic chart of social network sites, which I don’t have too much to say about because I don’t totally understand it, but I like that they’ve made a period chart of the different social media venues because I feel like a lot of my identity, even my academic and performative identities, are bound up in social media. I take a lot of cues from things I find in social media or the ways that people are behaving through social media and I take those things into my classroom to talk about—because we talk a lot about positioning ourselves or representing ourselves and the way most people do that now is through social
media so it’s increasingly relevant to my identity within art education and as an instructor.

And I have a couple of Feminist images here. This is actually a piece I created myself and it’s called *Women’s Work*. These women—well, it’s actually one woman that I ended up making a conjoined twin and they are each thinking about something totally different—here is the typical image of the power woman with the business suit on this side and the other is thinking about food, and then this cartoon about smashing the patriarchy. But also I chose it because there is this violence and militant quality of feminism. I find it’s really useful sometimes, how I identify. Here’s one example: I am a Feminist…anytime there is a conversation about gender for the rest of the quarter they (students) have that in their head. I have to make a decision in the beginning because it would come out eventually, but I usually choose to put it on the table. Because I hope that it encourages my students to then be honest, too. But I straddle that line a lot.

This is a sculpture by an artist Jen Stark [*Burst*, 2007] who a few years ago started taking school grade construction paper and making these really elaborate cut paper sculptures. So this is just a stack of construction paper that she’s cut away and folded back and made 3D coming out of that stack. I chose it because I think it’s just visually stunning and as an artist I’m drawn to things that represent themselves well visually. But there are a lot of reasons I connect to it—it’s school grade paper, going back to this Barbie image of what does it look like to teach art with construction paper and glue and google eyes and those perceptions of it. But
she’s taken this very basic and very common material and transformed it into something that is engaging in a completely different way, which I see as being a really good metaphor for what art education is: we’re taking this thing that people imagine as, and was for many years, of putting students in another space for an hour to get them out of another space or for students who have nowhere else to go—but the potential of it being something that is completely transformed.

I actually did a Google image search for “theory vs. practice” and I got a number of graphic organizer images that looked very “businessy”…but this is the one that really resonated with me. In theory, this works, right? You put stuff on this cart and then the donkey pulls it. But in practice, if you are too heavy on the theory here it doesn’t balance here and you can’t go anywhere. It’s the struggle of theory vs. practice that I have. Because, at its core, my program is a teacher preparation program. Even though most of MY students aren’t art education students, I feel like I still approach the way that I teach them the way that I might teach art education students, to rethink their visual terrain. And as a researcher in my field, I feel less relevant if I’m not balancing the theory and the practice. I’m constantly thinking, “How do I bring this back to conversations about practice in arts education?” While I’m trying to grapple with all these other things, I’m admittedly very preoccupied with my future and my job search and it’s another one of those tensions. I’m trying really hard to not take that into my classroom, to hold on to the things that I really value and believe about pedagogy and how I am with my students. But it’s really, really difficult at times. In a lot of cases, though,
I find that when I’m teaching and when I’m with my students it’s the ONLY time that I’m not thinking about this. But everything else is bound up in it. And all these images could be moved around really easily, too. They all relate to each other in very different ways. Really they are just a pile. (Courtnie, 4-27-11, lines 176-283)

Figure 4.17. Courtnie’s disciplinary story in images

4.02.03 Interdiscipline in Images and Objects

Following the presentation and discussion of images and objects, participants choose from the collective pool of figures to rethink their disciplinary identity and performance as that which could include aspects of the co-participants’ disciplinary stories. In this section, participants were instructed to select images to add to those
images or objects they provided and also elect to replace an image from their own
collection. This process represents a collaborative participant merging of other
disciplinary and pedagogical values and practices with one’s own.

Genevieve states that she would “add” the items pictured below to her
disciplinary performance.

I would add Lola’s bossy pants image or the way that she talked about Jazz and
this particular image of the donkey and theory and practice. I really like the idea
that if you have too much then this doesn’t work. And it might to people in the
academy but if we’re talking about teaching and what we want to do and the kind
of change we want to affect in the classroom then this doesn’t work. (Genevieve,
4-27-11, lines 287-297)

Figure 4.18. Genevieve’s selections from “outside” of her disciplinary identity
Next I selected the images to add to my disciplinary body of images. I pulled images from both Lola’s and Genevieve’s selections.

As much as I want to let go of this image of the art teacher, because I feel like it’s not a very good representation or a very true representation, there are some things that I really cling to. I resist it as much as I want to hang on to it. But things that Genevieve had, the things I really value about the way that you talk about your students, your perspectives as a therapist. I don’t have that same kind of language or that same kind of background, but I value the way you talk about your class and your students and the way that you engage people in the way that you talk. I liked Lola’s metaphor about the meandering river because even though theoretically I try to put myself in that space a lot, to let myself go with this flow, I’m realizing that tension a lot in this practice— to go with the flow…ultimately I know this is really valuable…and when it doesn’t go the direction that I wanted it to go, that’s all part of this process. But I’m not very good at that. (Courtnie, 4-27-11, lines 346-363)
Lola struggled more with combining the images:

That’s a really hard question. There are a lot of overlaps, which is interesting to me. I like the idea that there is a light at the end of the tunnel, even if we don’t know what that light is. I was thinking about bringing in some seeds, because it’s the metaphor I use myself when I feel like my students aren’t getting anything, that I’m planting seeds, right? Someday they’ll grow into beautiful plants. But this idea of working toward a goal that is not pre-formed. And it shouldn’t be pre-formed, there should be some flexibility, development, that sort of thing. Like we’re going toward the light, but we don’t know what it is. I also thought about bringing in an amorphous blob. But I thought that doesn’t feel quite right. I don’t feel totally unformed or I would be a complete disaster, which I’m not most days.
But there is confusion. It’s a good thing. It’s productive. It allows us to see a lot of possibility, which is why I’d include your [Dogon egg]… I feel like all I’m talking about is being confused—with my own images and the ones I’m pulling from the piles. But I feel like confusion is a site of potential for me and my students, that we’re moving through that confusion to the light at the end of the tunnel… I want to make sure that I’m including the Jazz, if we’re including things of our own. It’s a concept that is very important to me. And I’m a terrible jazz musician, because I can’t let go. (Lola, 4-27-11, lines 301-385)

Figure 4.20. Lola’s selections from “outside” of her disciplinary identity

The last image presented in this section is our collective interdisciplinary identity construction. When the disciplinary slate, so to speak, was swiped clean, we chose
together the representation of an interdisciplinary image. The most significant difference between the following image and the three preceding images relates to authority: in the preceding three images, we each had the singular authority to construct a multidisciplinary image. In the following image, we each had to consider the collective body in our choices.

I think that this is an image that for all three of us, when we’re teaching students, that this is in fact scholarship, that people do research, and it’s also applicable, connected to our everyday lives which I think is important. (Genevieve, 4-27-11, lines 389-391)

I’d also like to include the jazz, in terms of thinking about things differently and engaging our students with material in ways that I don’t really do in my own instruction, but if we’re constructing an interdiscipline, I’d want to include that. (Courtnie, lines 392-394)

I want to keep the egg. For our potential and for our students’ potential. We need that during our troubling days. We need a Feminist in there somewhere…[this] looks more Feminist. She has a hammer. And glasses. (Lola, lines 395-398)

The visual culture of Feminism. We can have more than one Feminist image in there. This is the character of Feminist, but we also have people that are practicing their theory. Maybe we should choose one of those. Or just the mirror? I’d like to
also include one of these eggshell shots. It’s not always the most productive way
of becoming a pedagogue or an interdisciplinary, but I think that it’s always present
and were that presence not there I know I wouldn’t rethink a lot of my own
practice. It’s a site of fruitful tension. (Courtnie, lines 399-407)

Figure 4.21. Collaborative interdisciplinary identity

4.03 An Interdisciplinary Investigation of White Privilege

In this section of the data, I present the dialogue surrounding the cohort’s
instructional materials for teaching the subject of White Privilege within our respective
disciplines. The content articulated during this cohort interview is representative of
particular understandings of our disciplinary praxis around a central theme and teaching
materials and concepts that have been employed during our teaching.
Lola, as the self-described “music person” in her department, centers much of her content and discussion around music and literature, but also heavily relies on large and small group discussions. She begins describing her pedagogical approach to the subject by stating, “This is something I did last quarter in my course and it’s been modified from things that I’ve been doing over many quarters and it worked particularly well” (5-4-11, lines 4-6). She continues:

We started out reading the Peggy McIntosh [1988] White Privilege piece, which I feel is such a cliché and still, it works… so I pair that with an excerpt from Toni Morrison’s *Playing in the Dark* [1993], and the excerpt I use is where she’s talking about the figure of blackness is so central to the American imagination, to the white American imagination…we read Toni Morrison’s *Jazz* [1992], so it’s sort of my segue into that whole thing. We have a large group discussion about the article...then I have them get into small groups and talk—each group gets assigned a different category of difference: one’s gender, one’s sexuality, one’s class, and one’s body, so ability. And then they have to identify who would be in the normative or privileged group and list five privileges that the group would enjoy. Then we come back together and have a large group discussion about them coming up with that stuff and that worked really well. But I try to make links between the different sorts of privilege and oppression, those words are sort of simple sometimes, so I can point out the intersectionality and help them getting thinking about that. Then we talk about the Morrison article, how she’s saying that privilege is really related to the canon, which we’ve talked about in previous
classes particularly in relationship to music, but this is the first time we’re talking about it in relationship to literature…[Toni Morrison] ends up using the trope of Jazz music to talk about different ways of ordering narrative and voice to disrupt authority, to disrupt linearity. Later on we get into why she’s using that particular musical metaphor in the book and how she’s trying to undermine White Privilege with a different kind of stor- telling. (Lola, 5-4-11, lines 16-53)

Later in the interview, Lola was asked to explain her use of Jazz (both the text and the art form) in more detail in regard to her curricular plan.

Toni Morrison’s intro to Jazz is really helpful in its talk about jazz as an art form and challenging the structure from within a structure and what can be thought of oppressive structure. She wants to capture the spirit of improvising, to capture the spirit of trading voices, of giving everyone a chance to tell their story. Then I have my students…read this piece by a music anthropologist, how hot rhythm in the early 20th century was considered an infection you could get, if you heard it you would get it and suddenly have very slippery morals and reduced to your bodily urges. We listen to some jazz, nothing too wacky, no Captain Beefheart or anything, some John Coltrane, and then we listen to hokey other shit that was happening in the 1920’s, Happy Trails. What is the difference between these? …And we talk about how Western music privileges their own notation and own musical style, rhythm is sublimated because it’s connected to the body which takes us back to this idea of virtues again. Morrison picked jazz as her structuring element of this book as a way of using these elements to tell a different kind of
story and to let different voiced intervene and to trouble what sounds good and what sounds bad. She does a really good job of troubling what morality looks like I think. She changes narrators a lot, there is an omniscient narrator that contradicts herself, she changes all these places and times, it’s hard for [students] to follow what is happening. But I warn them: this is what’s happening in this book, this is what she’s doing. (Lola, 5-4-11, lines 350-372)

Genevieve’s approach is somewhat different. She says, “I don’t really set out to talk about White Privilege [specifically when teaching the course on Women and Addiction], but more its position within the context of addiction” (5-4-11, lines 59-60). Like Lola, Genevieve uses discussion and inquiry as tools to help her students unpack the subject of White Privilege. Genevieve’s tactics further reflect her disciplinary positionality as a Women’s Studies scholar:

We talk about difference in Feminist spaces, why not why that separates us but why difference Feminism is so important…what Patricia Hill Collins [1990, 2000] calls the *Matrix of Domination*. They refer to the matrix of domination throughout the quarter, that’s the language that they use. Then I use this piece by Nancy Campbell, an introduction to her book called *Drug Policy, Social Reproduction and Social Justice* that does a history of drug use and reproduction, and the justice system… a history of why crack and cocaine became racialized, how cocaine came to be a white wealthy person’s drug of choice while crack was a poor black person’s. What does it mean that drugs are racialized and gendered and *N* classed? Because it’s within the context of drug and alcohol addiction right
from the beginning, because we do other addictions later, there are so many examples in the media that they don’t resist. This class, they are really good at doing this kind of work. They do a lot of sharing, offering up their own examples.

In the beginning I ask them to write about the readings and their feelings about the readings and some of them write things like “I had this idea that only black people or trailer trash,” or whatever is in their private free writes that they have to let go of. So it’s there, they have these ideas, but somehow during class discussion they are able to move past that, to help them realize that these are just stereotypes that they’ve held on to. (Genevieve, 5-4-11, lines 61-88)

Genevieve also discusses how her approach to the subject of White Privilege differs when she teaches another course outside of Women’s Studies. She notes that student expectation in a course focused on service learning and not marked as “Women’s Studies” often means increased student resistance to issues of privilege and power.

[In the service learning] class they are really resistant right now. I’ve used [Peggy McIntosh] and [Audre] Lorde’s [Age, Race, Class, Sex: Women Redefining Difference, 1980] to talk about ranking and difference. I also used hooks’ [A Revolution of Values, 1993]. They were really resistant to hooks and really open to McIntosh and Lorde…they identify themselves mostly with white facilitators and I ask them to think about why mostly white women participate in the program, why so often white college women are doing service. And I tell them to be careful about the way that we’re coming to be “savior” or to “save” these girls…but the resistance is there in [the service learning course]. There is a piece
they read by [Gloria] Anzaldua and they are like, “Why is she so angry?” We really need to be careful about calling Black women and Chicano women “angry” when we don’t like the tone that they are using to call us out on our own privilege. So I contextualize it historically, because these pieces were written in the 70’s and 80’s, this is what was happening. I don’t know, because of the nature of both courses, it’s so discussion-based, I don’t do a lot of interactive activities around that stuff. I’ve certainly thought about it. (Genevieve, 5-4-11, lines 88-134)

The discussion of my disciplinary and pedagogical approach to the same topic revealed some overlaps with Lola’s and Genevieve’s, but also my particular investment in visual media as a catalyst for student reflection and dialogue. Like Lola and Genevieve, I note that the topic of White Privilege, although dealt with specifically in the series of readings and discussions provided below, is part of a larger threaded discussion that takes place throughout the quarter. Dialogue and inquiry are central to the proceedings.

We read Mcintosh and I don’t tell them too much about it before…but ask them to consider how they feel about it, specifically what areas they found surprising or what areas they think are more relevant now than others. I use this artillery of images that challenge the idea that advertising is “more diverse” because there [might be] one woman of color in it. I’ve approached it before where I’ve used film or television shows that use parody or irony to approach privilege or representation…I backed off this quarter from using sites of visual culture and pop culture as much, because I don’t want them thinking, “Well I watch this
television show and now you are telling me that maybe I shouldn’t or that maybe you are suggesting that I’m not as sensitive or open-minded” as they grapple with their own limitations.

Instead this quarter I’m focusing on works of fine art because I want them to look at art and talk about art and know that they are smarter about those things than they think they are. And also because there is a certain amount of distancing, because most of my students aren’t art majors, there is a certain distancing that goes on when looking at works of fine art. They are more honest about the representation that is taking place because it’s not something that they are already close to. They don’t have to defend their already established interest in those things. I have them write a little about a time that they feel like there were at an advantage because of their race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality or whatever and then talk about a time that they felt like they were at a disadvantage for that same thing. I used Kara Walker this quarter, I’ve used Fred Wilson in the past and we have talked about Chris Ofili’s *Holy Virgin Mary* [1996]...[because the work asks] “Whose stories are being preserved? Whose stories are being valued?” I use them because my students shut down when we talk about race and ethnicity and White Privilege and I want them to understand that all these things are in place aren’t necessarily their fault…without trying to implicate them in ways they don’t want to be implicated, but helping them understand that this way of understanding these images or what it’s supposed to look like, the way visual culture guides us to a way of understanding difference and how we can disrupt that by recognizing
that it’s manipulating us in ways that we weren’t aware of, and once we are aware of it, we can understand those things differently. (Courtnie, 5-4-11, lines 178-272)

Although neither Lola nor Genevieve initially cited visual media as integral to their disciplinary approach to teaching the subject of White Privilege, both later indicated sites of visual culture that relate to the subject. Genevieve notes the culture of dolls and doll collecting as a site of exploration of White Privilege and visual culture.

Dolls are great. There is a person doing work on the American Girl doll series [and] the way the dolls are constructed racially…they are all basically the same. There is the “Just Like Me” series where you can get matching everything. Matching hair, matching eyes….it’s all the same mold. There are two that differ a little bit, their noses are a little bit different, their eyes are a little bit different—but she’s troubling that idea that a doll looks just like you, but not really, and you can only choose from these six skin colors and the hair is coifed like an adult in every one. (Genevieve, 5-4-11, lines 169-176)

Lola adds:

What kinds of ethnicized dolls do we have? You know the dolls Homies? Those are the dolls we can buy that are of color. There is a Barbie, but basically she has brown hair…but the white Barbie gets to be a lawyer, a doctor, or the art teacher, as we saw, but the ethnicized dolls, they’re gangsters…low rider pants and lots of makeup. (Lola, 5-4-11, lines 155-161)

Additionally, the cohort discussed the greeting card industry as a site of visual and conceptual critique:
[At] Target and you can buy something called “Mohogany Expressions” or something really offensive like “Chocolate Expressions” or “Rhythms of Love.” There is a separate line of cards for people of color. (Lola, 5-4-11, lines 134-137)

When I was in Texas and we talked about greeting cards, we talked about sexual orientation and greeting…and a couple of students shouted out, “They should just go to Condoms To Go,” which is like a Spencers [Novelty Shop], only dirtier. So then there is talk about why should an LGBT person have to go to a place called Condoms To Go to get hyper-sexualized cards, mostly for gay dudes, not lesbians. So greeting cards to talk about race, ability, sexual orientation, etc. I have a non-traditional student who worked for American greetings in Cleveland and she, because of her personal experience, was resistant to the idea that greeting cards are [racist, sexist, etc.] because they are trying really hard. But all we can talk about is what we’re seeing on the shelves. There might be great people working there like you, but we can’t see that on the ground. (Genevieve, lines 138-154)

The presentation of data from Phase III of the study attempts to illustrate the particular disciplinary approaches by each of the cohort participants to one theme: White Privilege. The overlaps and differences in our pedagogies and praxes and the significance therein in regard to becoming interdisciplinary will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter analyzing the data. Additionally, the conflation of discipline and
pedagogy—that I assert is, in part, bound by disciplinary identities which value strong pedagogical practices—will be further examined.

4.04 Further Interdisciplinary Exploration and Reflection

In the final phase of the collaboration, the three participants combined their curricular materials into one shared document for revision. This allowed each of us to view all of the curricular materials previously shared in the form of lesson plans in the third phase of interviews in one place and in relationship to multidisciplinary perspectives. Additionally, this section contains responses to the series of follow-up questions I asked of each participant and my own reflections on the collaboration. The included data represent a finite period of reflection following the cohort interviews, but is considered part of the collaboration.

4.04.01 The Collaborative Document

The collaborative document shows each participant’s curricular materials coded by color with participant comments appearing alongside portions of the text. The image below is a screen capture to illustrate the format used in this phase of the study.
Prior to class:
- Students read Mcintosh and an excerpt of Toni Morrison's “Playing in the Dark”
- Students are preparing to read Toni Morrison's Jazz, which is followed by a unit on hip hop during which we read Jacqueline Woodson's YA novel After Tupac and D Foster.
- "Students have already discussed the idea of ideology and representation, particularly as it pertains to the following concepts: individualism, exceptionalism, the myth of meritocracy, family, sexuality, and race (at this point, we've usually just finished reading a chapter on Elvis from a prominent cultural studies music critic, Greil Marcus—race is present in his analysis, but it's more about individualism and heroism).

Prior to class, students read Mcintosh’s Invisible Backpack
Terms for critically exploring works of art and visual culture: semiotic analysis, connoted, denoted, empty signifiers

(*Note: all of this happens in large group discussion. I should also note that)
Prior to class: (day 2 of the quarter) students read “theorizing difference from multiracial feminism” by Zinn & Dill.
In class: We talk about the ways differences often functions to exclude, rather than include and use Zinn and Dill’s piece to reconceptualizes difference. I introduce the concept "matrix of domination" by Patricia Hill-Collins to talk about the ways identities work together, create our experiences, help determine the way people treat us, the opportunities we are given, etc. In general, this is an easy dialogue/class because it's situated within the framework of addictions (certainly their is more resistance in an intro to WS class). I continue to use the "matrix" concept throughout the quarter. We return to these ideas more directly in week 6 when we talk about Addiction and Reproduction. Students are assigned “Introduction: Drug Policy, Social Reproduction, and Social Justice” among other chapters to talk about the ways drug use/addiction are racialized and sexualized (crack vs cocaine; a beer drinking pregnant woman vs an anorexic pregnant woman, a “speed” using pregnant white woman vs a marijuana smoking pregnant black woman, a cigarette smoking father-to-be vs a cigarette smoking mother-to-be, a physically abusive father-to-be vs an alcoholic mother-to-be, etc). Students make great connections during this section, especially when we talk about the ways punishments (jail vs prison) differ racially and by sex.

Figure 4.22. Screen capture of the electronic document

Comments alongside the curricular materials speak to participants’ interest in applying multidisciplinary methods or materials in their instruction or to the usefulness of having access to curricular materials after discussing them in the prior phase. In response to Lola’s inclusion of a young adult novel about the life of Tupac Shakur, I note:

I'm always looking for good access points for my students, and your use of Tupac here is especially inspiring. I don't know what it is about Tupac that still gets the kids going. Legends, I guess. But I'm always surprised at his staying power, even with student groups that were just babies when he died.
kids going. Legends, I guess. But I'm always surprised at his staying power.

(Courtnie, Google Document comment)

Lola cites Genevieve’s inclusion of a variety of readings to introduce the subject of White Privilege as useful:

I'm all about using something other than [Peggy] McIntosh to teach these ideas, and I think that these tools would definitely be a good way to go for me, as the concepts could just as easily be applied to the "gentrification" of music (particularly if we're talking about jazz and eventually hip hop). I would probably reach a little further into my course annals and show several clips of "Beyond Beats and Rhymes" if I led the White Privilege discussion with these strategies.

(Lola, Google Document comment)

Lola specifically notes how the inclusion of Genevieve’s readings might further enhance Lola’s own disciplinary approach and materials. Lola later comments on the inclusion of one of my activities designed to encourage student dialogue and personal reflection. My prompt asks students to “describe a time [they] felt [they] were at an advantage due to [their] gender, sexuality, race, or ethnicity, [then to] describe a time when [they] felt at a disadvantage because of that same identity construction” (Google document, page 2). Lola says:

I'd also like to use this as the active-learning component, since it prompts some serious self-reflection and that's usually a goal that I have with each unit, lesson plan, whatever. This could also be tied to the matrix of domination, so that students can see that they are multiply, contextually positioned (an important
lesson about the complexity of identity, privilege, etc.). (Lola, Google Document comment, emphasis my own)

I add the emphasis here to note that Lola cites all three disciplinary approaches in her comment to this technique: my use of the writing prompt; Genevieve’s use of the matrix of domination; and Lola’s own interest in active learning. The significance of this comment will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, but is worth noting here.

4.04.02 Follow-up Reflections

The responses that appear in this section were generated in writing through a shared document on Google Documents. After the third phase of the cohort collaboration, I sent these questions to all participants:

- How/were your thoughts on your own disciplinary performance changed through interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration?
- What would you note as the most significant benefits of interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration in higher education?
- What would you note as the most significant barriers to strong interdisciplinary work in higher education?
- How/was the experience of storytelling your disciplinary performance through images different than naming that performance through language?
- What were your thoughts on seeing your spoken words translated into a word cloud (visual) and then compared to your department/disciplinary word cloud?
• How might the process of collaboratively designing a lesson (White Privilege) change the way that you teach in the future? Were there any perspectives shared that you had not considered?

Although participants responded via the online document in writing, because it was a shared document that we each had access to, the written responses were able to operate as an ongoing conversation.

_How/were your thoughts on your own disciplinary performance changed through interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration?_

Lola says:

Honestly, I hadn’t really thought that much about how my disciplinary orientation shaped my performance as a teacher, and this project was really helpful for that. When I initially made the switch from women’s studies to comparative studies, I wasn’t expecting much of a change and therefore didn’t really prepare for one, or even consciously recognize that one was occurring. Additionally, the changes necessitated by my own progression as an instructor may have obfuscated some elements of my performance that were disciplinary at their root. Another thing that I found really interesting about working with both of you was the consistency in our experiences—we all struggle teaching our students about White Privilege, for example, we all negotiate power in complex ways, though with different strategies. I guess, in a way, these meetings just confirmed for me that disciplinary boundaries, whatever they are and wherever they may lie, are usually
arbitrary and do more to stifle conversation than to foster it. (Lola, Google document, p. 1)

Genevieve adds:

I echo Lola’s statement above about finding the consistencies in our experience interesting. I appreciated hearing both of your stories and examples, and the support that was offered as a result of us coming to together. A comfort in numbers kind of thing. (Genevieve, Google document, p.1)

My contribution to the conversation noted my surprise at how difficult it was to let go of my disciplinary identity in order to participate in an interdisciplinary identity, that perhaps I was reticent to loosen my grip on privileging Art Education after dedicating an academic life validating my persona as Artist Educator.

What would you note as the most significant benefits of interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration in higher education?

I think the intellectual humility inspired by encountering other ways of doing things is integral to both successful scholarship and to a healthy mental life for academicians. Not to mention that being in one’s own tiny little corner of inquiry can get very bland very quickly. Interdisciplinary dialogue generates new, creative ways of thinking and being that are, in many ways, hopefully more compassionate, receptive, and ultimately more just. Disciplinary balkanization can, I think, result in deeply problematic blind spots that calcify over time to become a matter of convention and, in the worst case, they’re fiercely protected as
a matter of having a coherent disciplinary identity (i.e. “I’m a ____, and in ____ studies, we just don’t talk about ____ because we’ll never get published/get a job/graduate). That’s the sort of thing you write about. (Lola, Google document, p. 2)

Again, I echo Lola. Interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration opens up new ways of thinking, new or different perspectives, new approaches for lesson planning. For example, the meeting where we talked about the ways we approached White Privilege was especially interesting to me. Perhaps the super most interesting part was looking at the different/disciplinary readings we each assigned to teach the topic. (Genevieve, Google document, p. 2)

What would you note as the most significant barriers to strong interdisciplinary work in higher education?

I would say money is probably the most significant factor. Every department, discipline, etc. is fighting a turf war to insist on their necessity and their relevance to intellectual productivity. My undergraduate institution was a very small liberal arts college where interdisciplinarity was the norm. All students were explicitly required to take three interdisciplinary courses (called “Paideia”—one each semester of our first year, and another capstone course by the time we graduated), and interdisciplinary approaches were just woven into the fiber of the other courses we (or at least I) took. I don’t remember anyone talking about it
specifically, it was just what we did. I suppose there were some instances where a
course wasn’t “interdisciplinary” at the level of content, but interdisciplinary
inquiry was NEVER discouraged, and it was never named as such. Like I said, it
was just what we did--inquiry by any means necessary. I suppose this may have
eemanated from the strong emphasis on social justice that permeated campus life
and the college’s mission. (Lola, Google document, p.2)

I guess besides money, I would say the ranking or hierarchy that seems to exist
(humanities vs sciences; disciplinary vs interdisciplinary) across the university
campus is the most significant barrier. Yes, I am pointing out the obvious!, but I
think it’s important to note. And, it seems that this ranking seems to happen on
the side of the sciences/disciplines rather than from humanities/interdisciplines.
again, duh! As an undergraduate student I had no awareness of
“interdisciplinarity.” I didn’t understand the workings of the university or
knowledge…until graduate school. (Genevieve, Google document, p. 2)

*How/was the experience of storytelling your disciplinary performance through
images different than naming that performance through language?*

I really enjoyed finding and sharing images to tell the story of my/our disciplinary
performance. Personally, I found this exercise useful as it provided me with an
opportunity to reflect on my/our performance(s). When I do take time to reflect on
my teaching/interdisciplinary performance (on my own time), I certainly don’t use
images, so that added a new layer for me. . . I had to do a similar activity in my education & spirituality class 2 years ago and oddly enough I used some of the same images for both activities. I’ll have to think about that connection further, but it intrigues me. This is an activity I’d be very interested in doing with [Graduate Teaching Associates] as the [Graduate Teaching Fellow], for example. (Genevieve, Google document, p. 3)

I agree with Genevieve. This was a really interesting exercise for me, especially because trying to talk through my images felt really, umm... artificially linear and maybe “too flat” relative to just letting the visuals and all their connotations speak simultaneously for themselves. Just another lesson in the complexity of meaning and the violence of language/categories, I suppose! (Lola, Google document, p. 3)

I won’t feign complete naivete to the reasons behind my suggestion that we use visual images...BUT you never know how people might interpret that exercise. This was, easily, my favorite part of the cohort experience. I’m really pleased that you both found it interesting and potentially useful. (Courtnie, Google document, p. 3)

What were your thoughts on seeing your spoken words translated into a word cloud (visual) and then compared to your department/disciplinary word cloud?
I was pretty surprised there wasn’t more obvious overlap, but I think that might have something to do with the ways in which departmental mission statements are drafted: they’re broad, often vague, and, in the particular case of an interdisciplinary department, hellbent on deploying rhetoric that allows for maximum flexibility. I mean, the idea that comparative studies even has a mission statement is a little counter-intuitive for me, since it seems meant to unify in a department that is, I think, ideologically opposed to unification and standardization. I can certainly see where I fit within that particular word cloud schema, and I was happy to see that the three of us had some significant similarities. I don’t teach all of the things that comparative studies can accommodate, so it makes sense that my personal *Wordle* wouldn’t look the same as the one meant to act as an umbrella for a department that houses everything from science and technology studies, to religious studies, to American Indian studies. (Lola, Google document, p. 3)

Genevieve, on the other hand, had less to say about her word cloud and as resistant to discuss it much further. “I hated my word cloud. But, you already know that Courtnie. It felt completely lame-o” (Google document, p. 3).

_How might the process of collaboratively designing a lesson (White Privilege) change the way that you teach in the future? Were there any perspectives shared that you had not considered?_
I wanted to get a sense of how participants were responding to the experience of the interdisciplinary collaboration, but it is likely that this question would be more easily answered in a longitudinal study. But the participants did note that shared readings from disciplinary perspectives were useful. “I did appreciate Genevieve providing an option that wasn’t the McIntosh piece, which I know works pretty well…but seems sort of threadbare at this point (Lola, Google document, p. 3).

Genevieve’s response reflects her uncertainty of how this experience might change her teaching in the future, but also cites the shared curricular materials as useful. She also remarks that the experience has changed how she might approach collaboration in the future. “I am not sure how it’ll change how I teach in the future. I do know that I was especially interested in the ways each of us identified essays from our respective disciplines to teach the same/similar concept. I also feel encouraged by this experience to seek out collaboration in the future” (Genevieve, Google document, p. 4).

As a disciplinary subject, I acknowledge the benefits of experiencing other disciplinary approaches to content, as well as pedagogical approaches that are informed by other disciplinary practices and values. In the following chapter, I continue to tease out the complex nature of disciplinary performance and its intersections with pedagogy. Additionally, the analysis of the data explores answers to the primary research question

*What are the potentials of changed disciplinary performance and identity resultant from mindful interdisciplinary collaboration in higher education?* through the interpretations of participant articulated responses.
While Chapter Four presented the data collected during the collaborative study, Chapter Five offers my interpretations of data and attempts to answer questions framed within the study, and uncovered through utterances of my participants. My interpretations are informed by literature outlined in Chapter Two. These interpretations are not meant to comment on individual participant’s interdisciplinary becoming. It is my intention to focus on the processes of interdisciplinary collaboration in higher education. This chapter is arranged around the phases of the collaboration—the initial interview and the participants’ descriptions of their disciplinary performance (5.01); the second interview and visual storytelling (5.02); the third interview and sharing of disciplinary approaches to a central theme (5.03); and an interdisciplinary approach to teaching a unit on White Privilege (5.04). Further, this chapter reconsiders participant responses to follow-up questions regarding the interdisciplinary experience of the study. Finally, I will return to concepts brought forth by Feminist theory and the work of Deleuze and Guattari introduced in the first two chapters regarding performance, refrain, the nomad, and territorialization to answer the question *What are the potentials of changed disciplinary performance and identity resultant from mindful interdisciplinary collaboration in higher education?*
5.01 The Initial Interview

The primary research question that I am attempting to answer in this study is *What are the potentials of changed disciplinary performance and identity resultant from mindful interdisciplinary collaboration in higher education?* While every attempt was made to construct the study collaboratively, as the primary investigator I ultimately made these decisions that pushed the study forward. I chose questions and proceedings that I felt would impact the direction of the study in meaningful ways without over-determining the outcome.

Several questions emerged from the initial interview that the participants continued to explore throughout the subsequent collaborations:

- What are the tensions associated with disciplinary performance in regard to student expectations of the discipline?
- How might interdisciplinary collaboration alleviate tensions or limitations embedded in a disciplinary identity?
- How does an interdisciplinary body perform?

My interpretations of the responses to those emergent questions from the initial interview are presented in this section. The questions are revisited throughout the chapter as a layered analysis of the emergent themes and the primary research question.

5.01.01 How Do You Perform Your Discipline?

In the initial interview, participants were asked to describe how they perform their disciplines. Because I knew that both of my co-participants were familiar with Feminist
theory, I added that I was framing performance through the lens of Feminist theory and the notion of repetition or refrain being integral to identity stabilization. I hoped that disclosing that information would help us as co-participants arrive at a common conceptual ground for the rest of the study and more quickly make my intentions as one investigating disciplinary performance transparent.

The first responses to the question of How do you perform your discipline? speak to the significance of disciplinary values in how each of us constructed our own identities as disciplined subjects. Each participant began by talking about what she perceives as important to her disciplinary identity- or those qualities that help define their discipline—before discussing one’s individual personal performance as a disciplinary subject. Genevieve states, “I feel that certainly ideas about inclusivity and dialogue are valued in my discipline” (Genevieve, 4-18-11, lines 31-32) and adds later, in regard to her own performance within the discipline, “I want them to engage in the ideas that makes sense in their future worlds” (Genevieve, 4-18-11, lines 410-411).

Lola also frames her performance with her definition of her disciplinary subject. “I think the one…central value that [we have as a discipline] is an awareness of power structures and shedding light on power structures” (Lola, 4-18-11, lines 46-47). Later in the conversation, Lola talks about how she performs that disciplinary identity. “I’m ideologically committed to the constructivist classroom…I don’t want them to shut down [as] I negotiate my own power” (Lola, 4-18-11, lines 273-274).

The articulation of my understood disciplinary performance also began with a discussion of how I understand the values and goals of my discipline, but also my
changed perspective on the field of Art Education from being a practitioner of school arts to a practitioner of Art Education in higher education. This, I believe, is closely aligned with the dual identity of Art Education as both a program of research and practice. I also noted that my disciplinary identity is bound tightly to the values and goals of this particular program, suggesting that disciplinary performance is fluid when considering the influences of other practitioners and theorists that one encounters on a regular basis.

As discussed in the review of literature, disciplines exert strong influences on our teaching, our learning environments, and how students learn. Similarly, most academics are probably comfortable with the idea that their discipline deeply influences those factors (Kreber, 2009). Each of the participants makes sense of their academic worlds through her respective disciplinary identity and performance. Further analysis of the data suggests that disciplinary identity also can limit one’s ability to make sense of pedagogy and praxis. In a sequence of images concerning pedagogy that Genevieve presented (Figures 4.12- 4.16), she noted the inclusion of some theorists (Friere and hooks) widely used in Women’s Studies that she felt “[hadn’t] been updated since the (19)80’s” (4-27-11, lines 78-79). Lola produced an image of a meandering river, which might suggest a pedagogical wandering. My own disciplinary identity pulls me in two directions: Art Education theory and Art Education practice.

5.01.02 Articulating the Tensions of Disciplinary Identity and Performance

The initial interview was particularly ripe with emergent questions for the study. In the description of disciplinary identities, each participant alluded to tensions that they
associated with being a disciplinary subject. I asked the participants to please elaborate on those tensions. Participants’ perceptions of their disciplinary marking provided significant insight into the barriers that are felt as one is aligning oneself with her discipline and the assumptions and expectations of disciplinary identity.

Lola remarked that the characteristic by which she most closely defines the discipline of Comparative Studies was its inherent interdisciplinarity—which she also said is the site of great tension in her performance of that discipline. Students often do not know what to expect from an “interdiscipline,” therefore do not have the framework by which to ground themselves in the content of the course. She claims that in her experience “[students] are not always prepared to respond in the most productive ways” (4-18-11, lines 65-66). This is countered by Lola’s approach to teaching the content, that she is able to “slide ideas in” or normalize ways language or practices within the discipline “without them knowing that you are doing something radical” (line 65). I interpret Lola’s use of the word “radical” to mean the insertion of ideas that disrupt normalized power structures in society, as this was one of the values she articulated as being central to her disciplinary performance.

Genevieve’s disciplinary identity, as she describes it, seems more concretely marked as part of the Women’s Studies department. In her experiences, students participating in a course designated as “Women’s Studies” often enter with expectations of the course content that do not provide as much resistance to ideas around the disruption of power dynamics or dominant discourse. Articulating the values of her department becomes more necessary when she teaches outside of Women’s Studies, as
she feels her personal disciplinary identity is closely aligned with that of the disciplinary identity writ large. She says, “I’m throwing around dyke and queer in the classroom and they’re really uncomfortable. They feel really threatened. They think I have an agenda, certainly I do. But it’s not the same agenda they think I have” (Genevieve, 4-18-11, lines 171-174).

My own disciplinary tensions stem from a similar dilemma as Lola’s. Students often do not know what to expect from an Art Education course, and what they know (or think they know) about Art Education does not closely resemble what takes place in my classroom. For most of them, “art” is something very specific, something precious and museum-worthy. My use of visual and media culture—television or film or print advertising—confuses them. Investigating those sites critically is often challenging for students who sign up for a class with an Art Education call number. I struggle with students that are unprepared to grapple with the subject matter. I feel their confusion stems from an inability to get grounded in the disciplinary identity of the course and my inability to clearly define for them what Art Education is in that particular setting. I assert that part of my inability to clearly articulate to my students what Art Education is in that setting is resultant of my disciplinary subjectivity. My disciplined body is a docile body at times. I move with the current of my field’s values and performances.

I believe these tensions associated with disciplinary identity and performance result in a sort of crisis: a crisis of implication. We felt implicated by a named discipline (Women’s Studies, Comparative Studies, Art Education) or others’ expectations of the named discipline (Feminist, “Interdisciplinary,” Artist). We felt implicated by our
performance of that discipline. We felt implicated by our attempts to leave the discipline unmarked; despite the tensions of disciplinary identity we wanted to name it. Ultimately, none of us expressed any interest in leaving our disciplinary identity behind entirely. Instead, we choose to traverse the terrain of disciplinary implication and run along its rims. This collaboration sought to fashion interdisciplinary tools with which to arm our disciplinary bodies, combating the tensions that arise through disciplinary identity, performance, and implication.

5.01.03 Alleviating the Tensions of Disciplinary Identity and Performance

In their discussion of the nomad, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) propose the notion of moving through a smooth space. Unlike the striated spaces marked by a system of codes, a smooth space allows one to move more freely. One plots points according to the path wandered. I envision this smooth space as one that allows for creativity of movement and exploration. Much of what I hoped to accomplish in asking the primary research question was to determine if a smooth (or, at least, smoother) space of disciplinary performance was attainable through mindful interdisciplinary collaboration. I posit that much of the crisis of implication mentioned earlier comes from the doubling of identity that comes from disciplinary performance. One is a disciplinary subject—safely rooted within a community of like-minded disciplinary subjects—and an instructor subject within a larger, multidisciplinary academic environment.

While the sharing of specific disciplinary approaches to curriculum among the cohort proved useful, the significant movement toward a smoother space of disciplinary
performance occurred largely when participants found overlaps with each other’s pedagogies, curricular content, and ideologies. I entered into this study with the expectation that our disciplinary pedagogical bodies might be changed, not initially acknowledging the significance of disciplinary “isolation,” or the feeling of being disciplinarily “alone” outside of the safety of one’s home discipline. Further, I had not anticipated the extent to which pedagogy would inform how each participant understood their individual disciplinary identity and performance.

During the first interview, participants found overlaps in describing their individual disciplines as being inherently “interdisciplinary.” “[Like Lola] I’m also from a discipline [where we] talk about interdisciplinary work…interdisciplinary arts, different media or practices” (Courtnie, 4-18-11, lines 72-74). Genevieve, from Women’s Studies, also spoke to the presence of interdisciplinary ideas embedded in her discipline. “I think that…the faculty are coming from different places professionally and have different ideas about what Feminist teaching looks like” (Genevieve, 4-18-11, lines 135-138). Although each of us articulated interdisciplinary perspectives within our respective disciplines, I posit that the “inherent interdisciplinarity” of those disciplines becomes part of a stabilized disciplinary identity. Further, there is still something inherently disciplinary in choosing a course of study within a designated discipline, regardless of the interdisciplinary perspectives of that discipline. For example, my interest in visual art-making and pedagogies of art-making are strongly rooted in my disciplinary identity as an Arts Educator, which might not be shared with other disciplines.
The articulated values of an “interdisciplinary” discipline—like Women’s Studies, Comparative Studies, or Art Education—might continue to smooth disciplinary boundaries by establishing commonly held beliefs across the borders of those disciplines while preserving unique qualities of disciplinarity that enrich interdisciplinary collaboration.

5.01.04 Performing Interdisciplinary Bodies

While not resistant to the notion of performing as an interdisciplinary body, our cohort faced a number of obstacles- a lack of time being the primary impediment. I theorize that in a more longitudinal study, the findings that I present here could be further validated. Still, I recognize that the obstacles we faced by limited time may not have been the only obstacles that might have emerged longitudinally. I posit that the performance of our interdisciplinary bodies illuminated some of the benefits and barriers of interdisciplinary higher education work, even if this is a study of limited scope and depth.

I suggest that our first steps toward becoming interdisciplinary bodies took place during the initial interview. During the first meeting, we were able to articulate within our respective disciplinary performances and openly discuss the tensions associated with performing our disciplines. By articulating the disciplinary, pedagogical, and theoretical values we hold, we opened ourselves to the advantages each disciplinary body could bring to this interdisciplinary collaboration. Additionally, the overlaps in our individual performative identities provided a framework for selecting a theme or problem to approach through a deliberate, mindful interdisciplinary collaboration later in the study.
5.02 The Second Interview

Proceedings from the second interview involved each participant sharing a collection of images or objects that they believed described their disciplinary identity (Figures 4.11-4.13). We referred to these collections as “stories” of our disciplinary identities. The primary research question and the emerging questions from the first interview informed the proceedings of the second interview. Much like the first interview and the participants’ responses to the question of performed discipline, much of what was presented as rationale for choosing particular images or objects to tell a disciplinary story pertained to each participant’s pedagogical identities as a disciplinary subject. This conflation of disciplinary performance and pedagogy, I posit, further positions the participants’ individual disciplinary identities as being inextricably linked to pedagogical practice and visual conceptualization.

By identifying our disciplinary, pedagogical, and theoretical values we gestured toward recognition of the advantages each disciplinary body brought to the interdisciplinary collaboration. For example, each of us brought images reflective of our positionality as Feminists and discussed how that positionality informs our practice within our discipline. I make no claims that this is represents a broad spectrum of interdisciplinary collaboration, only that our acknowledgement of the overlap of a particular theoretical framework and discussions of how we operate within that theoretical framework served to smooth the space of disciplinary striation that might have otherwise been felt by many disciplinary subjects.
By the second cohort meeting, the protocol had changed slightly: we were more relaxed and felt more at ease with interjecting and adding different perspectives to shared narratives of co-participants. As the participant/researcher, I suggested the practice of story-telling our individual disciplinary identities through visual images and objects, Leavy (2009) notes, “[v]isual art may serve as a vehicle for transmitting ideology while it can effectively be used to challenge, dislodge, and transform outdated beliefs and stereotypes” (p. 216). I posit that the use of images provided the participants with language and metaphor not present in the initial interview.

5.02.01 How Do You Perform Your Discipline?

The question of disciplinary performance was not posed directly during this session as in the initial interview, but each participant brought images of objects that spoke to her individual disciplinary identities. I suggest that through the collection of images and objects, the participants were able to more richly and clearly present their disciplinary identities and performances. I assert that given an opportunity to consider how their discipline might be described through images and objects, participants came to know themselves as disciplinary subjects in ways that they might not have otherwise considered prior to our shared investigation. Additionally, co-participants benefitted from knowing each other more completely as disciplinary subjects, which I believe is integral to the process of becoming interdisciplinary.

During the initial interview, Lola spoke about the values of her discipline, her pedagogical practices, and some tensions of being a disciplinary subject. She did not
speak of her background in music as informing her disciplinary identity in any way. For the second interview, her experiences as a musician were presented as greatly influencing her disciplinary identity and her pedagogical approaches to teaching courses in that discipline. “I’m kind of like the ‘music person.’ I kind of have that identity within my department for better or for worse” (4-27-11, lines 42-43). She expands on her identity as a Feminist. “I have this picture of this little girl, this Feminist….that represents how I feel: kind of optimistic, perhaps childishly so” (lines 27-28). The image of the child allowed Lola to personify her identity as a Feminist subject in ways that were not present during the first interview.

Examining the word cloud generated from Lola’s responses to the question of disciplinary performance from the first interview (Figure 4.5), I might interpret her disciplinary performance as being most significantly informed by Women’s Studies, notions of power, difference, class, theory, and dialogue. “Music” does not appear in her response during the first interview, but is much more present in the visual story telling that takes place during the second interview. I believe that this is resultant from the critical process of self-examination in assembling images and objects to describe oneself.

Genevieve, who hesitated multiple times during the initial interview when asked to discuss her disciplinary identity and performance, presented a multi-layered account of her disciplinary identity, its informants, her pedagogical approaches as a disciplinary subject, and her prior professional experiences as a therapist that contribute to her disciplinary performance. “I feel like I have a lot of freakin’ pictures to tell this story… thinking about how Women’s Studies as a discipline understands teaching, or performing
pedagogy” (4-27-11, lines 76-78). Genevieve’s account of the complexities of her disciplinary performance and identity was much more complete during this interview, indicating that the use of images as an organizing and interpretive tool might have aided in her ability to more completely describe her subjectivity.

Examining Genevieve’s word cloud of responses to the question of disciplinary performance from the initial interview (Figure 4.6), I might interpret her articulated disciplinary performance to prioritize narrative, Feminism, the personal, pedagogy, and dialogue. Her visual narrative presented during the second interview greatly expands those articulations and provides clarification and details that were not as deeply explored or were left out during the first interview. Like Lola, Genevieve’s visual exploration of her disciplinary performance indicates a more critical inquiry of her disciplinary body.

Similarly, I struggled with clearly articulating the complexities of my disciplinary performance and identity during the initial interview. Given a chance to describe myself through images and metaphor, I felt as though I had more completely put forward who I am as a disciplinary subject. With the inclusion of the Art Teacher Barbie and the construction paper sculpture by Jen Stark, I discuss my disciplinary identity as an Arts Educator outside of higher education.

My experiences as a public school visual arts teacher are not emphasized during the first interview, though integral to my disciplinary subjectivity. I contrasted those images that represent my visual arts education experience with the images that represented theory, noting that much of my disciplinary identity was bound up in the balance of theory and arts education practice (represented by the image of the donkey and
the cart). If I compare the generated word cloud of answers to the same question regarding disciplinary performance from the first interview, “education,” “arts,” and “practice” appear prominently, as did “theory.” This confirms that my initial response from the first interview and my visual story-telling from the second interview closely resembled each other. I maintain that during the second interview the descriptions of the complexities of my disciplinary subjectivity were richer. The richness of these descriptions were aided by the selection and presentation of visual images.

**5.02.02 Articulating the Tensions of Disciplinary Identity and Performance**

During the second interview, each participant restated tensions they experience as disciplinary subjects through the presentation of her images and objects. Rather than simply stating those tensions like in the initial interview, participants relied heavily on metaphor and symbolic representation in what I interpret as an attempt to clarify statements made during that initial interview.

Lola returned to tension of performing as a subject within a discipline that values the questioning of existing power structures. Her inclusion of actor Tina Fey speaks to her negotiation as a disciplinary subject and her approach to pedagogy. “[O]n 30 Rock it’s about [Fey] corralling this sort of wild band of [students] and I feel like that’s what I’m doing, sort of unifying them under ideas and dealing with their complicated identities and investments” (4-27-11, lines 12-14). She also addresses the tension she feels by being a subject in an “inherently interdisciplinary” discipline (Comparative Studies) where it is
often difficult to clearly define disciplinary identity. Her inclusion of an image of a winding river is a metaphor for that tension.

Genevieve’s presentation of images greatly expanded her articulations of disciplinary tension from the first interview. She included images that represented notable figures in the discipline of Women’s Studies (bell hooks, Paolo Freire) and further discussed what might have been thought a conflation of disciplinarity and pedagogy. She discusses Feminist pedagogies as being inextricably linked to her disciplinary identity, but then also notes her frustration with pedagogical practices she feels could benefit from being “updated.” The tension of being implicated as a disciplinary subject by others is restated, specifically in regard to Genevieve’s identity as a Feminist. She includes a cartoon where a male character says, “You don’t look like a Feminist,” suggesting that Feminism looks a certain way and, presumably, acts a certain way. “I feel like I’m walking on eggshells because I have to be a certain things…I remember the first outfit I wore the first day I taught…I thought, ‘Ok, they are going to be expecting this dike…so I have to appear as non-threatening as possible” (4-27-11, lines 137-143).

My presentation of images could be described in three categories: artist, educator, researcher. Each of these categories is a site of some tension for me. During the initial interview, I addressed each category in a rambling dialogue. Using images as part of my discussion of disciplinary performance and identity assisted in the organization of the complexities that I earlier struggled to articulate in the first interview. In the transcribed second interview, descriptions of those tensions I experience within my disciplinary performance were more detailed. In phase two I included an image of the Art Teacher
Barbie, an inclusion which helped me more clearly represent what I was trying to describe during the first interview. As a representation of my discipline, the image of the perky art teacher in brightly-colored clothing is almost clownish. I do not feel that this image allows space for the researcher or artist, so those aspects of my disciplinary identity seems misrepresented. I also spoke of resisting the letting go of any category of disciplinary identity, and noted that I sometimes had difficulty striking balance between the artist, the educator, and the researcher. These ideas were present during the first interview, but became more transparent during the second interview.

Comparing the word clouds generated from the first interview and the articulations from the second interview, I found further evidence that the visual story telling expands participants’ detailed descriptions of their disciplinary performance and identity. The strong presence of the word “student” in Lola’s first interview responses to performative disciplinary tensions was repeated during the second interview. “Interdisciplinarity” is not strongly represented in the word cloud generated by the first interview responses, while in the second interview she discusses the complexities of a named discipline that is inherently interdisciplinary, and confirms that it is a significant site of tension and negotiation.

Genevieve’s visual story telling about the tensions she experiences as a disciplinary subject focus heavily on her subjectivity as a Feminist scholar. Examining the world cloud from the initial interview (Figure 4.9), the word “Feminist” appears less prominently, indicating less a less frequent utterance of the term. Genevieve included imagery that more deeply investigates her Feminist subjectivity as part of her disciplinary
performance and a site of tension during the second interview. Further, Genevieve dismisses the word cloud generated from her uttered responses to disciplinary performance, but of the three participants has the most thorough and organized visual story.

The word cloud of my responses to the tensions of disciplinary performance (Figure 4.10) reflects many of the things I restate through my visual story telling during the second interview. The words “art,” “dialogue,” and “students” appear prominently from the first interview and those terms are rearticulated during the presentation of my visual disciplinary story. During the second interview, I include images that represent part of my disciplinary identity as a Feminist and the tensions associated with positioning myself as the Feminist Art Educator to my students. In reviewing the word cloud, my identity as a Feminist is not prominently presented as a site of tension.

The word clouds cannot absolutely represent the participants’ thoughts on their individual disciplinary performance and identity. Instead, I include them here to call attention to comparisons with the visual representations shared by participants during the second interview. The comparisons attempt to further illuminate how the practice of visual story telling can extend one’s understanding of disciplinary performance and the language of identity.

5.02.03 Alleviating the Tensions of Disciplinary Identity and Performance

I suggested during the initial interview phase that participants benefitted from shared accounts of disciplinary identity and performance. The overlaps of pedagogies and
disciplinary values that were articulated contributed greatly to our co-created smooth space of interdisciplinary collaboration. After sharing each participant’s collection of images and objects during the second interview, all were asked to reconstruct a collection of images that included images and objects from the other participants’ (re)presentations (Figures 4.18–4.20). In doing this, each participant had an opportunity to consider the metaphors and symbols present in the visual representation of her own disciplinary identity and to combine them with metaphors and symbols from her peers’ disciplinary identities—construction of new interdisciplinary bodies. I posit that this gesture enabled the participants to begin to re-imagine their disciplinary identity and performance—namely those aspects they might deem unproductive or to be sites of tension. This reconstruction through the perspectives of other disciplinary subjects borrows philosophies or practices that expand the boundaries of any singular disciplinarity.

5.02.04 Performing Interdisciplinary Bodies

Following the exchange of visual texts, the cohort collectively assembled images and objects they found useful in the production of one interdisciplinary body (Figure 4.21). Each participant retained parts of her own collection of images during the assemblages. When constructing one interdisciplinary body, elements of each participant’s represented disciplinary identity were chosen. I interpret these gestures in two ways: First, the participants valued the varied perspectives brought forth by different disciplinary approaches to pedagogy and research. Second, while each participant was careful to select parts of her own disciplinary identity to include in the interdisciplinary
body, the cohort was operating with consideration to a relatively equally represented interdisciplinary body. Put another way, I believe we each had an understanding that strong interdisciplinary collaboration necessitates polyvocality and equity.

5.03 The Third Interview

The data collected during the third interview continued to construct a movement toward interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum and pedagogy. I posit that in identifying one theme or problem; the concept of White Privilege that we each address in our curriculum and sharing our disciplinary approaches to the problem we further smoothed the space of interdisciplinary collaboration. This process enabled the participants to preserve specific disciplinary approaches that were considered useful. Further, the proceedings of the third interview provided participants with disciplinary alternatives to teaching the concept of White Privilege. I suggest that the willingness on behalf of the participants to engage in an interdisciplinary re-imagining of pedagogy and performance at this phase of the study was significantly informed by the staging of the two preceding phases of the study.

5.03.01 How Do You Perform Your Discipline?

The third interview session began with the sharing of curricular materials that each disciplinary subject submitted to the participant group for review. These documents detailed the participants’ individual disciplinary approach to the concept of White Privilege. The proceeding of the third interview, however, differed from the two
preceding interviews. During this interview, participants interjected with questions during
the presentation of disciplinary performance, whereas during interviews one and two the
individual participants spoke with little interruption. I stop Lola at one point during her
discussion in the third interview to inquire about timelines of instruction. At another
point, Genevieve offered alternative readings to Lola in response to Lola’s intimation of
her dissatisfaction with one of her regularly assigned essays. This set in motion a circling
around of the various disciplinary performances being presented, unlike the more linearly
structured responses produced earlier in the study. I interpret this change as a positive
more toward interdisciplinary collaboration. We established during the multiple phases of
the study trust, commonly held beliefs, and valuation of different disciplinary approaches
to curriculum and pedagogy.

As noted in Chapter Four, the third interview session lasted twice as long as the
first two interviews. The presentation of our individual disciplinary approaches and
curricular materials now seen merely as springboards for a spiraling conversation that
covered content beyond what any of us had previously used to teach the concept of White
Privilege. This might be interpreted as a dissolving of our disciplinary bodies in favor of
interdisciplinarity and the emergence of a new hybrid approach to the White Privilege
curriculum.

5.03.02 Articulating the Tensions of Disciplinary Identity and Performance

During this phase of the study, participants were still grappling with the tensions
of disciplinary identity and performance. Those tensions were articulated in direct
response to disciplinary approaches to curriculum. The participants not only shared their curricular materials, but also the perceived success or collapse of particular materials when presented to students. This makes more transparent the operational negotiations each participant makes when selecting content for teaching the concept of White Privilege. For example, I discuss choices I made to include sites of visual and media culture—television, film, and print advertising—to unpack representations of White Privilege. This approach worked particularly well with one group of students, but did not with another. Even though I adjusted my approach to teaching representations of White Privilege, my adjusted curricular materials were almost exclusively works of visual art.

Lola’s curricular materials, which she notes were “modified from things that I’ve been doing over many quarters and it worked particularly well” (5-4-11, lines 5-6) by including music and texts about music. While these two different disciplinary approaches to a single concept might have experienced success, it is in the occasional collapse of a particular disciplinary approach that challenges disciplinary subjects to redevelop new approaches. I am suggesting that through interdisciplinary investigation of concepts or problems those tensions can be reclaimed as sites for new solutions and perhaps in some ways allowing those tensions to somewhat be relieved.

5.03.03 Alleviating the Tensions of Disciplinary Identity and Performance

This phase of the study provided the most practical approach to alleviating tensions of disciplinary subjectivity by enabling the participants to share their specific disciplinary curricular approaches to one concept or problem and begin to develop new
interdisciplinary solutions. I return to Karl Popper’s assertion, that “we are not students of some subject matter, but students of problems. And problems may cut right across the borders of any subject matter or discipline” (Popper, 1963, p. 88). The presentation of multiple disciplinary approaches to a problem and the inquiry surrounding that presentation made available concrete new curricular approaches to the concept of White Privilege and made accessible content derived from the individual expertise of each participant. I posit that the shared expertise of disciplinary knowledge is among the most significant outcomes of this study. The solidified application of multiple disciplinary approaches to a problem opens the advantages of interdisciplinary collaboration where participants can benefit from expertise outside of their own and begin to incorporate their new understandings in ways that may produce new pedagogical possibilities.

5.03.04 Performing Interdisciplinary Bodies

I had expectations of the performance of our interdisciplinary bodies that were not realized, but the limitations of this particular study might be likened to the limitations of other interdisciplinary collaborations: time and investment of the participants. In conceptualizing the study, I had hoped to arrange multiple observations of co-participants’ teaching and possibly design and implement a unit of instruction. We were eager to share disciplinary identities and to discuss our experiences as disciplinary bodies. We enthusiastically shared curricular materials and pedagogical strategies. When it came to the collaborative designing of curricular materials, we collectively had less to say. I can attribute this to a number of factors, but I would say that most likely the cohort
succumbed to the pressures of academic life: teaching responsibilities and other research. I acknowledge that this is a factor in the planning and implementation of future studies regarding interdisciplinary collaboration.

Responding to the follow-up questions, participants were able to address the commitment necessary for strong interdisciplinary work. Sometimes, the commitment requires more time. When asked how her disciplinary performance might have changed through interdisciplinary collaboration, Genevieve states, “I feel like I haven’t had a whole lot of time to think about that because I am facing (new) challenges in the Service-Learning course I teach, so my attention has been focused on other things in that class” (Genevieve, Google document, p. 1). At other times, the commitment requires a “letting go” of disciplinary identity that I found I was less willing to let go of than I had initially thought. Lola remarks, “I guess I’m more wedded to my own little conventions than I thought, which is certainly something worth reflecting on as I prepare to teach this summer” (Lola, Google document, p. 4), and I agree:

I’d also add that I was a bit surprised by how difficult it was to let go of my disciplinary identity… maybe I want to defend art education more than it needs to be defended. But letting go of the artist educator somehow felt like I was devaluing my experiences or how hard I’ve worked to make my own identity as artist educator valid as an academic. (Courtnie, Google document, p. 1)

The process of becoming interdisciplinary in this study was not about the outcome of the collaboratively performed curriculum like I had hoped or expected; rather, the cohort engaged in a process of becoming interdisciplinary in subtle ways that I suspect
may often be overlooked in the implementation of interdisciplinary programs. We began with close investigations of our disciplinary performances and then moved toward a more interdisciplinary understanding of course material. We valued disciplinary experience as integral to the process of becoming interdisciplinary. Even when we found it more difficult to escape our disciplinary bodies, by the end of the study we were more able to acknowledge that subjectivity. Additionally, there is evidence in the utterances of the participants that suggest their collaborative interdisciplinary experiences will inform their future teaching. This, I believe, is a significant move toward strong interdisciplinary work.

5.04 Answering the Primary Research Question

To answer the primary research question *What are the potentials of changed disciplinary performance and identity resultant from mindful interdisciplinary collaboration in higher education?* I reconsider the data generated by the phases of the study and return to the literature introduced in the second chapter as a lens through which to explore that data.

5.04.01 Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity

In the second chapter, I suggested that disciplines might be understood as striated spaces in which one performs. The codes of a discipline, which might be stabilized in theory or pedagogy, can nonetheless help to define that striated space. I also suggest that interdisciplinary practices help to smooth those striated, coded spaces. I now suggest
further that the smoothing of striated disciplinary spaces can increase the potential of changed disciplinary thought, performance, and identity.

Responding to the notion presented by Barnett (2009) that determined disciplines become displaced in a pluralist society where multiple perspectives are favored over a singular perspective, I note that participants’ difficulty in pinning down a clear definition of their disciplinary performances—manifest in the inclusion of multiple disciplinary or theoretical perspectives and the conflation of discipline and pedagogy—reaffirms Barnett’s notion of displaced disciplines. In this regard, the disciplinary subjects participating in this study are already smoothing a striated space that could supplement or replace what disciplinarity might have once meant. Still, because each participant indicated a particular disciplinary identity—Women’s Studies, Comparative Studies, or Art Education—it can be surmised that there are codes in place that mark each participant a disciplinary subject and codes that they mark themselves with. The phases of this study carefully examined those disciplinary markings by asking participants to name their disciplinary performances. First, participants named their disciplinary identities with spoken language. Following that, they constructed those identities further using images and object. Careful recognition of the construction of their individual disciplinary bodies assisted in recognition of the potentials of merging disciplinary bodies into operational interdisciplinary bodies.

The included literature also suggested a usefulness of disciplinary identity and that most academics are probably comfortable with the idea that their discipline deeply influences their teaching, learning environments, and how students learn (Kreber, 2009).
Genevieve cited specific pedagogies that she believed were valued by her discipline. “We’re sitting this way because this is a Women’s Studies classroom…this is one way that we dialogue with each other, to see each other’s faces, to decentralize the power” (4-18-11, lines 317-319).

Lola also indicates the disciplinary influences on her teaching: “I tell my students ‘This is a cultural studies classroom, and in cultural studies we value these stories’” (4-18-11, lines 326-327). I also interpret Lola’s use teaching critical inquiry in writing as influenced by her articulated disciplinary value of investigating and disrupting power structures.

Concretizing my disciplinary influences for the course I was teaching during this study was less transparent since it was not a course on Arts Educational practice. Still, I noted in the interview that I attempted to articulate to my students the disciplinary values that I believe are held by Art Education regarding social and personal transformation.

I include these instances of acknowledging influential factors of disciplinary identity to support a notion that strong interdisciplinarity requires the acknowledgment of disciplinary influence and experience. The usefulness of a discipline may also give way to more fluid practices of recognizing the usefulness of other disciplines and collaboratively investigating concepts or problems. Although the participants in the study often resisted the territorial claims that overdetermine each disciplinary claim, there was yet evidence of the benefits of multi-perspectival approaches to curriculum around a central concept. In the third phase of the study when participants shared their approaches to teaching the subject of White Privilege, Lola admitted that she was satisfied with her
students’ responses to the materials she presented to them on the subject. Further, the processes of becoming interdisciplinary allowed for new perspectives on individual participant’s understanding of their own pedagogical flexibility. In the follow-up questions she noted her surprise at how much she was “wedded” to her own disciplinary conventions, but that she appreciated Genevieve’s suggestions for alternative readings to the McIntosh (1989) reading Lola often uses. This instance might not represent what some would regard as strong interdisciplinary collaboration, but it suggests the usefulness of disciplines coming together and intimates what might be possible should a move toward interdisciplinary problem solving be made. Put another way, the potential for changed disciplinary thought, performance, and identity was increased.

5.04.02 Feminism, Performance, and Discipline

In the Review of Literature, I presented Feminist theories of performance and asserted these were fruitful sites for rethinking disciplinary performance and the codes that define a discipline. The proceedings of the study attempted to renegotiate the codes that govern disciplinary performance by engaging the participants in interdisciplinary collaboration, narrative, and arts-based methods of answering the question of How do you perform your discipline?

It is difficult to present a clear analysis of the data in regard to the demonstrated rethinking of disciplinary performance in this study. First, I theorize that the participants each already undergo renegotiation of their performance or disciplinary identity by positioning themselves within disciplines that have been called in this study “inherently
interdisciplinary.” Second, that each participant identified Feminist theory as strongly influencing her disciplinary identity, performance, and pedagogical practices, I believe that renegotiation of codes and resistance to constructed hierarchies is also inherent in their disciplinary subjectivities; Feminist theory encourages problem-based investigations, synthesis of ideas, and disruptions or departures from coded behavior just as this study suggests interdisciplinary collaboration might.

I posit that engaging in an interdisciplinary collaboration still produced sites of change. Participants showed a willingness to borrow disciplinary perspectives other than their own during the construction of interdisciplinary bodies in the second interview session. Additionally, during the third interview the participants engaged in a much more dialogic presentation of their disciplinary approaches to teaching the concept of White Privilege than they had in describing their disciplinary performances in the first two interviews. I interpret this as an increased willingness to let go of individual disciplinary performance articulations in favor of an interdisciplinary dialogue. Regardless of the perceived success of their individual disciplinary approaches to teaching a concept, participants were open and eager to know the details of their co-participants curricular materials and methods. I acknowledge the increased trust participants had in each other after an intense and respectfully engaging investigative process, a coming together

5.04.03 Deleuze and Guattari

My inclusion of the ideas that Deleuze and Guattari put forward in A Thousand Plateaus (1987) attempted to frame the process of becoming interdisciplinary as a manner
of thinking differently. Despite the complexities of interdisciplinarity, what interdisciplinarity looks like or how it is defined, I believe that the simplest way of understanding interdisciplinary work in the context of academia is to understand interdisciplinarity as thinking differently. I posit that simplifying a way of understanding what interdisciplinarity is or can become increases the potential of changed disciplinary thought, performance, and identity. The framework of thinking differently, borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari, included the rhizome, the refrain, nomad thought, and territorialization.

A rhizome is a decentralized networking structure as opposed to a centralized root system like that of a tree (arborescent in Deleuzo-Guattarian terms). Disciplines might be understood as arborescent and interdisciplinarity as more rhizomatic. The data suggests a move toward rhizomatic thinking during co-construction of interdisciplinary bodies with images and objects during the second interview as well as when participants engaged in layered dialogues regarding disciplinary approaches to teaching the concept of White Privilege.

It might be suggested that the movement toward rhizomatic thinking slipped away during the construction of an interdisciplinary unit of instruction via the Google document after the third interview took place. The time constraints of the study prevented me from determining whether my perceived “slipping away” of the interdisciplinary body was due to a return to more arborescent thinking when it came to actually designing a unit of instruction. It could be as I noted earlier, that the participants’ responsibilities outside of the study demanded more attention than their voluntary participation in the
study. I maintain that the process of thinking differently about disciplinary approaches to curriculum was there, and therefore the potentials for changed disciplinary performance were present as well.

The refrain is the coding of information that marks a territory. I suggest that interdisciplinary collaboration deterritorializes the refrain long enough for thinking differently about curriculum and pedagogy to occur. The same proceedings of the study that I claim mark a move toward rhizomatic thinking could also be said to mark the deterritorialization of the refrain of a discipline. Again, time constraints of the study limit a determination as to the extent of the deterritorialized refrain or disciplinary performance. The analysis of the data in this chapter does point to a willingness on the part of the participants to engage with other disciplinary perspectives. Further, it is my belief that a mindful interdisciplinary collaboration greatly increased participants’ potential for changed disciplinary thought, performance, and identity.

Finally, it is useful in the analysis of the data to imagine interdisciplinarity subjects as nomads. Nomads, according to Deleuze and Guattari, are dedicated to deterritorialization of over-coded spaces. The articulations of the participants during this study suggest that each feels somewhat of a disciplinary nomad. This can be determined in the participants’ descriptions of their disciplines as “inherently interdisciplinary.” But I assert that even an inherently interdisciplinary discipline is one still coded as a discipline—Women’s Studies, Comparative Studies, or Art Education—and is still held to the same preconceptions about how those disciplinary subjects should be performed. Participants articulated certain disciplinary values and how those values influenced their
teaching, like sitting a certain way in a Women’s Studies classroom, valuing certain stories in Comparative Studies, or the use of visual and media culture in a writing course. But, their voluntary participation—and the enthusiasm with which they shared—in the collaborative study suggests a readiness to become more of disciplinarily nomadic.

To return to the data from the third interview, the concept of White Privilege as an inquiry might be considered the path. The participants’ approaches to the concept would then be the points along that path. A disciplinary path would be over-determined by those points. An interdisciplinary (nomadic) path has subordinated points that along the way might be renegotiated, but the path would stay the same. Approaching one concept or problem from multiple disciplinary perspectives can be interpreted as a renegotiation of points along a path, and therefore a move toward interdisciplinarity.

5.05 Conclusion

What are the potentials of changed disciplinary performance and identity resultant from mindful interdisciplinary collaboration in higher education?

I found that the data strongly indicated the potentials of changed disciplinary performance through mindful interdisciplinary collaboration. The interdisciplinary collaboration undertaken by the cohort in this study brought forward the values of: disciplinary perspective; the challenges of disciplinary performance and identity; movements toward alleviating the challenges or tensions of disciplinary identity; and polyvocal disciplinary perspectives on teaching a challenging concept. The time constraints of the study did not allow an investigation of practiced disciplinary
performance in the classroom or changes that participants might have made after the study, but it was productive nonetheless. The utterances of the participants during the study bring to mind a great potential for changed disciplinary performance resultant from interdisciplinary collaboration.

The data also suggests that disciplinary identity might not so easily be changed, but that perhaps a change of disciplinary identity is not necessary in creating strong interdisciplinary work. Earlier discussions in this chapter note the usefulness of disciplinary perspective and experience. I acknowledge that the “inherently interdisciplinary” disciplinary subjects that took part in this study were possibly less likely to resist thinking differently about curriculum and pedagogy during an interdisciplinary collaboration than a subject deeply rooted in an over-coded discipline. Still, it is my interpretation that the disciplinary subjects from this study can stay wedded (to borrow the term from Lola) in their disciplinary identities, even while the potential for strong interdisciplinary collaboration is present.
CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSIONS

The final chapter will explore what the findings of the study could mean for designing interdisciplinary studies; return to the notion of transdisciplinarity introduced in the first chapter; and discuss the implications for further research on the subjects of disciplinary performance and interdisciplinarity.

I noted in the first chapter the increasing prominence of interdisciplinary programs of studies at colleges and universities in the United States, and that one must only do a Google search of “interdisciplinary studies” to get millions of hits on the subject. I also noted that Kleinberg (2008) warns that those programs, in practice, often don’t differ substantially from the academic disciplines and departments that interdisciplinary studies were designed to challenge.

Transdisciplinarity is described in the first chapter as the collapsing of academic borders and the emerging of a new discipline (Davies and Devlin, 2010). Interdisciplinarity seeks idea dominance over discipline-based concepts. Transdiciplinarity is post-discipline, leaving its parent discipline behind and “[emerging] from a discipline that has since been ‘dissolved’” (p. 17). The usefulness of a discipline might therefore give way to subjects that understand themselves as inherently interdisciplinary.
Finally, during the study I pondered what the next logical step might be in further exploring the subject of interdisciplinarity. I consider rephrasing the primary research question from asking what the potentials of changed disciplinary performances and identity are to asking what the significance of changed disciplinary performances is and how it might reshape one’s identity.

### 6.01 Designing Interdisciplinary Studies

It bears repeating that since the mid-1970’s, interdisciplinarity in higher education has been more defined as a learning mode of exploratory methods through integration and synthesis of theory and methodology drawing on more than one discipline (Ellis, 2009) and that Klein (1990) noted interdisciplinarity as “variously defined” as “a methodology, a concept, a process, a way of thinking, a philosophy, and a reflexive ideology…[as] a means of solving problems and answering questions that cannot be satisfactorily addressed using single methods or approaches (p. 196). Klein also asserts that the range of definition leaves interdisciplinarity vulnerable to tokenism: interdisciplinarity by name only.

The increasing prominence of interdisciplinary programs of study at colleges and universities in the United States suggests an increased interest in diversifying the methods with which students are encouraged to investigate concepts or problems. Further, the success of interdisciplinary studies, according to Davies and Devlin (2010), is idea dominance.
Viable projects require a key ‘idea’ without which success of the project is threatened. It has been noted that over 50 percent of interdisciplinary collaborations fail. Failure might be because of inconsistent or incompatible key ideas, or because no key idea emerges. The key idea needs to be mutually agreed upon as being important by all involved. (p. 22-23)

I suggest the possibility that some programs called “interdisciplinary” are perhaps more closely compared to multidisciplinary programs. A multidisciplinary approach draws information or content from more than one discipline, but without the synthesis or collaboration of an interdisciplinary approach (Ellis, 2009). In my experiences as a public school teacher, the term “interdisciplinary” was tossed about frequently. The curriculum directors and administration at my schools assuredly recognized the benefits of interdisciplinary, problem-based explorations. The teachers’ lesson plan templates had a section outlined for evidence of “interdisciplinary” methods, but inclusion of multiple disciplinary perspectives was generally at the discretion of the single disciplinary practitioner. At the time I did not think to complicate the use of the term “interdisciplinary,” but after conducting this study I do now.

The findings of this study do not suppose to illuminate any well-charted terrain of what interdisciplinarity is or could be. Instead, what these finding might mean for designing interdisciplinary studies could be explored further than the specific details of this study. The participants were all doctoral graduate students at the same institution of higher education. Each of the participants claimed (or was claimed by) a discipline, yet each of the participants grappled with a disciplinary identity that could be defined as
“inherently interdisciplinary.” Graduate students who hold teaching positions during their graduate studies have dual identities: student and instructor. I believe that duality may also offer a flexibility of practice and ideology that might otherwise be lost in the shuffle of departmental professional responsibilities later in their academic careers. Graduate student instructors also have the benefit of frequently observing others teach, greatly increasing the graduate student instructor’s opportunities to see different disciplinary and pedagogical approaches to concepts and problems. Graduate student instructors are often new instructors and open to the experiences and expertise of others. Of course, none of my observations regarding graduate student instructors can be generalizable to all graduate student instructors, nor can the observable qualities of graduate student instructors necessarily (not) be applied to tenured, full faculty with decades of experience. I offer these observations only to put forward the idea of the potential usefulness of designing an interdisciplinary collaboration with student instructors.

By selecting graduate students that belong to disciplines that could be described as inherently interdisciplinary, like the participants of this study, there is an increased potential for strong interdisciplinary collaboration. Participants in this study discovered meaningful overlaps in their (inter)disciplinary identities that aided in the identification of a key idea (to borrow a term from Davies and Devlin above) to explore. Choosing participants from disciplines that are more strongly rooted in particular disciplinary practices might allow for the greatest growth during interdisciplinary collaboration. Still, I assert that the complexities of trying to name our disciplinary performances and
identities as participants in the study greatly informed the process of becoming (stronger) interdisciplinary bodies.

**6.02 Trans/Post-disciplinarity**

Transdisciplinarity is described earlier in this chapter as the collapsing of academic borders and the emergence of a new discipline. Post-disciplinarity is described:

‘Post-disciplinary' retains nothing of the notion of a shared consciousness, or of a shared objective that brings together a broad range of discrete studies. Instead, it suggests that the organizing structures of disciplines themselves will not hold. Only conditional conjunctions of social and intellectual forces exist, at which scholarship and performance may be produced. (Case, 2001, p. 150)

Davies and Devlin (2010) suggest that transdisciplinarity “may be more a theoretically possible position than a practical reality. It is not clear what would count as an example of a new discipline that has emerged from a process of transdisciplinary evolution” (p. 17). Case (2001) gives a clear example of what she considers post-disciplinary programs. “English departments, which once focused exclusively on literature written in English, now regularly offer courses in film, bi-lingual Chicano literature, and Feminist, postcolonial and psychoanalytic critiques, among other things” (p. 150).

It is in trans post-disciplinary practice that one might return to the importance of what disciplines have to offer. How does one construct trans/post-disciplinary practice without a bricolage of disciplinary concepts? I like the notion of a post-discipline, but I also wonder how a field that depends on dissolution of organizing structure of disciplines
might slip away, closing its claim to institutional resources (like budgets). What happens to knowledge in a post-discipline? How does one ground oneself? Case continues, “New undergraduate and graduate programmes in American Studies, Critical Theory, Liberal Studies, and Cultural Studies signal a future of a greater proliferation of scholarship that does not conform to any traditional notion of field” (p. 150). This is evocative of the proliferation of interdisciplinary courses of study mentioned earlier in this chapter. I posit that trans/post-disciplinarity is subject to the same vulnerability and tokenism as interdisciplinarity has been. Like interdisciplinarity, perhaps both retaining the value and usefulness of disciplinary knowledge while becoming post-disciplinary could strengthen trans/post-disciplinary practices and resist tokenism.

6.03 Further Explorations of Interdisciplinarity

This study, like many studies, collapsed and expanded in various ways during the proceedings. Collected data steered the focus of the study in different directions than I had anticipated, and some of my (admittedly naïve) projected outcomes were not realized. To end this chapter, I would like to suggest an opportunity for further investigation of changed disciplinary performance and identity resultant from interdisciplinary collaboration. I phrased the primary research question as looking for the potentials of changed disciplinary performance and identity. I still regard potential as being integral to change. To push a study of potential for change further, one might ask what the significance of change would be? A more longitudinal study would be necessary in order to explore the significance of changed disciplinary performance and identity.
resultant from interdisciplinary collaboration. Asking that question also assumes that there is change resultant from collaboration. I assert that there is sufficient evidence put forward by the included literature in these chapters and in the collected data to support a theory that interdisciplinarity can be transformative.

6.04 Conclusion

Recently, one of my new colleagues inquired about my dissertation study. When I supplied them with the Reader’s Digest version, they asked, “What did you conclude?” My response? “Interdisciplinary collaboration is hard.”

In the beginning of this study, I was admittedly smug regarding interdisciplinary tokenism. After conducting a study and attempting to answer a research question concerning disciplines and interdisciplinarity, my experiences with the complexities of strong interdisciplinary work in higher education effectively dissolved my arrogance. Interdisciplinary collaboration takes dedication and constant renegotiation. It requires comfort with rhizomatic proceedings. It takes patience to work with and honor other participants’ perspectives. Most importantly, it takes time, trust, and open dialogue.
REFERENCES


Yin, Robert K.. *Qualitative research from start to finish*. New York, NY, USA: Guilford Press, 2010
APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL
April 6, 2011

Protocol Number: 2011EO191
Protocol Title: PERFORMED DISCIPLINE/COLLABORATIVE DISCIPLINE: FEMINISM, DELEUZE, AND BECOMING INTERDISCIPLINARY IN HIGHER ED, JAMES SANDERS, COUTRINE WOLFGANG, ART EDUCATION
Type of Review: Request for Exempt Determination

Dear Dr. Sanders,

The Office of Responsible Research Practices has determined the above referenced protocol exempt from IRB review.

Date of Exempt Determination: 3/30/2011
Qualifying Exemption Category: 1, 2

Please note the following:

- Only OSU employees and students who have completed CITI training and are named on the signature page of the application are approved as OSU investigators in conducting this study.
- No changes may be made in exempt research (e.g., personnel, recruitment procedures, advertisements, instruments, etc.). If changes are needed, a new application must be submitted.
- Per university requirements, all research-related records (including signed consent forms) must be retained and available for audit for a period of at least three years after the research has ended.
- It is the responsibility of the Investigator to promptly report events that may represent unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

This determination is issued under The Ohio State University’s OHRP Federalwide Assurance #00006378. All forms and procedures can be found on the OHRP website – www.orrp.osu.edu. Please feel free to contact the OHRP staff contact listed below with any questions or concerns.

Cheri Pottey, MA, Certified IRB Professional
Senior Protocol Analyst—Exempt Research

Office of Responsible Research Practices
Ohio State University
1960 Kenny Road
Columbus, OH 43210
phone: 614.688.0389
fax: 614.688.0366
email: pottey.1@osu.edu

Exempt Determination
Version 1.3
APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM
CONSENT FORM
Performed Discipline/ Collaborative Discipline: Feminist Theory, Deleuze, and Becoming Interdisciplinary in Higher Education

You are invited to be in a research study of interdisciplinary collaboration in higher education. You were selected as a possible participant because of your interest in pedagogy and collaboration in higher education. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Courtnie Wolfgang (PI)- Department of Art Education, The Ohio State University. (Dr. James Sanders III (Faculty advisor)- Department of Art Education, The Ohio State University

Background Information

The purpose of this study is: Investigate disciplinary performance as it is understood by the participant group and the potentials for changed thought and practice through interdisciplinary collaboration in higher education.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:
Meet for one (1) hour long sessions three (3) times as a participant group for discussion; agree to have conversations taped for transcription; observe another participant’s classroom teaching; agree to be observed teaching; agree to share documents such as syllabi and assignments with the participant group; collaboratively design instruction with fellow participants.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the Ohio State University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time with out affecting those relationships.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

There are no known risks associated with this study.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records (Kept in a locked file cabinet at PI’s private residence, Columbus, OH). All participants will have access to audio recordings and transcriptions.
You will be allowed to review any audio or video recordings and request that data not be used if you feel uncomfortable. 
Once the study has been completed, the data collected will be stored and used for future research but participants will remain confidential.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Courtnie Wolfgang. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact them at 706-202-6395, wolfgang.15@osu.edu. PI’s advisor can be reached at 614-292-0266 or sanders-iii.1@osu.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: ___________________________ Date:

Signature of Investigator: ___________________________ Date: